

# **Black Legends And the Light of the World**

**The War of Words with the Incarnate  
Word**

**John C. Rao**

D. Phil., Oxford

Associate Professor of History

St. John's University

**BLACK LEGENDS AND THE LIGHT OF THE  
WORLD:  
THE WAR OF WORDS WITH THE INCARNATE  
WORD**

© 2011  
John C. Rao

First Edition

A paperback copy of this book may be purchased from

Remnant Press  
P.O Box 1117  
Forest Lake, MN 55025

Visit us online at [www.RemnantNewspaper.com](http://www.RemnantNewspaper.com)

## INTRODUCTION

*"Christ said 'I am the Truth'. He did not say, 'I am custom'."*

-Pope St. Gregory VII, citing Tertullian

*"There are times when an elevated spirit is a true infirmity. No one understands it. It even passes for a kind of mental limitation."*

-Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*

*"Now battle had to be joined, and therefore men were needed to restore a new order, and new theologians as well, to whom the evil was manifest from its outward phenomena down to its most subtle roots; then the time would come for the first stroke of the consecrated sword, piercing the darkness like a lightning flash. For this reason individuals had the duty of living in alliance with others, gathering the treasure of a new rule of law. But the alliance had to be stronger than before, and they more conscious of it."*

-Ernst Jünger, *Auf den Marmor klippen*, XX

With many thanks to my father, mother, and sister, Mrs. Carol Palmieri, for their constant encouragement; to Linda and John Cuff for the initial inspiration for this work; to Christopher Ferrara and Michael Matt for intellectual support; to Richard Dunn and George Sanseverino for financial aid; to Jeanne Barrett for editorial assistance; to *Pasticceria Rocco* in New York City for a congenial working environment; and to all the friends of the Roman Forum, from New York to Gardone Riviera and Estonia, for their love of the Incarnate Word--the Light of the World--and their Catholic pilgrim spirit.

# Table of Contents

**Introduction:**

*On Weaponry and Terrain.*

**Chapter One**

*First Blood*

**Chapter Two**

*The Attack of the Word*

**Chapter Three**

*The Turbulent Battle for a Christian Imperial Order*

**Chapter Four**

*The New Ascent of Mount Tabor*

**Chapter Five**

*Counterattack and Resistance on the Cheap*

**Chapter Six**

*The War of All Against All or the Peace of the Reinvigorated Word*

**Chapter Seven**

*The Global Battle for Nature: Modern Naturalism and the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo*

6 BLACK LEGENDS

**Chapter Eight**

*The Naturalist Revolution, the Implosion of the GCSQ,  
and the Troubled Beginnings of the Ninth Crusade*

**Chapter Nine**

*The Ninth Crusade: Retrenchment and Renewed Assault*

**Chapter Ten**

*Firestorm in the Kingdom of the Word*

**Chapter Eleven**

*When the Salt Loses its Savor:  
Mindless Rout and Voluntary Enslavement to the Words*

**Epilogue**

*My End is My Beginning*

# Introduction: On Weaponry and Historical Terrain

## *A. A War Between “Words” and “the Word”*

The following pages offer a number of reflections on ecclesiastical history, based upon lectures given for the Roman Forum’s Summer Symposium at Lake Garda in Italy between 1993 and 2011. Although these meditations do, at times, focus upon rather specific events in the two millennia long life of the Church, they nevertheless do not represent an academic presentation of the Christian record and its theological underpinnings as such. Instead, their purpose is to provide the interested layman with a general, readable, thematic and bibliographic guide through a mass of otherwise daunting historical data. This guide is intended to inculcate the message that the essential issues, fundamental difficulties, and precise details of Catholic History can only properly be grasped with reference to the irrepressible,

unending, and ever more global war that the genesis, birth, and growth of the Catholic Faith have everywhere provoked.

What, exactly, is the nature of this war? Several giants of nineteenth century Catholic apologetics offered the clearest description of it. They argued that the struggle in question was a conflict waged over acceptance or rejection of the *fullness* of the Way, the Truth, and the Life brought into the world through the Incarnation of the Eternal Word: the only truly “new” and “different” event that has ever really taken place in the history of mankind. This clash, they added, was rendered inevitable, permanent, and monumental due to the existence of the Mystical Body of Christ—the Church—as the visible, organized, active continuation of the Incarnate Word and His teaching through the ages. And that struggle, they concluded, was intensified still further given that the Church more and more became a powerful, effective, rage-provoking “sign of contradiction” not simply to the opponents of Christian Truth, but to the enemies of each and every kind of Truth—rational, scientific, and aesthetic truth included.

Basic Church power and effectiveness come from the fact that fully awakened and practicing Catholics understand their need to struggle for individual salvation through her living, authoritative reality. But the actualization of the Church’s provocative potential in the natural realm has varied greatly over time in proportion to the seriousness of her commitment to two goals of the Incarnate Word possessing immediate, practical, historical and sociological importance.

The first of these aims is the correction of sinful men and the flawed natural order in which social beings of flesh and blood must live and work out their salvation. Despite its supernatural foundations, such a project has precise contours



## INTRODUCTION

and can even be spelled out in transparent legal language. The second aim, on the other hand, is much more difficult to capture in limited human terms. It is centered round a spiritual reorientation of both man and nature to the exalted task of giving glory to the God who created them; to a renovation of the entirety of Creation; to a transformation of all things in Christ. Exactly what this means entails a complex learning process that has unfolded over time, and has only done so in union with individual and social progress in sanctification.

Whenever the Church takes her examination of and commitment to the full significance of the Incarnation of the Word seriously, she more vigorously proclaims the fact that her Christ-centered Faith, which is undeniably focused primarily on the work of individual salvation, nevertheless must also inevitably toil to perfect the whole of the created universe. The fully conscious Bride of Christ sees and exuberantly rejoices in the truth that Catholicism cannot help but mobilize all the diverse riches of the cosmos and place them at the service of distinct persons; that, in doing so, it enables human beings to obtain everything that life offers temporally, upon the earth, to the greatest degree that its mortal, dependent character permits; and that in transforming the incomplete and subordinate natural order, it actually sharpens the individual man's yearning for God, thereby providing him with further tools to labor more vigorously for a complete and eternal life with the Trinity in Heaven.

An increased celebration of the treasures of the Catholic path to perfection is necessarily accompanied by a much more firm repudiation of any determinedly anti-

## 10 BLACK LEGENDS

incarnational, anti-Word message. That kind of teaching, represented most powerfully in modern times by the man-centered naturalism promoted by the Enlightenment and its various interpreters, is understood to cheat and diminish the individual. Naturalism is seen to do so through its acceptance of the earthly status quo, marred by sin, as though it provided a self-evident, common sense, and truly practical guide to life. Such an outlook is recognized as actually putting men to sleep regarding the multiform character and full potential of the universe that God intended human persons to inhabit and enjoy. Closed to correction and transformation in Christ, naturalism – along with all the other anti-incarnational positions taught throughout the ages – is therefore condemnable not only for blocking men from that fruitful temporal use of Creation which acutely sharpens their desire for eternal life. It is also reproachable for encouraging the individual to embrace earthly “goods” which unfailingly turn out to be peripheral, ephemeral, or even utterly meaningless and repulsive shadows.

A sleeping, inactive Church is already an irritant to the supporters of the natural status quo. After all, even such a half-dead body still suggests the possibility of an alternative to the guidelines for human existence that they wish to remain totally unquestioned. On the other hand, a fully awakened, militant Church; a Church stirred by a proper ecclesiology to a complete consciousness of her character and mission, is a truly much more threatening phenomenon. Defenders of the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is” must inevitably view her as launching an intolerable assault on the good life as they conceive it. It is therefore logical that they feel the call to meet an active Catholic challenge in one of two ways: either by unleashing a total war

## INTRODUCTION

to eradicate what is perceived to be an intrusive and unnatural monster, or, failing to break her back directly, to deconstruct, subvert, and radically dilute the Church's depraved historical and sociological influence. Hence, that perennial conflict carrying us from the time of Christ until the present; from the sophists of the later Roman Empire to the personalists, pluralists, neoconservatives, and libertarians of our own era, whose basically unchanging battle plan and weaponry must now be addressed.

### *B. Word Games*

Mars has not been friendly to the Church and to Catholics in their struggles on behalf of the cause of the Word in recent centuries. All the strong points on the battlefields of this endless conflict seem to lie in the hands of their well-outfitted opponents. The enemy's overwhelming strategic advantage can be explained with reference to two points: the character of the arms that he carries into the fray, and the unwillingness of believing Catholics both to open their eyes to the weaknesses in their own line of defense, as well as to employ the most powerful weapons at their disposal on the terrain most suitable to gaining them a victory.

The best of the arms shouldered by the anti-Word enemy are not always the ones that directly draw blood. For, potent as the swords and guns aimed against the Church throughout the ages have admittedly been, such weapons generally pale in long-term effectiveness next to the damage that has been inflicted through written and spoken words. I am referring here to the words eventually shaped by gifted enemy rhetoricians into two related types of myth: "black legends"

## 12 BLACK LEGENDS

designed to ridicule the Mystical Body and Catholic efforts to correct and transform the world in Christ on the one hand, and alternative “good stories” mimicking the language of the Faith, while stripping it of all substantive Christian meaning, on the other. So important is the broad role of these black legends and substitute narratives in the imposing array of forces battling the Faith through the centuries that the entire clash of the opponents and supporters of Catholic Christianity can legitimately be discussed as this book treats it: as a war between “words” and “the Word”. Let us briefly examine both types of myths in turn.

Strictly speaking, the term “Black Legend” refers to the complex of yarns invented in sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch, English, and German circles to defame Catholicism in general, but the Spanish Habsburgs and King Philip II (1556-1598) in particular. However, I am employing it in a much wider sense here, to indicate the entire body of half-mythical tales that has been used throughout the ages to attack the Catholic Faith and Catholic believers. We shall see that this arsenal of rhetorically effective cannon balls already began to be assembled in pre-Christian times, in the midst of the battles of the sophists against the Socratics, when proponents of “nature as is” grasped the threat to the demands of “business as usual” emerging from the philosophical hunt for the deeper meaning—the *logos*—that lay behind immediate surface appearances. It was augmented, bit-by-bit, even through the seemingly most Christian of centuries. Modern naturalism ultimately filled the rhetorical anti-Catholic arsenal to repletion in the period stretching from the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748 down to the present.

## INTRODUCTION

Black legends shaped by talented rhetorical artisans playing critical word games have marched into battle against the message of the Incarnate Word from crisis to crisis and from age to age throughout the history of Christianity, with no final settlement of their quarrel ever being reached. Even at the apparent nadir of their anti-Catholic fortunes, the black legends have always maintained a basic strength and potential for vigorous counterattack. Unfortunately, their periodic successes in the past, and their continuous and ever more widespread victories in contemporary naturalist times, are to a large degree due to the very credibility the distortions that they perpetrate seem to possess. And this credibility, in turn, owes much to the extremely clever manner in which the black legends are presented: majestic in vision, while starkly simple, popular, and often quite vulgar in form. Although we shall have manifold opportunities to illustrate these effective characteristics in the chapters immediately to follow, a full explanation of the structure and scope of the black legends as I am defining them must await the complete formation of the anti-Catholic camp by the first third of the twentieth century.

Less needs to be said about the "word merchandising" involved in the creation of good stories, even though these have frequently proven to be much more seductive and effective than openly hostile black legends. Whichever type may have the final edge in their anti-Catholic competition, the two certainly grew in tandem, with the former generally emerging out of the work of the very men responsible for the latter. For hatred of the substantive teaching of the Christian Faith, followed by bitter admission of the reality of its success in establishing a hold over large and varied populations, caused a number of the supporters of black legends to retreat

## 14 BLACK LEGENDS

from an apparently losing strategy of open opposition to Catholicism to another approach that was much more subtle. And it was precisely this change of tactic that dictated an assault on the religion of Christ by means of its “deconstruction” and replacement with “friendly” alternative interpretations that could be of danger to no one dedicated to a continued life of “business as usual” in the service of “nature as is”.

### *C. A Self-Destructive Catholic Disdain of History*

Rather than entering into a premature discussion of the brilliance of the black legends and alternative good stories at this juncture, it is much more fruitful for us first to examine an infinitely more distressing reason for the successes enjoyed by the rhetoricians inventing them: the Catholic contribution to their triumph. The very many factors entering into this strange assistance that believers give to their enemies’ cause will be explored in the following chapters—all of them dedicated to uncovering the complexity of the Truth needed to correct the picture painted by what is an often understandable, clever, but, in the final analysis, painfully unsatisfying reductionism. For the moment, I should like to discuss the suicidal aid given by many of the faithful to the victory of the reign of myth with reference to their stubborn and self-destructive disdain of Church History.

Admittedly, disregard for the past is a widespread modern disease, especially in countries that pride themselves on their “newness”, like the United States. This modern malady has badly infected the large number of believing Catholics who treat a serious study of anything other than the Church’s past *devotional* life as something positively

## INTRODUCTION

frightening; even intrinsically dangerous as well. Rather than viewing the complete record of a Faith necessarily grounded in history as a jewel-box filled with invaluable treasures, many believers—Catholic academics included—often build a thick wall between themselves and a thorough consultation of their own religious tradition. Construction of this wall has had disastrous repercussions on their ability effectively to fend off the assaults of the black legends and alternative good stories. It is a wall to which militant Catholics committed to the full message of the Incarnation can come only to wail over the loss of the memory of past glories.

This is not to say that such disdain arose from nowhere. Catholic nervousness regarding history is partly due to terror over the potential side effects of exposure both to the sheer volume of historical data chronicling human errors and stupidities, as well as to the seemingly endlessly insane reactions to them from age to age. For many people, all that this historical data appears to do is to offer infinite nuances and caveats unacceptably diverting minds away from the clear supernatural truths taught by the Eternal Word active in time. Moreover, the complex historical record also seems capable of creating a sense of existential pointlessness, depicting life as a peculiar Hegelian dialectic of twisted theses, antitheses, and syntheses, with no sure exit from its dead end of false alternatives ever visible on the horizon. If nothing else, a visit to Data Mountain can look like an enormous waste of time better spent on the study of pure theology. Why—to take but one commonly expressed conservative American Catholic complaint—bother to rummage through the biographies and developing ideas of the Fathers of the Church, whose path to truth was filled with

the inevitable potholes accompanying all such groundbreaking work? Are not the polished dogmatic treatises of the greatest medieval scholastics—men who inherited all of the Fathers' achievements, but purged them of their errors—immeasurably superior and sufficient unto themselves?

Then, again, many believing Catholics have also turned against history because of the influence of *historicism*. Historicism can be attacked on similar grounds as data mongering, for its unacceptable introduction of the principles of flux and changeability into our appreciation of the unchanging God and His purposeful Providence. It naturalizes and perverts all theological and philosophical efforts to reach the unquestionable, bedrock meaning of life, and in a much more open fashion than mere data grubbing. Why, therefore—so the impassioned believer's argument often goes—open an examination into something as sacred as the development of the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist? Historicists would only use such a study to feed the impression that the doctrine of the Real Presence emerged through a natural evolutionary process rather than from a meditation upon a direct and eternal revelation of the God-Man.

It is not my purpose to downplay all the potential perils of my own discipline. Historical data-peddlers who calmly bark out their giddy catalogues of pointless human follies, oblivious to the deep feeling of futility and ultimate absurdity this anecdotal chatter may evoke in their hearers, do indeed exist. I am myself quite conscious of a personal professional temptation to indulge in blithe, data-rich recitations of the errors, sins, and madness of clergy and laity which do not in the slightest disturb my cocktail hour, much less my Faith,



## INTRODUCTION

even as they send some of my historophobe Catholic comrades straight into the nearest alleyway to slit their wrists. Also, there is simply no denying history's ability to indulge that modern penchant for wasting attention on petty detail that swallows up all time for devotion to more noble tasks. And, finally, the fear of a very real, very seductive, naturalist, Faith-killing historicism is no idle one indeed.

Nevertheless, Catholic suspicion of history has to be quieted through acceptance of the simple fact that life affects different people in different ways. Those men and women who experience real perils to their souls when exposed to intoxicating spirits, films, or novels should certainly be encouraged in their desire to avoid them. Similarly, it may honestly be the case that the spiritual well being of some Catholics actually does compel them to headlong flight from all prolonged contact with data-rich historical accounts of the truth and development of the Faith in time that they find disturbing. But palpably negative as exposure to history can sometimes be, I still insist that it reflects a spiritual problem that affects individuals. It is not an existential dilemma that can be turned into a universal guideline for eliminating history from the education of the Catholic faithful – as it *is* so excised in a number of contemporary conservative religious curricula – especially when the instruction of the Catholic clergy and lay Catholic activists is at stake.

And what, exactly, is there for believers to fear in the annals of mankind? Yes, history does reveal man's seemingly endless record of comical and tragic disaster; his failure to harmonize his actions with his stated aspirations. But why should Catholics, of all people, fear exposure to a chronicle of dysfunctional behavior? A record of failures should simply

confirm, drive home, and draw out for them the consequences of some of the Church's central dogmatic teachings: that individuals are unique; that they all possess a free will which prevents their being approached as mechanically predictable automatons; that their actions may be conservative or innovative, good or bad, logical or illogical, rigidly consistent or highly contradictory; that their reactions to fresh and often disturbing developments can be as flawed and unpredictable as the decisions that brought these developments on; that "stuff happens" in history and has to be confronted with both courage and a great deal of humor if one is successfully to tackle new and changing conditions in the temporal realm.

Moreover, believers ought to be perfectly conscious of the fact that no given individual *Catholic's* path through life can be fully and accurately understood or foreseen through abstract, rational, and scientific studies of theology, philosophy, and the laws of nature alone. They should thus not be surprised to discover that the day-to-day effort of *imperfect* Catholics to understand how the *perfect* God works in time has never been totally devoid of ambiguity or scientifically complete. Neither should they marvel over stumbles and fruitless detours in Catholics' attempts to relate their understanding of God and His Providence to familiar as well as to changing historical circumstances, nor their application of these judgments to daily decisions crucial to their own personal lives.

Besides, believers' acceptance of the reality of human freedom and the ever-attendant possibility of sin should readily prepare them for making the acquaintance of an ample number of individual members of an otherwise divine institution who publicly confess their commitment to

## INTRODUCTION

Catholicism while ignoring its practical consequences and engaging in precisely the sort of immoral behavior condemned regularly by it. Scripture itself indicates that these sinners can include quite significant individuals, the Apostles themselves among them. That alone should steel the faithful for discovering many other Catholic reprobates, some holding positions of importance inside the Church and even dominating her affairs over long stretches of her history.

Similarly, the faithful should in no way be stunned that the broad effects of the Fall have produced even well-intentioned Catholics who have been seduced into intellectual errors and practical behavior of breathtaking self-destructiveness. For they must know that in a world weakened by sin, nothing infallibly assures the choice of men of wisdom, courage, and prudence to wield authority within the Body of Christ. Nothing mandates that a Church leader will have the intelligence and energy to use his Faith and Reason to deal effectively with fresh temporal dilemmas in sensible and well-considered policies, or, for that matter, that he will teach and act in any serious manner at all. In fact, nothing ensures that popes, bishops, priests, and their flocks, through ignorance, laziness, and spiritual weakness will not be tempted to believe the most blatant distortions of alternative good stories, conclude that their false recipes for the Christian life are reconcilable with and beneficial to the cause of their supernatural Faith, and act accordingly.

Finally, believers confronting the ecclesiastical record should expect many instances of confusion and madness if for no other reason than the immense complexity of raising natural "spaces" and institutions to fulfillment of their mission in Christ. After all, this difficult work, essential as it

## 20 BLACK LEGENDS

is to facilitating the individual's spiritual journey, nevertheless lies precisely in his own weak and sinful hands. Understanding exactly how to accomplish such an exalted labor has to entail a great deal of painful sifting, judging, and practical maneuvering. This, in turn, requires the calming of numerous negative spiritual instincts and intellectual judgments shaped by previous experiences with an as yet unrepentant and unreformed nature. It also risks offending personal, deeply ingrained, individual sensibilities. More importantly still, it demands the courage to confront many vested and overwhelmingly powerful worldly interests that can inflict immediate and intense bodily harm upon anyone threatening them.

Transforming nature in Christ thus calls for a realistic understanding of existing secular conditions, along with an appreciation of what the outside world actually *ought* to be and *could* be through changes effected by the alliance of faith, grace, and reason. Such a two-pronged understanding is not easy to gain and translate into mechanisms for change under the best of circumstances or even under the guidance of the greatest of the saints. When sought out by weak, ignorant, foolish, or hypocritical sinners—that is to say, basically all of mankind—it would be surprising were it not regularly misconstrued and thrown into the greatest chaos and contradiction. If the difficulties of thinking about and living the Drama of Truth as presented by the deepest of ancient pagan thinkers were already formidable enough, how much more would this then have to be the case when their character and the stakes involved were highlighted in Christian terms? In sum, no believer should be shocked to find Catholic History replete with perhaps the most extraordinarily tragic and comic figures of all. For any fall from the vision of the

## INTRODUCTION

transfigured life of Christ as seen by the Apostles on Mount Tabor must inevitably be more horrible or ridiculous than those from the heights of human aspiration identified even by the finest of Greek dramatists and Socratics. All this should be obvious. If so, then history, where is thy sting?

Be that as it may, whatever the evils and confusions that Catholic History may uncover, the failure to plumb its depths is deadly. It amounts to a voluntary and unilateral disarmament, leaving believers with only crippled arms to deploy against the supporters of "nature as is". Why? Because without consulting the historical record the seductions of the alternative good stories, the lies of the black legends, and the real message of the Incarnation can never be completely and accurately illuminated. In shutting their eyes to the full teaching handed down to them from the past, believers indulge their own parochial limitations, focusing on second-class problems and weak apologetics that actually ignore Catholicism's true nature and strengths. Meanwhile, they parry assaults of their enemies that ought not to concern them, neglect their substantive follies and contradictions, and give their foes a semblance of superiority that they do not in any way deserve.

Yes, once again, breaking down the iron curtain between Catholics and their inevitably troubled history does mean confronting crimes and shortcomings that have helped mightily to give the black legends just that sufficient tinge of verisimilitude to survive and prosper. But this is absolutely necessary in order to understand three much more important truths: first of all, that one is, precisely, speaking here of "crimes and shortcomings", owed to the failure of believers to grasp and implement the full Catholic vision, rather than

## 22 BLACK LEGENDS

adherence to its precepts; secondly, that such real crimes and shortcomings are regularly the product of Catholic acceptance of alternative “good stories” that distort both Faith and behavior, and actually reflect the kind of world that the proponents of the black legends long desperately to create; and, finally, that the historical record, even at the nadir of Catholic fortunes, everywhere offers hopes and guidelines for regaining the sure path to union with the Word active in time.

A serious study of Church History must necessarily identify shortcomings and crimes for what they are, through the simple expedient of directing the believer to *all* the sources of Catholic doctrinal and moral teaching and practice. Such an investigation propels him to a consideration of Scripture, councils, papal pronouncements, the work of the Fathers, and similar founts of full orthodox enlightenment. It points him towards the stuff of what is referred to as *positive theology*. And it is positive theology that provides the nutritious food guaranteeing *speculative, systematic theology* protection from mythmaking or pontificating in thin air. Examination of Catholic History thus directs the faithful to a careful reading of the complete record of *all* of the Church’s positive thoughts and actions through the centuries—our chief means of learning how Christ works *in time*. This has the further benefit of demonstrating what has and has not had substantive pastoral value in spreading Christian Faith and practice. Moreover, examination of the roots and daily chronicle of the Church’s message, structure, and actions shows that there has indeed been a growth in Catholic understanding, defense, and practice of the Way, the Truth and the Life; and that the consequences of that grand intellectual growth translated into the formation of a highly

## INTRODUCTION

sophisticated Catholic Christendom populated by many great and holy men and women in whom the faithful can take deep and justifiable pride.

A plunge into the unexpurgated fullness of the Church's past story thus offers one of the most splendid paths for earth-bound souls to open themselves up to the music of the spheres and judge what is and is not in harmony with it. I am convinced that this is the case, because it performed such a service for me. It was history that indicated to me that I had to look beyond the flux of mere historical experience to the ultimate source and seat of an eternal wisdom that might place the daily ecclesiastical horror show in its proper perspective. It was history that fueled an unexpected longing for deeper instruction in the superior disciplines of philosophy and theology, which at first confused and even repelled me. It was history that unwrapped for me the priceless gift that Christianity offers: a life-and joy-filled, body-and-spirit-exalting phenomenon, testified to by armies of great minds and souls; a Faith that gives the lie to the cheap, parochial, and often scurrilous depiction of Catholicism by men who have no "eyes to see or ears to hear". Finally, it was history that also identified and denounced to me the impact that the age-old, word merchandising spirit makes: that of a strait jacket seeking to limit or crush the deepest aspirations of the human mind and soul

—my own included; that of a permanently effective sleeping pill guaranteeing an existence equivalent to a life-long euthanasia in a toneless universe. In short, history pointed the way far beyond its limited self, and for this I am forever grateful to it. It gave me four goods—history, philosophy,

theology, and love of life in general—for the price of one. And all three of these, laboring in tandem, form a mighty battering ram to break down the outwardly impressive house of cards built up by the black legends and alternative good stories to devastate or defuse Catholicism.

It is its work in uncovering the latter fraud that is most significant to my argument at the moment. For confrontation with the full historical record reveals just how frequently clergy and laity have not listened to the music of the spheres, accepting pale, alternative tall tales regarding the Faith in consequence. And acceptance of this mess of pottage, in turn, explains why Catholics have so often appeared to be nothing other than drugged actors in a two thousand year performance of theater of the absurd. Time after time they trot in and out of history to play a role worthy of Ionesco. There they are, again and again, chastising zealous defenders of Christ's mission as traitors to God; praising purveyors of false but alluring words as the real heroes of the Faith; demanding modifications of Christian thought to accommodate the demands of their deadly opponents; pursuing policies which are detrimental to the short and long-term profit of the Church, nature as a whole, and the individual in particular. Devastating as it is to admit, there are some points in their history when so many Catholics have given such credence to erroneous good stories that little further reason for the successes of their enemies need be provided. The tragic reality of such twisted assistance has played its part in rendering the war between "words" and "the Word" the highly baffling conflict that it often is.

Catholic apologists need to know if they are defending Catholicism or a caricature thereof. A true supporter of the Word Incarnate must be sure that he is getting the *substance*



## INTRODUCTION

of a heartfelt obedience to His Savior's wishes from Catholics he seeks to defend as opposed to a purely *pro forma* song of praise from their lips. Pointing solely to a man's recitation of the Creed does not give the loyal soldier of Christ all the information he requires to make a proper judgment regarding past reality. An honest study of history most helps in identifying whether one is dealing with men who were, in practice, exactly what they said they were. My fellow B.A. recipients in 1973 all sang hymns praising the crushing of heresy that, on the surface, made them sound like several hundred manifestations of St. Athanasius. But anyone familiar with their daily history understood that they had no interest in Christian doctrine at all, and that they were belting out their song only because they had been told to do so by the school authorities, who had made singing it with gusto a condition for awarding them their degrees.

Catholics who disdain study of the reality of the vast number of "curveballs" which individual believers have thrown to Church History by their replacement of the fullness of the Faith with a good story emasculating it, allow for the victory of precisely that evil which they claim to fight: the distortion, naturalizing, and minimizing of the effects of supernatural truth and grace operative in time. For unwillingness to probe and expose the many bad, mistaken, and often unpredictable actions that were taken by fallen Catholics in a fallen nature is an open invitation to placing a blessing upon everything that they did as somehow "god-fearing" in character. It is an open invitation blindly to baptize the grotesque use of Christ's message by either the ignorant or clever strong men, whose illogical or hypocritical

hosannas to the Son of God masqueraded their erroneous or self-interested purposes.

What is perhaps most troublesome about neglect of serious investigation of the past crimes, blunders, and intellectual seductions of erring believers is the way that it has blinded many contemporary Catholics to the precise means used by the modern naturalist enemy who dominates their lives today to forge his path into the heart of Christendom. For we shall see that naturalism's dangerously anti-Word argument to a large degree slithered onto center stage in disguised form, with an especially "nice", alternative, effective good story, using seemingly faith-filled, nature-friendly language to make its ultimately harmful case. We shall learn in Chapters Seven through Nine just how many beguiled Catholics were lulled by familiar-sounding words into giving their support to a set of naturalist beliefs and practices that actually aimed to destroy the message of the Word. We shall witness how they surrendered the citadels of the Faith to their deadly foes before they had any real sense of what was happening to them. Catholic man cannot live by words alone; by means of a good story that is actually a lie. It is through an historical examination of what naturalism did – and does – in practice, rather than an unquestioning acceptance of the truth of what it blithely says that it does, that its anti-Catholic character and path are most easily revealed and combated.

A study of Church History serves one final purpose: it offers profound hope and thought-provoking guidelines for future recovery from our current spiritual and temporal nightmare. Once he consults the full ecclesiastical record, the startled believer is awakened to the long-lived character of the problem facing Catholicism. He learns how seriously and

## INTRODUCTION

successfully the supporters of “nature as is” have contested the Christian achievement in every stage of its development. He sees how they have done so in a fashion that has periodically involved Catholic loss of consciousness of the fullness of the Incarnation’s mission to correct and transform man and society in Christ. But most importantly, he encounters innumerable heroes who understood what was truly “practical” from a Catholic standpoint, and how a road back to implementing the full message of the Incarnate Word can effectively be paved.

Allow me once again to stress the fact that the *entirety* of the historical record is essential to this task of fighting the alternative good stories and the black legends. Failure to investigate *all* of Catholic History, each and every one of its facets, condemns men to an arbitrarily limited self-defense and rearmament in the fight against the enemies of the Faith. Believers who think that it is sufficient to know the “end result” of Catholic History in 2011 without respecting the contribution made by the faithful in all past ages are infinitely more likely to fall prey to the particular temptations fought off so valiantly by the special efforts of previous bands of Christian warriors. They deny themselves knowledge of what “experts in the field” did or did not do “back then” to parry unique shades of error with which they might not be so familiar in their own time. Should such problems reappear once again to trouble their own life—and this is always a possibility in a world inhabited both by free men as well as artisans of black legends and good stories on the lookout for any “angle” that works—they would thus be sitting ducks for destruction by them.

Believing Catholics who persist in disdaining the value of history have an unfortunate tendency to hunt for protection from the enemies of the Faith behind a wall of well-intentioned, Word-friendly, but rhetorically-bloated good stories of their own. However nice these stories may be, they are in no way rooted in the history of Christ and His Mystical Body: neither in the Gospel narratives, nor in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the work of the Church Fathers, nor in the hard-won teachings of councils and popes. Such well-intentioned good stories can sound orthodox in a number of ways, such as in their attribution of temporal Catholic victories solely to supernatural interventions or in their linkage of historical defeats to the seemingly superhuman evil of one particular “scapegoat” individual or conspiratorial group. But insofar as these tales are totally untrue, severely flawed, or as marred by false stereotypes as anything their opponents produce, they cannot ultimately shield the Christian front from a sophisticated onslaught launched against it.

In fact, when believers seek protection behind the Maginot Line of their own myths alone, they are sorely tempted to operate by the rules of victorious naturalism as soon as they emerge from the citadel walls to confront “reality”. With little or no knowledge of how Catholics solidly rooted in the truths of the Incarnation should behave and defend themselves in their daily dealings with the natural world, they are no danger to their sworn naturalist enemies. Supporters of an uncorrected “nature as is” can even praise the Christianity that they represent, since, in practice, it is nothing other than the harmless, personal or group sport of a religious fraternity—a Catholic Club, which demands precious little, if anything, of this world in practical terms.

## INTRODUCTION

In any case, such behavior explains why one frequently finds firm believers who speak with the voice of a Torquemada while inside their "Catholic clubhouse" yet espouse eighteenth century "common sense" principles once they emerge into the "real world". And it clarifies why such men can continually make political and economic alliances with individuals and groups who truly mock their substantive corrective and transforming Faith. Less reliance on seemingly orthodox tall tales, and more willingness to consult the historical record, would demonstrate the bitter truth that much of the standard operating procedure of ill-informed believers throughout the ages, the present one included, has, in practice, been dictated by *opponents* of Catholicism who have been accepted as friends; that this accords badly with true Catholic doctrines; that it seriously promotes only those alternatives to Faith that are praised by the sculptors of the black legends and the good stories; and that, ironically, it then allows the word merchants to criticize the Faith for wrongful actions of the faithful that have little or nothing to do with the message of Christ whatsoever.

Allow me to conclude with a word in favor of certain "good stories" – true ones. Christianity can never wage war versus anything aesthetically pleasing. It needs the beautiful much too much to do so. Men are not creatures of pure intellect, hermetically sealed off from the manifold messages of a world of flesh and blood and the innumerable envelopes in which these can be sent. Catholic man cannot live by syllogisms and dogmatic formulae alone. The Son of God came to redeem, raise, and "divinize" the entirety of nature. Created nature involves human communication, which has an enormous and demonstrable impact on the individual. A

talented, aesthetic development of the rational use of words is, in the long run, as natural to man as efforts to perfect his mind, and often much more immediately important. The enmity of the faithful must be directed only against that form of rhetoric which seeks to “close life down”; to put men to sleep regarding a full philosophical and theological understanding of its meaning; to prevent attempts to grasp the True and the Good lying behind the Beautiful; to manipulate words to bury the profound longing of the human soul for definite, eternally-significant knowledge under one, large, oppressive, but golden-tongued wet blanket. A rhetoric used *in union* with good philosophy and theology is, on the other hand, a weapon of nuclear force. It provides a “good story about a true story”.

This is where history also plays a significant role. The historical profession has been allied with rhetoric since its origins, given its clear concern, from the very outset, for engaging men’s attention to move them to practical action. Sadly, this alliance has meant that history has frequently been abused, serving primarily as a sophistic propaganda tool on behalf of the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is”. But when united with good philosophy and theology, a knowledge of history can capture the human imagination and move men to intelligent, informed action in the service of the greatest story ever told. And it is to such a goal that the present work is dedicated, in its effort to demonstrate that many false friends have repeatedly flown the most impeccable Catholic banners while literally getting away with murder, to the detriment of the name of Christ and His Church.

For a Catholic who cannot overcome his distaste for history, a study of the war between “words” and “the Word”

## INTRODUCTION

may appear to offer nothing more than another near occasion of secularizing, intellectual sin. For an opponent of substantive Christianity shaped by those black legends and alternative good stories whose nefarious influences we shall be attacking, this book may seem to be doomed from the very outset by its dogmatic *leitmotif* and a presumed temptation to twist historical data to its service. Even the indifferent may be tempted to join in the critical fun, quite accurately noting that the author of a general, reflective history of this kind, whatever his sense of having satisfactorily researched his work, regularly stands in need of corrections provided by experts in specialized fields. Believers, non-believers, and neutral observers alike could well join hands in a one-time display of camaraderie to toss the present tome into the rubbish heap without permitting it the slightest chance to work its magic on them.

I must once again insist that I admit that all the dangers outlined above are real. But my abandonment of this work would entail a renunciation of a much needed depiction of a thematic forest that the trees of the specialist, however true and essential their cultivation undeniably is, often badly obscure. It would also be an indirect admission that recounting the experience of Catholic Christianity's impact upon *my* life plays no legitimate role whatsoever in explaining the influence that that Faith has had on human history in general. Finally, abandoning the writing of a general, reflective book of this kind, whose inevitable flaws of detail I shall always be happy to correct, would bring with it an effective acknowledgment that the only writers permitted to interpret Christianity's *significance* are those men and women whom I firmly believe to be precisely the ones who

have arbitrarily closed themselves off from seriously grasping its real consequences and import. Accepting that thesis would be a morally repugnant decision. So let us allow the words to flow and see if this work, with all its obvious limitations, can nonetheless tell something of a “good story about a true story.”



## First Blood

The dominant forces of the contemporary western world actively stimulate the blithe acceptance of the lessons of immediate sensual and emotional experiences. In varying ways, some open, others disguised, they all insist that voluntary abandonment to the teaching of surface phenomenon, far from being a frivolity, is actually the only realistic approach to existence. Anyone seeking meaning, fulfillment, and joy in life must energetically fight off that temptation to deeper thought and reflection which prevents "closure" and "moving on" to satisfaction of the ever changing and evolving messages of immediate sensation.

Study of the roots of the militant modern preference for the shallow over the profound must begin in the ancient, pagan world. For the *conscious* encouragement of a spirit favoring "closure" and "moving on" over "stepping back" and "reflecting" is already noticeable in the Classical Greece of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., especially in the eye-opening period of the Peloponnesian War and its dismal

aftermath (431-336 B.C.). This is because Greece, as the home of the first insightful discussion of the meaning and practice of education—of *paideia*, as they called it—inevitably provoked the original open battle between those men primarily valuing the lessons of surface phenomena and others insisting upon the hunt for their underlying and more nuanced truths.<sup>1</sup>

Epic, lyric, and dramatic poets were the first teachers of Hellas. They sought answers to the basic issues of life by asking aesthetic questions; i.e., queries regarding the meaning of beauty. Aesthetic preoccupations led them to tackle the problem of how best to educate for a knowledge and possession of “the Beautiful”. Their hunt for the tools essential to a primarily aesthetic formation gradually became “holistic”. It slowly uncovered the need for consultation with, and guidance from, a variety of different sources: the individual and his immediate desires, the family and its long-term requirements for stability, and, perhaps most importantly, the demands of the *polis*, the city-state, in its search for attainment of a common as opposed to a merely individual or familial “beautiful” life.

The reputation of the polis as an aesthetic, educative, guiding force was enormous at the end of the Persian Wars (490-479 B.C.). Athens and Sparta, its two greatest contemporary representatives, had assured their polis’ prestige by winning a victory over the most impressive power in the world—a force before which, in startling

---

<sup>1</sup> For the following discussion, see the brilliant work of W. Jaeger, *Paideia* (Oxford, Three Volumes, 1965), particularly Volume III (*The Conflict of Cultural Ideals in the Age of Plato*), 132-262.

## FIRST BLOOD

contrast, a number of important individuals and purely family-dominated Greek lands had humiliatingly cowered. Such an unexpected but clear triumph made it appear that the community-focused polis could, in effect, accomplish absolutely anything. It was for this reason that Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), in his *Oresteia* trilogy, has an unending cycle of superhuman vengeance and counter-vengeance concluded through polis-shaped (i.e., political) judicial action. Beauty, education, and the polis, one might have said; now and forever; one and inseparable.

Unfortunately, however, it was precisely the same cherished polis of Athens and Sparta which revealed insane, self-destructive passions and limitations during and after the Peloponnesian War, thereby stimulating further debate regarding the basic tools required for a proper education designed to gain possession of the beautiful. Control of the renewed dialogue passed out of the hands of the poets alone, who had seemingly said everything that they could possibly say on all sides of this issue of *paideia* by the time of the plays of Euripides (480-406 B.C.). Greece, even before this moment, had witnessed the emergence of a quite different approach towards education, along the lines suggested by the first philosophers, the so-called pre-Socratics, who wished to replace an aesthetic understanding of man and nature with one founded firmly upon knowledge of the material structure of the universe itself; knowledge of its constituent "scientific" elements. But pre-Socratic approaches to life and education proved to be too radical a break with the traditional aesthetic vision for the mainstream Greek world to accept. They were rejected, in particular, by two schools of thought, both active

in the war and post-war period, which were themselves destined to lock horns in mortal combat.

One of these schools was that of the Sophists, men concerned with rhetoric, the successful use of language. Sophists, in effect, argued that the old-line aesthetic approach to hunting for the Beautiful was correct, but that it needed to be organized, taught, and followed much more rigorously if it were to become a sure foundation for the individual, the family, and society. The other school was that of Socrates (469-399 B.C.), who, while also retaining much of the traditional aesthetic approach to education, felt a call to critique, transform, and elevate it. The battle that this entailed was related for us not by Socrates himself but by his most brilliant pupil, Plato (427-347). And Plato reveals the nature of the conflict in his debate with Isocrates (436-338) – perhaps the most self-conscious and instructive proponent of the opposing, sophistic, rhetorical approach.

Plato's great achievement as a philosopher and as an educator was one of demonstrating that the classical Greek formation of an individual for the possession of the beautiful required an understanding both of the nature of goodness as well as of the underlying truths of the universe for which the pre-Socratics were groping. He presented Socrates, his model teacher, as a "soul doctor", a man who sought the cure of moral and intellectual flaws in his continued hunt for aesthetic perfection. Education for beauty in the fullest possible sense was indeed a holistic project, Plato insisted, but an exciting and dramatic one, drawing the individual closer and closer to God, the measure of all things, shaping his soul as an image or icon of the divine as he advanced. Every tool that the Greeks had come to consider to be important – the polis included – had a crucial role to play in

## FIRST BLOOD

this all-encompassing, life-long enterprise. Nevertheless, those valuable tools were flawed, each and every one of them. Paradoxically, the means of education themselves required correction and improvement at the hands of the individual “icons” that they helped to shape. Soul doctoring could thus be a perplexing, immensely difficult, exhausting task, involving much meditation and self-questioning. And such an enterprise could not help but appear to be a pointless, frustrating detour to those on a perpetual hunt for “get possession of beauty quick” schemes; those interested in “closure” and “moving on”.

“Pointlessly frustrating” was certainly the criticism attached to Platonic education by Isocrates, who claimed the title of philosopher with as great a sense of justice and fervor as his fellow Athenian did. Still, apt student of the Sophist Gorgias (c. 485-c. 380) that he was, Isocrates understood philosophy to be a wisdom that only the trained *rhetorician* could possibly grasp and use properly. This inevitably meant that his definition of any Good or Truth underlying the Beautiful would differ considerably from the one given to it by Socratics eager to pass beyond the borders of rhetoric alone.

For Isocrates, there was no question of seriously critiquing, transforming, and possibly even rejecting the immediate emotional and sensual experiences and preoccupations of the ordinary man. Man was the measure of all things, and unquestionably correct in his urgent, common sense appreciation of the importance of obtaining the riches, power, and fame that he *obviously* knew would yield the beautiful life. The average individual’s sole problem was a *technical* one: he could not relate one, justifiable, obvious,

common sense experience to another, and thereby understand how best to exploit and satisfy them regularly and comprehensively. His efforts to explain his reactions to daily problems, both to himself as well as to others, proved to be "dumb" ones. It was effective words, and the arguments shaped through them, which were lacking to the average man. Only the well trained rhetorician, the master of words, could clarify the full depth of immediate feelings and experiences, show where they were headed, and stir people to do what was necessary to fulfill their promise. The Good and the True were, therefore, ultimately nothing other than "appropriate explanations" of reality, and developments of those obvious and common sense reactions to the raw stuff of daily life that are themselves absolutely infallible guides to the possession of Beauty.

To take but one simple example, the average person might be said to have an eminently justifiable, positive, common sense reaction to the powerful feeling and experience of sexual passion. Nevertheless, without the right words and arguments to explain his "opinions" regarding this formidable *force de la nature*, he is not able to relate the meaning of his reaction to experience properly; not even to himself. Pragmatic efforts to gain the full promise of sexuality and cause it to work together with other deeply felt experiences about which he has positive "opinions" are even further out of his reach. It is the rhetorician who illuminates Everyman through the use of appropriate and stimulating words, demonstrating the key to sexual understanding and its link with the multitude of other desirable goals.

But how will Everyman know that the rhetorician is "speaking appropriately" about reality? The answer to this question is also an obvious one. For the master rhetorician's

## FIRST BLOOD

advice will not only “sound right” – clearly, consistently, and self-assuredly responding to the average individual’s personal sense of the obvious truth of his own preoccupations, and where, more or less, those concerns are headed. Beyond that, it will prove itself by being crowned with clear success. Hence, Isocrates’ recognition of his need to underline the simplicity, lucidity, harmony of purpose, confidence, and material achievements of *his* pupils, while contrasting them with the cranky and ultimately unfathomable detours, self-criticisms, bitter divisions, and practical failures of the Socratics.

Isocrates longed to prove rhetoric’s ability to gain possession of the Beautiful on a grand, world scale. In order for him to find the key to such great success, the philosopher/rhetorician had to begin with the study of the raw experiences and the common sense reaction to them not merely of an individual, but of an entire people, since only a city-state or nation could conceivably become a long-term driving force in global events. The work of Herodotus (484-424), Thucydides (mid-400’s-c. 403), Xenophon (c. 430-c. 355) and others offered guidelines as to how such historical data might be collected. Rhetoricians like Isocrates saw one of their tasks as being that of explaining to a population the appropriate greatness to which its otherwise “dumb” historical experiences were calling it. History thus came very early under rhetorical purview and influence: partly to its profit, since it became more readable, dramatic, and effective, but very often to its severe detriment, by being transformed into a tool of pure propaganda.

From the raw history of his environment, Isocrates claimed to learn a number of important principles: that there

actually was a Greek people, united by a shared culture, *Hellenism*; that the essence of Hellenism was the development of the illuminating, life-giving, and unifying “word”; that the universal value accruing from appropriate use of “the word” gave to a Greece which possessed knowledge of its significance a world-wide cultural mission; and, finally, that this universal vocation had been shown to involve the sea, struggle against Persia, and imperial expansion.

Fulfillment of future Hellenist destiny would require two things simultaneously. On the one hand, it was crucial to maintain a constant respect for the “good old days” of the foundation of the Greek spirit and the institutions giving clout to it. On the other, it was necessary to shape a loyal population obedient to any vigorous strong man who might guide that spirit to the discharge of its contemporary mission. Moreover, the institutions embodying the spirit of the good old days, the strong man giving them clout, and the populations obedient to his *fiat* were to be stirred to their appropriate political roles through the vital words of the creative rhetorical genius.

But “philosophy”, as defined by Isocrates, can easily constitute a gigantic circle, manipulated by the rhetorician who, through the clever use of appealing words and images, may seize control of the familiar concerns of the average man or State and run with them where he wills. Common sense experience is pronounced the infallible basis for action simply because the experience appealed to is arbitrarily declared “common sense filled” and thus an infallible basis for action. Successful attainment of riches and power is said to prove the appropriateness of the rhetorician’s understanding of the beautiful life and guidance of Everyman to its promise because possession of riches and power is presented as



## FIRST BLOOD

unquestionable, axiomatic proof that beauty has indeed been grasped. Respect for the “good old days”, contemporary strong men, and obedient populations are essential because denial of such esteem to any one of these elements would rip apart the “beautiful” rhetorical image tying together ancient roots with present hopes and future destiny, mass popularity, and elite power. And all those aspects of “the vision” were necessary since experience had proven them essential to the construction of the career of the master of words, whose personal success worked to guarantee the validity of their union.

Absolutely no questioning of “obvious experience”, “common sense”, “success”, the “historic mission”, and the consistency of the tools required for its realization could be contemplated, lest this lead to the unacceptable argument that obvious experience, common sense, success, the historical mission, and its vital tools were themselves somewhat problematic. Isocrates, as Werner Jaeger notes, makes a virtue out of abandoning any deeper investigation of the meaning of life once he has shaped what for him appears to be a rhetorically beautiful “point of view” with a chance of obtaining a successful outcome. That “point of view”, if attractive and potentially useful, *must* be accepted as though it were Truth itself.<sup>2</sup> With this, the debate is over. Closure has been achieved. One must move on to accomplishment of the Great Promise, or face the wrath of the rhetorician and the outraged nature whose unerring voice he has infallibly proclaimed himself to be.

---

<sup>2</sup> Jaeger, III, 46-155.

And the rhetorician *is* powerful. He knows that his words do have “the ring of truth”. He is sure that he can count on the support of immediately felt, individual, family, or polis-wide “common sense” passions in his call for their immediate satisfaction. He senses the understandable and well-neigh universal fear that acceptance of Socratic self-criticism would paralyze swift action, thus preventing exploitation of favorable opportunities to fulfill desire, thereby causing men to “lose out” on success, perhaps even up to the very moment of death. The rhetorician, with his mastery of words, can paint the profound, life-determining, “either-or” option offered to men by Sophists and Socratics in all of its dramatic colors, though clearly weighted to his advantage. After he has skillfully organized the picture as he wishes, any Socratic who calls the average man to logical, painful soul-searching at the possible expense of satisfying urgent passion becomes a sitting duck for his rhetorical abuse. A Platonic philosopher would all too easily lend himself to the accusation of representing both a crackpot idealism, indifferent to the obvious demands of human nature, as well as a cynical opposition to the successes of “real men”, whom he cannot emulate, bitterly envies, and wishes to destroy in consequence.

Plato was not just a Socratic philosopher but a literary genius in his own right, sensitive to the power of purely rhetorical arguments over the average man, and the need to respond to them “beautifully” to demonstrate their flaws. He did so reply, by depicting the pure rhetorician as an ultimately self-deluding failure. Yes, Plato argued, the Sophist rhetorician was influential. But contrary to his claim that that influence came from his role as a wise man, teaching individuals and states the meaning of the beautiful and how

## FIRST BLOOD

to get possession of it, his impact actually and ironically emerged from something quite different: from his total inability to educate those whom he prided himself upon illuminating. For the “word” spoken by the rhetorician styling himself to be a philosopher could itself never rise above “dumb” opinion, and merely illustrated the trained man’s ability effectively to flatter peoples’ fancies. Rhetoricians possessed what Plato called a “knack” of appealing to a particular appetite, like that of a cook in a fast-food restaurant, ignoring entirely the question of whether they ought to have indulged in such an admittedly successful flattery and knack in the first place.

The successful rhetorician deceives himself into thinking that he is superior to his “wordless” audience, but he is simply more effectively “thick” than it is. His words resemble an overbearing and endlessly repeated rock rhythm in a room filled with impressionable but musically illiterate hedonists. They fail to elevate, just as any tool that uses man rather than God as the measure of all things falls miserably short of its pretensions. Anyone responding to the “either-or” option confronting him by choosing for the rhetorician would, therefore, be voting for eternal mediocrity and blindness. Sadly, precisely due to the rhetorician’s observable knack for maintaining power over the vulgar mob, the pathetic outcome of such a wrong choice could conceivably be hidden from its victims forever. False rhetorical “philosophers” needed only to do two things: 1) enthusiastically to invent ever “new” surface variants on the proven appealing slogans to keep men thinking that fulfillment of the brilliant promise of the Empty Life lay just around the corner; and, 2) constantly to drill into a benumbed population’s mind the

fear of the “dead-end” impotence that the Socratic hunt for a more profound goal would ensure.

One of Plato’s painful labors was that of explaining embarrassing instances of this seeming Socratic impotence, with the disasters of his own political missions to Dion in Sicily in 388 and 367 primary among them. Such shipwrecks, he insisted, were not attributable to true philosophy’s innate inability to navigate effectively. Rather, they were simply another confirmation of the difficulty and very infancy of the task that the real lover of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth had set for himself. Yes, he admitted, philosophy needed the aid of rhetoric, of the lesser “word”, to explain itself successfully to a world filled with ambiguous though powerful passions and convince it to change its ways. But that secondary “word” must always be subordinated to a deeper Word – that Logos towards whose ultimate knowledge the talents of the rhetorician should be directed. Alas, at least in Plato’s own day, it had proven to be “hard to find the creator and father of the universe”, and “impossible to describe his nature publicly.”<sup>3</sup> Men could not yet be guided properly to the divine imitation that would definitely perfect them and give them possession of the Beautiful. As dilemmas went, this certainly was a killer, and Plato feared that it would remain an unresolved one unless “some God” came to the earth to unravel it.

Faulty or not, the ideas of his opponents did more than those of the Socratics to form that mixed Greek/Middle Eastern/Latin civilization which we call the Hellenistic World. This new reality certainly did demonstrate the literal value of the Greek language, whose superiority in

---

<sup>3</sup> *Timaeus*, in Jaeger, III, 208.

## FIRST BLOOD

transmitting manifold, complex concepts became universally recognized. It also reflected all of the potential practical consequences of a cosmos shaped by a purely rhetorical “word” alone. For Hellenistic Civilization was one that did indeed work for the “common sense” benefit of those “vigorous strong men” praised by the rhetorician as essential for the fulfillment of its mission. These leaders learned to create and manipulate powerful state machinery for the purpose of keeping the “dumb” mass of the population in obedient submission to their will. Such “doers of great deeds”, from Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.) through to the Caesars and the Senatorial Aristocracy of the Roman Empire that worked together with them, were even willing to tolerate satisfaction of certain specific, immediate desires of the multi-cultural, pluralist world over which they ruled, so long as its constituent elements accepted “closure” regarding matters that might disturb what really counted: the personal power, wealth, and fame of the victors. And rhetoricians in abundance gained a decent income justifying the order thus created.<sup>4</sup>

Rhetoricians were very active from the 300’s B.C. through the 300’s A.D. providing the Hellenistic cosmos, the *ecumene*, the arguments proving that the debate over *who* possessed the things that made life beautiful and *what* those things were was over. They also contributed mightily to efforts to overcome “parochial” religious “superstitions” whose concerns might threaten the status quo. Such integration of divisive elements involved publicizing the need to submit to

---

<sup>4</sup> For the Hellenistic era, see P. Green, *From Alexander to Actium* (California, 1990).

and adore the divinity of the State apparatus and the self-made men who dominated it. "Closure" had been achieved in the realm of the gods as well as that of men, and the "word" could now "move on" to "get the ordinary job of living done".

That "word" moved on by devoting itself to legal and civil service careers, and to sickly praise or boring, encyclopedic chronicling of the existing, unchangeable order of things. Manipulators of the "word" thereby shared in any trickle-down benefits that the Divine Masters supposedly serving the Great Visions they rhetorically identified awarded them. They moved on by finding substantial employment producing that esoteric, archaic, and pointless heap of pretty sounds and properly placed commas adulated by exclusivist literary circles. Aside from that, they also moved on by churning out pornographic material for the gross diversions of a rabble ever tempted to accept subordination and abandon true enlightenment for cheap material satiety.

The spiral downward from the more sophisticated "apologetic" writings and literary achievements of earlier Hellenistic regimes to the servile, pedantic, and vulgar *oeuvre* of much of the powerful and widespread "second wave" of literary Sophism of the second through fourth centuries, A.D. is instructive. Plato, for one, would not have been surprised by the decline, since he had argued that rhetoricians indifferent to true philosophy were destined to a low-class butchering of even their own legitimate art and talent. One need only consult the biographies and stories to be found in Aulus Gellius' (123-165) *Attic Nights*, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Philostratus' (c. 170-248), *Lives of the Sophists*, Eunapius' (346-414) *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, Diogenes Laertius' (no later than

## FIRST BLOOD

200's) *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, and Athenaeus of Naucratis' (200's) *Doctors at Dinner* to test the validity of his hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

But what can one say about the Socratic opposition? What about their war with immediate appearances and superficial judgment? Did not the materialist passions of the Hellenistic Monarchies far surpass those of Athens and Sparta at the time of the height of the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath, when Socrates himself had shown that the call to possession of a flawed Beauty could never, in the long run, satisfy either the population or the dominant forces misleading it? Was there not a fraud to be identified and corrected here? Or had some mystery of iniquity done its job, quieting the outrage of the true philosopher?

Alas, philosophy *had* generally been tamed, adapting itself nicely to the depressing, conformist, "common sense" rules established and rhetorically-justified by a combination of power-worshipping adventurers and Sophists. This was partially due to certain innate weaknesses of the Socratics, as well as subsequent, powerful, related schools of thought like Stoicism. Aristotelians retreated into their cubbyholes of knowledge, working in spheres that did not necessarily have to bring up the big questions disturbing to the daily status quo. Neo-Platonists, even while conducting a truly exalted discussion of the Hierarchy of Being leading to clarification of the final, divine, unchangeable principle of the universe, also became propagandists for the powers that be. They were

---

<sup>5</sup> Green, pp. 135-267; 545-683; M. Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature* (Columbia, 1950), pp. 186-225, 275-286; *A History of Latin Literature* (Columbia, 1952), pp. 353-380.

fearful that any disorder and alteration in the political and social world around them could open the path to what they considered to be a totally unacceptable conception of change, willfulness, and unpredictable action affecting one's notion of the proper character of the very Godhead itself. Stoic insistence on the purpose-filled structure of the universe tempted it, in the absence of a concept of sin, to treat accommodation to the successful status quo as though it were obedience to the will of God. Acceptance of the idea that meaning lay behind every aspect of natural life also convinced many Stoics that crude popular experiences of reality, including truly offensive superstitious practices, should be treated seriously alongside more profound ones. Plato's effective rhetorical use of allegory could be called upon, though in reverse, to show the more "sophisticated" – dare we say "appropriate"? – significance expressed through their vulgar exterior peculiarities.<sup>6</sup>

But none of this would work if the populations thus "guided" by the rhetoricians and their political allies did not in some way respond to the song that was sung to them. This, the majority of them seem to have done, dealing with the bewildering change backed by willful men and their propagandists by going on vacation to a Never-Never Land where native beliefs and customs which did not shake the established order could still be maintained. Many ancient Greeks, Romans, and Near Easterners took this holiday of denial, stunned as they were by the innovations accompanying the multicultural empires shaping their world beginning with the conquests of Alexander and continuing down to the eve of the victory of Christianity.

---

<sup>6</sup> See Green, pp 545-683.



## FIRST BLOOD

Once arriving in Never-Never Land and establishing their clubhouses in its Japanese gardens, they often even denied that anything new and dangerous had actually entered into their lives at all. In order to obtain permission for traditionalist Never-Never Land games, however, the visitors to these varied ancient playgrounds had to collaborate with the existing system and its rulers on those matters that really guided their practical lives. Forget about simply avoiding anything that might give offense to the powers that be. Personal security required that they enthusiastically praise the divinity of the establishment oppressing them. And this they readily did: over and over again. Acceptance of Divine Oppression was engraved over the entrance of each native clubhouse door as the price for permission to open it up to its members.

Beyond that, collaboration, for truly significant subordinates, might entail the shouldering of active obligations to the great monarchs of the age before rushing home to the more pleasant task of cultivating impotence. Collaboration, for the weak mass of men, might mean just working, paying taxes, and never transgressing the sacred wall separating private fantasy from social and political reality. Most collaborators kept the wheels of the regime machinery going because they did not wish to risk their necks by openly opposing it; some, since they had become so used to its gears that they took them for granted as an unquestionable given, maintaining ties with their own oppressed traditions through pure inertia alone. A few of those who collaborated were fully co-opted by their masters. They became fervent propagandists for the new order,

alongside the official rhetorical class, even hoping one day to be accepted into its inner circles.

Of course not everyone confronted by bewildering, force-backed change, justified by rhetorical bombast, went down the escapist-collaborationist path. A respectable number reacted to such transformations by militantly taking up arms against them, and this often outside of those customary structures of their societies which had cowardly or unthinkingly opted for an accommodating posture. But such a path was fraught with danger as well. On the one hand lay the overwhelming power of the existing order of things to punish such a frightful choice. On the other stood the tendency of initial opponents of the status quo who burned with desire for victory so to adopt the same successful approach as their enemies as to become indistinguishable from them—even as they masqueraded their transformation by cloaking themselves with the respectable name of “defenders of the faith”. One can think of the transformation of the Maccabees from martyrs and confessors into typical Hellenistic tyrants in this regard.<sup>7</sup>

All of which is not to say that tyrants and their propagandists were necessarily “fulfilled” human persons. How could they be, unless one truly believes that their pathway is indeed the route to individual perfection? Plato himself insisted that the tyrant had to be the least contented of all men. In point of fact, the elite of the status quo *was* permeated with discontent, and not just that expressed by material dissatisfaction. Some members of the elite themselves retreated into the Never-Never Lands of the ineffectual philosophical clubs. Others “went native”, seeking

---

<sup>7</sup> Green, pp. 497-525, 586-602.

## FIRST BLOOD

meaning in the local gods of conquered lands; gods whose labors could be construed, through Hellenism, to signify something much more universal than Egyptians or Mesopotamians had ever thought possible. A few even went so far as to adore the strangest god of all, the god of the Jews. But the status quo remained unchanged through it all.

Something “other”, a miracle, the intervention of some god, as Plato indicated in the *Timaeus* and the final words of *The Laws*, was needed in order to fight this unchangeable beast. Only the intervention of a force from the outside could inject new strength into sufficiently large numbers of the “dumb” population—which, by this point, included not only ordinary individuals but philosophers as well. Only this could elevate and stiffen men’s awareness of the real Drama of Truth in which they were the actors, and thus strike some fear into the Sophist opposition. Only this would have the means to reach everyone effectively, and therefore teach a “good story about a true story” with eternal significance. Only then would the proponents of “business as usual” be fully stirred to conscious, bitter resistance, and the war between the “words” and “the Word” truly begin in earnest.

In sum, as Werner Jaeger explains, it is the desire for a knowledge of God that would assure a universal knowledge of man that represents the real longing of the Socratics.<sup>8</sup>

The culmination of this system is the systematic knowledge of values, is the knowledge of God; for God, as Plato taught us, is the measure of all things...The continuation of Plato’s metaphysics in

---

<sup>8</sup> Jaeger, III, 261-262.

the theology of Aristotle and others of his pupils...proves that behind the significantly vague hints of those final words [of *The Laws*] there lies the outline of a great theological science which would be the understanding of the highest things in the universe and would be the crown and culmination of all human knowledge. Here there is nothing of the difference between knowledge of reality and mere educational knowledge which some modern philosophers have tried to establish: for in Plato's there is no possible educational knowledge which does not find its origin, its direction, and its aim in the knowledge of God... And thus, after a lifetime of effort to discover the true and indestructible foundations of culture, Plato's work ends in the Idea of that which is higher than man, and yet is man's true self. Greek humanism, in the form which it takes in Plato's *paideia*, is centered upon God. The state is the social form given by the historical development of the Greek people to Plato in which to express this Idea. But as he inspires it with his new conception of God as the supreme standard, the measure of all measures, he changes it from a local and temporary organization on this earth, to an ideal kingdom of heaven, as universal as its symbol, the animate gods which are the stars. Their bright shapes are the divine images, the *agalmata*, with which Plato replaces the human forms of the Olympian deities. They do not dwell in a narrow temple built by human hands; their light proclaiming and manifesting the one supreme invisible God, shines over all the nations of the earth.

## FIRST BLOOD

The hunt for this knowledge constituted the substance of Plato's prophetic vision and ensured his readiness to "educate for combat". It was this hunt that made him and his followers the noblest of ancestors of all who would not accept "nature as is". And it was this hunt that made their work the providential prelude for what was to come into the world through the work of the Word Incarnate, the Catholic Church, and her crusading, transforming mission.<sup>9</sup>

As long as we try to conceive his educational system as a state, we feel it strange and unnatural. But if we think of the greatest educational institution of the post-classical world, the Roman Catholic Church, it looks like a prophetic anticipation of many of the essential features of Catholicism... At the opening of the book *{The Laws}*, he said man was God's toy. If we take that image together with the remark in the prologue to the law, in which he said that God was the measure of all things, we may think out his real meaning. He means that human life is not worth taking seriously. In reality only God is worth taking seriously, and what is divine in man. But that is the logos, the word by which God moves man. Man at his best, is God's plaything; and the life he is trying to attain consists in playing so as to please God. If humanity is not seen in that divine perspective, it loses its own independent value. In particular, war and strife are not the really serious things in life. They contain 'neither play nor culture of any importance:

---

<sup>9</sup> Jaeger, III, 252-253.

therefore we must try as far as possible to live in peace'—just as we say that one makes war to live at peace. All life should be a festival for God, with sacrifices, songs, and dances, in order to win God's favor. And yet the duty of resisting the enemy remains, and is inevitable. No one is better fitted to fulfill it than the man who has been trained in that spirit during peacetime. Perhaps those who came closest to fulfilling this ideal were the religious orders of knights in the Middle Ages.

# **The Attack of the Word, the Seeds of the Logos, and the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo**

## *A. The Attack of the Word*

It was during the first decades of that dramatic transformation of the Roman State from Republic into Empire that history's greatest spiritual and intellectual "curveball" was tossed into the closed cosmos of the Hellenistic World. The Divine Light that Plato said would have to intervene in human events to resolve the seemingly insoluble dilemma of exactly how the individual and society were to aid one another to gain possession of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful did just that: it entered palpably into history, with the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as Jesus Christ, the God-Man. Through this act, the Eternal Word of God Himself went on the attack. In doing so, He gave to the Socratic hunt for the *logos*—the essence of things;

the life-giving “word” lying behind the mere surface phenomena dogmatized by the sophist—a strength that it could never have had on its own. For, as the masses listening to him recognized, Christ spoke as no mere founder of a school of thought, however didactic his words might be. He spoke as one in full possession of a divine authority.<sup>1</sup>

Readers might perhaps object that, based upon what I just finished saying in the previous chapter, possession of an aura of divine authority would not have seemed particularly unusual to anyone. After all, if Christ spoke “divinely”, He did nothing more than any divinized Hellenistic monarch would have done. And that would indeed have been true if the God-Man had spoken as an authority that was divine in the *pagan* sense of that word—that is to say, as the possessor of some admittedly mysterious, sublime, and frightening power that was far beyond the reach of ordinary mortal men, but, ultimately, nevertheless, still part of that same natural world in which lowly human beings were active, alongside more potent “godly” beings.

This was precisely what Christ did *not* do. Rather, He spoke as one possessing a supernatural authority; that of the omnipotent Creator God, now given flesh to redeem the realm that He Himself had first called forth into being from nothingness. This meant that the character of “the word” that He uttered—the word of the Eternal Word—must necessarily surpass that of a “divinized” this-worldly monarch, who was

---

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in J.M Mayeur et al., ed., *Histoire du christianisme* (Desclée, Thirteen Volumes, 1990-2002), I, 7-58; Also, R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (Yale, 1984), pp. 1-42; G. Barrois, *Jesus Christ and the Temple* (St. Vladimir’s, 1980).



## THE WORD

but a much more powerful part of the kingdom that the Creator of the world had fashioned.

Christ's action as one possessing omnipotent supernatural authority also meant something else as well: namely, His right to claim the *last* authoritative word on any given subject of central importance to man and nature. The fact that He took such a claim for granted, without feeling any necessity to spell it out and plead for it like a suppliant in court, can readily be seen throughout his ministry. For, although He was always willing to explain His "word", He would not subject its merits to a debate with those who refused all openness to accepting it. He was there to teach, to command, and to be obeyed; not to be Himself corrected.

All this stands to reason, because it was only possession of the final and unchangeable word in human affairs that could give to a truly different supernatural authority a serious distinction from any merely worldly "divine" power, and thereby make it worthy of belief. A supernatural authority that was willful and could conceivably alter the firm decisions it revealed to men to guide their path to eternity was seemingly subject to passions that it either could not foresee or simply did not choose to resist. Moreover, a supposedly supernatural word that might always potentially be overridden by yet another, equal or higher pronouncement from an as yet silent ethereal realm—a supernatural word that always had to look over its shoulder in anticipation of possible second-guessing or rebuke from something as powerful or still greater than itself—destroyed its own "omnipotent" pedigree.

In practical terms, a force of this kind would represent only a *naturalist* vision of an omnipotent, otherworldly

authority, and, as such, would be in no way detrimental to the interests of those men determined to ignore its decrees. The entry into history of a King of Kings who either could not or would not tell men what He would think or do tomorrow, and, even worse, whether or not another authority would emerge to contradict or correct Him in the future, would change absolutely nothing whatsoever in their earthly environment. The willful reign of other “divine” monarchs, aided by the purveyors of manipulative words providing them their justifications for the exercise of their power, would never seriously be threatened by a supernatural being whose behavior appeared exactly to mirror their own. They could continue their normal practices in “nature as is” while waiting for new pronouncements from a King of Kings who was “better informed about reality”, or the appearance of yet another messenger from still another supernatural realm with precepts and an “appropriate explanation of strongly felt desires” more to their taste. Under these circumstances, the question that legitimately could be posed by someone like a Plato, excited, in theory, by the concept of a life-changing temporal guidance emerging from a truly “other” source would be easy to predict: “Is that all there is”?

Thankfully, to the everlasting chagrin of the proponents of “business as usual”, the answer to that query, from the Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church and in the writings that she attests to tell the true story about Christ, is a resounding “no”. And it is precisely because Christ and Catholicism are truly different from anything else in the experience of mankind that they are the obvious and eternal “sign of contradiction” unfailingly targeted with the greatest fury by everyone accepting “nature as is”.

## THE WORD

The final, unchanging, authoritative “word of the Eternal Word” was also a patently *nature-loving* teaching emphasizing that exultation in Creation that God, the author of love in addition to being the author of the cosmos, wished all men to feel. Appropriately enough, this nature-loving teaching was frequently uttered in the context of a joyful dining experience of the type that Socrates and Plato also cherished, whether in the company of a large crowd of common people at the time of the Sermon on the Mount, at a more private wedding banquet, or in the home of a single, rich, and even highly unpopular urban host. These varied, convivial, dining venues brought together individuals representing a wide range of personalities, talents, and problems, and the God-Man addressed His word to each of them. Each of them, in turn, therefore had to see that what He said was meant to have an impact on all the different aspects of nature that they represented. His redemptive mission was thus revealed “to all who had eyes to see” as one that engaged everyone and everything in a spirit of overflowing love and joy in life; a mission that provided an earthly foretaste of the exuberant eternal banquet in heaven to which all men in the fullness of their diversity were equally called.

On the other hand, Christ’s final, unchanging, authoritative, nature-loving word did not pronounce a blessing upon “appropriate explanations of strongly felt desires”. This word was also a truth-drenched word. The full, joyful life that Christ came to offer was something quite different from that encouragement of unquestioning acceptance of the immediate passions to be found in the writings of sophist rhetoricians skilled at stoking the ambitions of their powerful patrons. For such passions could

never be indulged properly, nor could they yield good results, without first understanding their true purpose and their correct relationship with one another.

This understanding had, tragically, been marred by sin—the free rejection by man of God’s plan for His Creation—the very malady that Christ came to provide a medicine to cure. The Word made flesh thus authoritatively taught an awareness of the existence of self-produced evil obscuring man’s vision of the universe around him, causing him blindly to chase after self-destructive, *unnatural* delusions that he *mistakenly* perceived to be natural and valuable. The consequent need was for everyone accepting Christ to correct everything that had been corrupted through the embrace of sin and its delusions.

Correction of such a monumental disorder would obviously not be an easy matter. Men could only examine life correctly if they viewed the world through God’s eyes. But seeing the world through God’s eyes could only be realized if individuals themselves were literally “divinized” in Christ, incorporated into the life of the Incarnate Word through acceptance of His message, imitation of His behavior, the eating of His body, and the drinking of His blood. Not only did such a transformation mean that individual men would have to change themselves, but, given their social nature, the entire environment around them as well. For, as Christ’s example clearly indicated, whether an individual liked it or not, even the pain occasioned by sins of others in some way fell upon him as well.

God’s loving Providence ensures that if this difficult work of correction were to be accepted, every individual and social aspect of the splendid Creation presided over by men would shine forth in ever-greater glory. Creation as a whole might

## THE WORD

then be rendered fit to give man more abundant peace and temporal joy than ever before. And it could provide this greater peace and joy as it aided the human person to attain the one supreme goal that really counted in his and every other individual's life: an unending and loving union, through Christ, with the Triune God; a reward much more splendid than the blissful earthly existence first promised to Adam; a prize that he would share eternally with other distinct personalities, together with all their own unique perfections, in a resplendent, fraternal, Communion of Saints.

Christ's call to a correction of an *unnatural* evil that would thereby offer to all of Creation a more glorious mission and destiny than before Adam's sin was also extremely militant in character. Correction of this kind was a summons to recognize that the "Kingdom of God", gained by seeing life in and through Christ, was not the apocalyptic gift of some indefinite "end time" but a reality that had already definitively arrived with the appearance of the Eternal Word made flesh upon the earth. The consequences of the arrival of the Kingdom of God—which was to be very different in character than the *uncorrected* Kingdom of David that men of an "old Israel" without eyes to see and ears to hear had envisaged—had to be made manifest in everyone's daily existence... *now*. This was an immediate call to arms if ever there was one.

The purgation and supernatural transformation of all institutions, public "spaces", and aspects of daily customary life that such a message entailed was good in and of itself, as a means of praising the one, true, supernatural God. Still, let us remember—especially given modern preoccupation with this point—that that social labor was primarily intended by

God to work for the divinization of the individual human persons presiding over nature as its stewards. Society and individual were called upon mutually to complete and divinize one another “in and through the Word”, but for the ultimate advantage of the human person and his union, together with his brothers, with the Triune God. Reason was helpful in aiming man’s mind and heart to attainment of this goal, but grace was the efficacious medicine through which the Platonic circle of individual and social corruption was really to be squared—and the intellect itself mobilized for *serious* action.

Here was an “either-or” option that turned the sophists’ vision on its head. Isocrates claimed that we must *either* opt for the Platonic Great Detour that deprives the individual of the obvious joys of earthly life while leading him on a goose chase after an unreachable Truth *or* his own, common sense based, nature-affirming message. Plato, however, had said that “where divine goods are cherished, human virtues appear of their own accord” and that “those who try only for the latter, lose both”.<sup>2</sup> And now Christ confirmed and enhanced that prophetic Socratic vision, telling us that we must *either* accept the need for a militant correction of a natural world made unnatural through sin, and gain, as individuals, all that earth and heaven could offer in the process, *or* remain with “obvious, common sense, nature as is” —thereby losing both the temporal *convivium* provided by this life and the eternal banquet of the next.

If Christ made militant demands on everyone with respect to everything, so that human persons could win both a God-given earth and a God-promised heaven, He also did

---

<sup>2</sup> Jaeger, III, 221.

## THE WORD

so with supreme awareness that the life He was calling men to lead is a highly complex matter. That life might be compared to an intricate dance that requires different steps at different times in order to correct, harmonize, and exalt all the innumerable aspects of Creation contributing to its proper choreography. As a divine Person, Christ saw this dance in all its incomparable natural beauty. As a divine Person with a human nature, He knew that limited mortals, marred by sin, had to struggle to dance it well, and that they had to do so in an environment that also had been disfigured by evil. In effect, He knew that individual men had to labor at gaining the fruits of their redemption while at war with themselves, and in a magnificent but dilapidated ballroom studded with obstacles that could easily reduce the intended beauty of the dance of life to a chaotic free-for-all. Hence, His invitation to individual men to become part of His body, to take the corrective and transforming medicine of grace and thereby join in the complex dance of life, came along with the promise of an overwhelming supernatural patience and compassion as they slipped and fell in an inevitably clumsy whirl-a-gig.

Contemplation of this “messy” truth once again leads us back to the fact that Christ did not shirk from inviting to the mysterious dance of life even those whom He knew to be capable of wreaking havoc within it. Such risky guests included men and women generally considered to be the least acceptable members of contemporary society. Even more importantly for the future, they numbered in their ranks the very apostles whom He called to be His closest collaborators. The ability of these colleagues in evangelization to do evil as well as good was obvious to Him from the outset. It was made still more manifest after their call by the mutual

jealousy and envy tempting each of them to grasp for recognition as the principal recipient of His supreme love and authority.

Much more will have to be said to flesh out all the dilemmas such problems pose in the chapters to come. At the moment, however, it is necessary simply to note that they become all the more complex and dramatic with the appearance in history of each new and distinct individual person equally capable of embracing good and evil. Indeed, the good and evil actions of fresh personalities in the ballroom of life can be seen as innovative contributions to the choreography of the dance of all to sanctity, capable of either enhancing its beauty or damaging its smooth and harmonious flow. Hence, those already whirling along about the dance floor must need to be ready to adjust their movements accordingly—for the sake of their basic survival on the one hand, as well as for that of their positive personal and fraternal growth and development in obedience to Christ's message on the other.

In pastoral terms, what Christ demands of those He has chosen at any moment in history is a readiness to accept appropriate change in that changeable earthly realm where permanence in every respect is utterly impossible. Every one of His followers is, in a sense, called to "pick up his pallet and walk"; to flee from paralysis and move on, under the guidance of what probably is best referred to, broadly speaking, as "a pilgrimage spirit". Even if each and every one of Christ's disciples is not expected literally to take to the open road, all are certainly called upon to do so with their hearts and minds. This is absolutely necessary, since man's familiar everyday surroundings, which do not provide the setting for his eternal banquet and his eternal ballroom, can



## THE WORD

easily enslave him, hindering and destroying his work of self-correction and transformation.

Without the proper pilgrimage spirit, enslavement to the familiar can block the learning of new steps in the complex dance of life. It can make a man perform a clumsy and ever more ugly dance that he may nonetheless persist in calling Christ-like and beautiful. Taken to its extreme, it can ultimately blind one to the very need for corrective change at all. Enslavement of this kind provides an Elysian Field for the machinations of the worshipers of "nature as is" and their word merchant priesthood, who can exploit the average man's paralysis to work for their own benefit alone. For paralyzed men and women cannot turn to face the many new directions from which these enemies may advance to destroy the followers of Christ—and themselves (in their self-deluding enterprise) in the process.

Let us note that the need for new steps in the dance of life does not prove the existence of some innate willful element in the structure of the universe. Instead, one can say that it demonstrates, first of all, the necessity of finding inventive pastoral strategies for shielding believers from novel *unnatural* actions on the part of the sinful, and then, secondly, the value of discovering fresh means of assisting the return of the wicked to both natural and supernatural health. All acceptably different steps in the dance of life can thus be seen logically to follow from the message of the Savior as new circumstances demanding novel applications of His teaching arise.

Once again, the difficulties of this call to accept appropriate change as part of the unchanging plan of God are evidenced by the example of the apostles themselves. Their

own temptation to nurture a “stand pat” mentality deadly to the pilgrimage spirit is clearly depicted in the eagerness of their designated leaders to build tents on Mt. Tabor at the time of the Transfiguration, and thus avoid the trials, known and unknown, of the unfamiliar and dramatic highway that almost all of the them were *literally* summoned to trod. Our Lord rejected their request for a permanent encampment. Participation, through Christ, in the transformed life of an eternity with God was the unchangeable and final goal to which the Eternal Word had ordained them. The moral behavior required to reach that unchangeable goal was equally fixed and final. But that fixed and final path towards the unchangeable goal was a highway filled with ruts, detours, road works, and surprises. A new and more dramatic ascent of Mount Tabor was what was demanded of the faithful, and there would be no fixed tents upon its summit until entry into the exceedingly different realm of supernatural eternal life.

Finally, in speaking His final, unchanging, authoritative, nature-loving, compassionate, and militant word, Christ did so in a way that was designed to reach the hearts and minds of all men. Therefore, like Plato on the natural level, the supernatural Savior of mankind could not and would not disdain the use of rhetoric. Instead, He completed the purgative and transformative oratorical work of the Academy, showing rhetoric its proper value and use, enticing the men and women around Him through the telling of a “good story” about His true story. He spoke in gripping parables to crowds, and probably in a similarly approachable fashion to smaller groups at table. He offered people a good story about His true story in all the many ways that human persons were disposed to hear that tale and capable of

## THE WORD

listening to it. Even the explanations of His teaching that he gave privately to the apostles were a “good story” about the true Christian story of a more direct and more comprehensive kind.

But there is a second crucial reason why the *Blitzkrieg* launched by the Word could do what no mere natural school of thought properly employing rhetoric would ever have been able to accomplish on behalf of the Truth. This is the fact that the divine commander responsible for that militant assault never disappeared from the battlefield. Jesus Christ was a Plato who remained ever present in His Academy. He undertook the threefold task of individual and social affirmation, correction, and transformation in His physical body for a little more than three decades alone. He actively invited men to participation in His life for merely three short years. But with His death and Resurrection, His teaching and His invitation to participation in the life of God moved ceaselessly onward through His Mystical Body—His Church.

This Church was integrally Christ in a sublime, mysterious way, and pursued His activity in a fashion that human persons could clearly see, hear, and touch. As a result, the truth about the individual, nature as a whole, and their eternal destiny in God could still be taught in a human manner. It could continue to be presented with the same self-assured sense of being the final, unalterable, authoritative, supernatural Word, engaging everyone and everything, with a simultaneous recognition of human potential and weakness, and the necessary pilgrim spirit to confront life in the changing earthly realm. An unchanging affirmation of all of nature, a “boat-rocking” demand for its supernatural correction, and its “lifting up” to a higher destiny could thus

continue until the end of time with exactly the same militant but humanly nuanced intensity.

And indeed the Church did emerge as an *agmen*, an army on the march, with chains of command that swiftly became as elaborate as those of the Roman legion and the Roman state. This was an *agmen* on the march beyond the boundaries of the old Kingdom of Israel and the Jewish *ethmos*, and even, in the long run, beyond the borders of the Roman Empire as well. This was an *agmen* commissioned to carry on the attack of the Word to the very ends of the earth. Powerful and effective word merchants working for the benefit of their “divine” patrons had shut down the debate over the meaning of life and the tools necessary for achieving its promise. But that debate could now be reopened. All the arms capable of revealing the inadequacy of “appropriate explanations of strongly felt desires”, the fraudulence of “fulfillment” as defined by the rhetorician, and the need for a Platonic Great Detour from the path indicated by mere surface judgments in order to enter onto the true highway to perfection could henceforward much more successfully be deployed. For through the Church, all the tools for a new ascent of Mount Tabor lay readily at man’s disposal.

Furthermore, they could be deployed in a way that reached beyond an intellectual elite and into the hearts of the average man and woman; into the hearts of all of us. And, in truth, all of us are “ordinary” at certain moments, perhaps even at almost every moment of each and every day. This is why the parables, in the final analysis, are as necessary for the instruction of the most convinced apostles as they are to the “average” man in the largest crowd of simple folk, and repeatedly so throughout their entire lives. Every human being needs the retelling of the true story in dramatic,

## THE WORD

gripping ways—including those whose developed minds must hear it in complex intellectual form as well.

One great “if” stood behind the successful propagation of this good and true story. Its telling was very much dependent upon whether or not the Church did her work properly, in full consciousness of her innate strength, *which came solely from her life as the continuation of the Eternal Word Incarnate in history*. This, alas, proved to be a very shaky “if” indeed. Endowed with the supernatural vigor of Christ, the Church’s practical daily life was, nevertheless, in the hands of limited and potentially very sinful men. Hence, her development of a complete consciousness of what she actually was; of the unchanging character of Christ, the ground of her being; of what exactly she was called upon to do; of what type of activity was required of her to perform that mission; of a courage actually to fulfill her responsibilities, and a capacity to pass all her wisdom and daring down to future generations to imitate: none of this was to be the work of a single or particularly easy day, year, or millennium.

Strictly speaking, that development can never come to an end. The truths that it concerns are supernatural ones, ultimately beyond any total human comprehension. The courage required to do the full work of redemption is superhuman, while the labor involved is constantly subject to disruption in a world whose flux brings repeated attacks of confusion and fear. And, once again, the successful performance of the Church’s tasks can unceasingly be thwarted in a universe where the reality of endless individual free choice may habitually result in deadly, sinful consequences, both personal and social.

Nevertheless, despite all of its haphazard twists and turns, regardless of an irrational and sinful backsliding sometimes even lasting for generations at a time, it is possible to identify a maturation process in the life of the Church and her recognition of the demands of transformation in Christ. This maturation process can be seen to continue down to the present, providing her, along the way, with ever more effective means of triumphing over the illogic and evil constantly threatening to stunt her growth in self-consciousness and mission. Once again, however, the following basic point needs constant emphasis. Although the maturation process is palpable, individual and social awareness of that ever-clearer teaching, and the practical pastoral implementation of an awareness of the implications of the Incarnation of the Word in history, by no means *must* reflect this growing clarity. Alas, they all too frequently have not done so, and with the enthusiastic complicity of Christians themselves.

In the remainder of this chapter and the whole of the next, we will focus upon both the enormous accomplishments and the failures of perception and behavior of what can be called "Imperial Christendom": the Christendom, broadly speaking, of the first millennium. A three-fold task lies before us in discussing the impressive exploits and unfortunate shortcomings of those thousand years. We must first of all examine the kind of knowledge the Church and Christians gained through these centuries concerning the Incarnate Word and their relationship and responsibilities to Him. Secondly, we shall need to describe the way in which the life-changing consequences flowing from the physical activity of the Word in history provoked the varied proponents of the acceptance of the "business as usual" demands of "nature as

## THE WORD

is" to begin constructing a powerful anti-Christian alliance; an alliance that drew especially heavily on the enormous strength that comes from the love of inertia and the potency of cleverly crafted words in the work of the divinization of mere custom; an alliance whose victory always ensures the triumph of the will. Our final task will be to illustrate just how much the unwillingness of Christians to take increased knowledge of the Word seriously, and to conform their behavior to all of its demands, has marred their harmonious, pilgrim-like participation in the dance of life, thereby mightily assisting the obstructionism of their opponents. Discussion of all three of these topics must, to a large degree, be undertaken in tandem. And that discussion will ultimately focus upon the difficulties of pouring into the "old skins" of Greco-Roman society, the Roman State, and their often stubborn and unyielding "foundation spirit", the new wine flowing from the Incarnation of the Eternal Word in a makeshift pilgrim shelter in Bethlehem.

*B. Stumbling Towards Knowledge of the Word and His Kingdom*

Anyone reading the Gospels today would think that Christ, before His Ascension into Heaven, had left a transparently clear militant pilgrim program for his immediate followers to carry out: that of going forth to teach and baptize all nations. And yet the book of the *Acts of the Apostles* presents us with the picture of a rather bewildered Church leadership, bumbling its way through decisions regarding what it was actually supposed to do next when left

on its own. This fundamental document for the study of the first decades of Church History shows us that even after Pentecost and the supernatural enlightenment provided by the Holy Spirit, basic questions involving what we would consider to be the most obvious and essential aspects of the Christian pilgrim mission continued to trouble the apostles and their disciples. Should the evangelical message remain the property of the Jews alone, or was it intended for the Gentiles as well? If it was intended for the Gentiles, was it necessary for them to adhere to the ritual practices of the Old Covenant? Attempts at resolution of these questions lay behind the conflict of Saint Peter and Saint Paul and the early battles over their apostolate in Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Asia Minor, and Greece. In the midst of the tensions they aroused, any willingness to remain open to the complex dance of life and the pilgrim spirit required to respond to the new steps needed to perform it properly appeared as though it might be decisively strangled in its very cradle.

These basic mission questions provided the crucial framework for Christianity's first growth in self-awareness. Ironically, although the conflicts they engendered were quickly resolved in favor of a pilgrim mission to Gentiles who would indeed *not* be called upon to live like Jews, this early zeal for the conversion of new peoples was short-lived. Evangelization *inside* the boundaries of the Empire clearly did take place—through appeal to existing Jewish communities, with the quiet but fervent aid of certain spiritually-awakened members of the Greco-Roman elite, and in many other fashions about which we know precious little. Evangelization *outside* the borders, after the initial labors of the apostles, their disciples, and men like St. Mari in Persia, apparently soon became the work of pure accident alone. Occasionally, it was



## THE WORD

due to the influence exercised upon their masters by especially devout slaves, or by an entire captive and enslaved community that remained stubbornly loyal to its Christian beliefs. We hear something of this sort of “foreign” evangelization in the case of Georgia and among the Goths. But for open expressions of the specific kind of missionary zeal so vibrantly reflected in the writings of St. Paul in the first decades after Christ’s Death and Resurrection, one has to wait for the fifth century and the appearance of St. Patrick—a truly self-conscious and determined pilgrim to a pagan Ireland that was never part of the Roman Empire at all.<sup>3</sup>

Instead, once the initial clarification imparted by the Holy Spirit and the vibrant enthusiasm of the apostolate of Paul and of Peter to the Gentiles began to wear off, the most fundamental “mission question” seemed to be a quite different one. This was the query concerning whether so much human effort for correcting and transforming souls in Christ ought really even to be expended in the first place. After all, was it not the case that a dramatic appearance of the purifying Spirit, or even the return of the Incarnate God Himself, might lay but a moment away? An event of that magnitude would alter the conditions of human life and action both swiftly and completely. With such a prospect in

---

<sup>3</sup> For early development, see Mayeur, I and II, *passim*, but especially II, 937-951; III, 1103-1239; MacMullen; M. Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (Routledge, 1994); K. Donfried & P. Richardson, ed., *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (Eerdmans, 1998); R. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Knopf, 1986); R. Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion* (U. of California, 1999), pp. 66- 96.

mind, would it not be the Church's task simply to prepare those who had already been won to the Gospel for imminent, definitive, earth-shattering change—or final judgment? Why put together superfluous plans for an expansion involving energetic action in novel situations that would never have time to bear fruit anyway?

On the other hand, what if the Millennium or the Second Coming were not to be expected for tomorrow or the day after? What if troubling oneself too much about the time and the place of “the end” were itself a dangerous game, reflecting a presumptuous curiosity that was actually displeasing to Christ; a frivolous sport deadly to the task of making men realize that the Kingdom of God was *already* at hand? Under those circumstances, guidelines for Christian survival and even for possible expansion might eclipse panicky discussions of when and how to circle believers' wagons round to await the inevitable cataclysm.

Despite many Gospel supports for this second—and true—position, temptations to believe in the imminence of “something big” that could easily render missionary activity pointless were indulged by many if not perhaps the majority of early Christians. Millennial temptations reached their peak with the movement stimulated by Montanus, a self-mutilated priest of Cybele, who lived in the vicinity of Ancyra in Asia Minor in the second century. After becoming a Christian, both he and his prophetess assistants attracted many believers to a site somewhere in present-day Turkey called Pepusa, there to await the looming arrival of the Holy Spirit. So strong was the appeal of this millenarian Montanism that

## THE WORD

it even appears to have attracted sophisticated members of the Christian intellectual elite into its ranks.<sup>4</sup>

Thankfully, the Church—as she must, if she is truly Christ continued in time and destined to make the Kingdom of God a life-changing reality—routed this untenable Montanist onslaught. Explanation of the differences between a Montanist and a non-Montanist vision of Christianity, and the grounds for rejecting the one as heretical and accepting the other as truly faithful to the message of Jesus Christ, made an enormous intellectual impact in the second century. It helped mightily to fuel the growth of Christian theology—the absolutely necessary intellectual component to the telling of a good story about the true story of the Savior. Moreover, that deeper, anti-millenarian, theological meditation then inevitably brought with it a treatment of two other concerns: 1) the practical guidance of Christians more and more expecting to live an entire life in a problematic and potentially hostile environment; and, 2) a better understanding of the nature and structure of the Church responsible for governing the catechesis of that believing population.

The importance of the first of these two tasks needs no explanation. The latter work was required because differences in Church structure seem to have been the rule in the first century. Divergent organization was probably owed to the inevitable problems caused by the *Blitzkrieg* of the earliest wave of evangelization, the swift disappearance from

---

<sup>4</sup> Sordi, pp. 73-86, 195; Mayeur, I, 522-527; J. Quasten, *Patrology* (Christian Classics, Four Volumes, 1992), I, 161, 228-229, 254, 279, 282-283, 288.

the scene of the apostolic founders of the new local churches, and the well-known efforts of various opposing groups to destroy or co-opt them. Hence, the existence of base-oriented communities, some where power was firmly in the hands of men we would call “ordained”, and others where it rested with charismatic lay prophets and prophetesses. Hence, also, the simultaneous presence of so-called monarchical churches, dominated by a given Greco-Roman city’s chief priest: a bishop.<sup>5</sup>

*Practical* labor on many of these issues had already begun before the Montanist controversy. Much of that work is as unknown to us as most early evangelization. Once the foundations for such practical activity were questioned, however, a more serious *theoretical* examination of the underpinnings of what might have been a merely “felt” Faith was unavoidable. This inevitably brought with it a more profound realization of the day-to-day consequences emerging from acceptance of the life that comes from Christ and in Christ alone.

Deeper thinkers saw that there could be no accurate guidance of the individual, or better understanding of the nature and character of the Church guiding him, without further investigation of who, exactly, Christ—the ground, model, and “fuel” for all Christian action—actually was. If Christ were somehow an enemy of the material realm, then the proper behavior of the Christian would indeed involve wholehearted flight from the world and from the flesh. If, however, working out one’s salvation were based upon what did, in fact, take shape from the decisions of the early Church concerning Trinitarian and Christological doctrines, a

---

<sup>5</sup> Mayeur, I, 267-437, 777-815.

## THE WORD

different kind of life affirming the value of Creation would be required.

Similarly, if Christ loathed the material world, His Church would be obliged to flee from the thought of her own physical organization. She would inevitably become a much more inward and purely spiritual force, her "body" being nothing more than a symbol for the future heavenly community of Christians. On the other hand, the more that one accepted the idea that Christ was a real man with a real body pleasing to a God who loved and wished to redeem His physical Creation, the more a Church possessing a material structure analogous to His own would be appreciated. With this appreciation would also come greater concern for the unity of that body with its source in Christ, His apostles, and the episcopal successors chosen directly through the election of the latter; a confirmation of the need for the existence of a monarchical Church of the kind already mentioned above. With it would emerge also a more profound interest in that Church's cohesive bodily union, and a greater outrage at the thought of "dividing Christ" – whether this might be through laity and priests separating themselves from their chief priest—the bishop—or bishops cutting themselves off from their fellow shepherds.

Furthermore, one could not focus on the exalted nature of the Incarnate Word and the magnificence of His redemptive sacrifice without thinking both of the horrible human flaws calling forth that Incarnation and that Redemption in the first place as well as the urgent need to deal with them now that the Kingdom of God was definitely "at hand". This meant that deeper study of Christ and Christ's Church intensified a consciousness of a continuing battle with sin in the daily life

of individuals; a battle that would not be brought to a swift and happy conclusion by the imminent end of the world as a whole. Such battle awareness also fed the spirit of militant "crusade" against whatever personal and social behavior assisted a spirit of sinful indulgence and thereby mocked the graciousness and patience of God's redemptive action.

In sum, historical efforts to grasp the character and demands of the Christian mission soon merged together with many other profound questions: What must the individual do to live his daily life properly? How should the Church guiding him be structured? Who was the Christ of history and what was the "body" He left behind? What was the nature of the sin calling forth the Incarnation and the terrible sacrifice of the Word made flesh? How extensive was damage caused by rejecting God's plan for man? How and with what tools might that damage be repaired? And, finally, what kind of spirit of urgency and crusade on the part of both individual and society was needed for effective damage control?

Under the impact of such queries, Christian thinkers gradually saw that believers were called to a much deeper and laborious transformation of the inner and the outer man than anything envisaged by the rituals of the Mosaic Law. Guidance of this transformation meant nothing less than the creation of a comprehensive system of Christian education; a *Christian paideia* that had to be as well organized as that *secular paideia* held in honor by the elite of the Greco-Roman world. And the attempt to promote such a *paideia* in a closed society that already thought that it had all the answers that it needed to live life properly entailed demonstrating that it possessed the hallmarks that the outside world expected from a respectable educational program: an ancient pedigree; a set

## THE WORD

of documents that its students must consult; and accredited teachers to interpret just what it was that these documents signified.

Formation of a *Christian paideia* of this sort was the work of the men we call the Greek, Latin, and Syrian Fathers. Systematic study of their labors is the task of *Patrology*, a term popularized by Johannes Gerhard in his book, *Patrologia*, of 1653. Patrology is divided into examination of a variety of writers: the *Apostolic Fathers*, namely, those who had direct contact with either the Twelve or St. Paul and lived through the beginning of the second century; the *Apologists*, much of whose defense of Christianity was inspired by the battle against the Millenarians and Montanists discussed above; and, finally, the *Ante- and Post-Nicene Fathers*, whose line continues down to the time of St. John of Damascus (c. 676-749), and whose teachings best explain to us the whole of the maturation process characterizing the entire imperial age. It is important to note, in passing, that some of the truly great men whose meditations are crucial to an understanding of the growth of a Christian *paideia*—impressive figures like Tertullian (c.160-c.220), the first of the major African thinkers, who apparently became a Montanist—are denied the title of “Father” because of their association with heretical ideas or groups. Such theologians, despite their enormous significance, are, for better or for worse, commonly referred to merely as “ecclesiastical writers”.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> For the Fathers, their connection with ancient *paideia*, and regional differences in the growth of theology, see Quasten, all four volumes; Also, W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Harvard, 1961); M. Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the*

Christian proof of their possession of a body of sacred texts representing the fulfillment of a vision more venerable than anything Greek or Roman—the creative program of a God existing before and outside nature, and first revealing Himself to the acceptably ancient Jews—was already offered by the time of the Apologists. But everyone agrees that the third century was the era of the Great Leap Forward in the full creation of this *Christian paideia*, both in the Greek and Latin-speaking parts of the Empire. It was in the 200's that the Catechetical "School" of Alexandria began seriously to function, gaining its most famous representative in Origen (c. 185-253): a passionate, Achilles-like "thinker of Christian thoughts and doer of Christian deeds" long overdue for poetic celebration on the part of modern Catholics. This student of Plato and Neo-Platonism was the creator of ecclesiastical Greek. His work was to be of overriding influence not just in Egypt, but also—due to his lengthy sojourn in Caesarea (232-244) and the achievements of the students who came to learn from him there—in Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor as well. It was really only through Origen's labors that the language and categories essential to discovering and explaining most basic and complex theological questions—even his own manifold errors of genius—were developed.

Hostile reactions to the vibrant Origen were inevitable, with gifted opponents rapidly becoming active in the very same regions that were influenced by this theological giant. One highly important center of criticism of Origen eventually

---

*Later Roman Empire* (Cornell, 1951); Sordi, pp. 79, 86, 163, 192; Mayeur, I, 509-895; II, 41-125; C. Dawson, *The Making of Europe* (World Publishing, 1970), pp. 58-72.



## THE WORD

emerged in Syria and its great metropolis, Antioch, although his opponents were active everywhere, Egypt included. Their greatest venom would be felt centuries after this brilliant theologian's death, when he was no longer capable of defending himself against assault. Attacks upon him were often uncharitable and sometimes highly dangerous theologically in their own right, about which more anon.

But opposition to Origen, sound or exaggerated, was by no means his opponents' sole claim to fame. Places like Antioch were to contribute positively to Christian doctrinal and pastoral growth as well, particularly in the realms of philology (the study of written language in its historical context), scriptural exegesis, and homiletic expertise, counting men like St. John Chrysostom among their later, distinguished "alumni" (c. 349-407).

Meanwhile, in Africa, Tertullian, the creator of ecclesiastical Latin, was also active at this time. Despite his apparent conversion to Montanism, Tertullian's work provided the linguistic framework through which Western Christianity could grow, theologically, eventually finding both points of contact and serious contrast with what was being discussed in the eastern part of the Empire. Third-century Africa offered the Christian world the work of St. Cyprian (200/210-258), Bishop of Carthage, as well. The Africans in general were more interested in discussing the practical problems of living the Christian life in a sinful world than in that final transformation in Christ offered to the blessed in heaven that so captured and stirred Origen's Platonic spirit. Rome sneezed whenever Carthage caught cold, lending the budding intellectual activity of the Eternal

City the flavor--both positive and negative--of the pragmatic African approach in this difficult springtime of theology.

Different though these Egyptian, Syrian, and Afro-Roman emphases might be, their protagonists were united with each other and with early believers in general by one thing that marked them off decisively from the vast majority of their non-Christian counterparts. This was a sense of the immense divide separating truth and error, the need passionately to embrace the first and reject the latter, and the dramatic practical consequences of the either-or choice that lay before man. Once again, it was not an "appropriate explanation of strongly felt desires" that interested them. It was concern for the essence of things--what they really were in and of themselves, and what a life in union with them demanded from mankind in terms of a changed daily behavior--that guided the thought and action of all these heroic teachers and their followers alike. Settling for anything else, for them, was tantamount to introducing tainted meat and sour wine into the banquet of life. It meant wearing blinders while whirling through the magnificent dance to eternal bliss.

Christian Fathers and Church leaders thus began, in differing degrees, to understand that the massive catechetical enterprise they were undertaking underlined the holistic character of all existence. Many of them therefore came to see precisely what was asserted at the beginning of this chapter: that nature in its entirety is a gracious gift of God designed to work harmoniously to fulfill the divine plan. This they understood to be essential to the message of the Savior, along with the need to separate out nature's true meaning and function from its sinful misuse. Christ's mission of lifting up the hearts of individuals to grasping and attaining their essential supernatural goal was more and more recognized as

## THE WORD

one involving a central, positive role for each and every aspect of natural society and the natural world as well.

Such being the case, most Fathers and prelates realized that the need to address day-to-day life inside the Greco-Roman *ecumene*, and the teachings of the Greco-Roman *paideia* guiding its governing elite. This growing awareness taught them that alongside the clear evils of classical thought and behavior were real merits reflecting a certain appreciation of the goods of God's Creation—"Seeds of the Logos", as the Apologist, St. Justin Martyr (103-165), called them—that they, too, must continue to cherish.

Moreover, it clarified for them the still more astonishing fact that Christians could actually nurture and bring to fruition these non-Christian seeds better than their initial pagan supporters. Their argument in this regard was analogous to that of Plato with respect to the relationship of the rhetoricians to philosophy. Pagans, they insisted, lacked the fullness of divine light, and were incapable of completely understanding even the natural goods they claimed to love, much less of placing them in their proper perspective and hierarchy of importance. What Socratic philosophy was to rhetoric, Christianity was to Greco-Roman Civilization as a whole.

If secular history were in some way also part of God's initial plan, then, given this truth, Christianity had a second means of indicating a pedigree more ancient than that of Greco-Roman *paideia*—one that even surpassed its being rooted in the venerable Jewish experience. It could show that all that was natural came from the hands of the "Christian" God and was therefore intended to be Christian from the very outset. It was for this reason that Christianity alone could

fulfill the brilliant promise of ancient history for the benefit of both the Church and the as-yet uncomprehending world around her. Christians, as the Apologists already argued, were not only *not* the enemies of the Greco-Roman *ecumene* but in fact the sole men who could keep its best and most ancient achievements alive, preventing them from contradicting and destroying one another. They were the only individuals who could truly bring them all, together, to unity and full fruition. It is worth quoting the entirety of the relevant passage in St. Justin Martyr to illustrate this straightforward claim:<sup>7</sup>

We have been taught that Christ is the firstborn of God and we have declared that he is the Logos, of whom every race of man were partakers, and those who lived according to the Logos are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists, as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them.

Whatever all men have uttered aright is the property of us Christians. For we worship and love next to God and Logos, that which is from the unbegotten and ineffable God, since it was even for us that he became man, that he might be a partaker of our sufferings and bring us healing. For all writers through the implanted seed of the Logos which was engrafted in them, were able to see the truth darkly, for the seed and imitation of a thing which is given according to the capacity of him who receives it is one thing, and quite a different one is the thing itself of which the

---

<sup>7</sup> St. Justin Martyr in Quasten, I, 209-210.

## THE WORD

communication and the imitation are received according to the grace from God.

For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Logos. But since they did not know the entire Logos, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves. And those who by human birth were more ancient than Christ, when they tried to consider and prove things by reason, were brought before the tribunals, as impious persons and busybodies. And Socrates, who was more zealous in this direction than all of them, was accused of the very same crimes as ourselves. For they said that he was introducing new divinity and did not consider those to be gods whom the state recognized...But these things our Christ did through his own power. For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine but in Christ who was partially known even by Socrates, for he was and is the Logos who is in every man.

The labor involved in bringing about a transformation in Christ can be imagined with reference to rhetoric and the exalted role assigned to the manipulation of words by Greco-Roman *paideia*. If this were already a difficulty for the Socratics, what could be more representative of the seemingly *unnatural* old skin into which the new wine of transforming Christian Faith and Grace now had to be poured? Here was a discipline whose historical development led to a limitation of human horizons to the concerns of the moment alone, and

prohibited use of the data of life as a springboard for grave and long-lasting meditation. Here could be found a force that had historically encouraged an obsession with that petty, changing stuff of existence that, from the Christian standpoint, was intrinsically unhealthy—a source of psychological illnesses aiding sinful man’s penchant for fleeing from the exalted and permanent to the vulgar and ephemeral. Here, in the theories of the rhetoricians, one found guidelines for preventing the individual and society from ever gaining insight into their specific mistakes, much less correcting them and conceiving a destiny more elevated and fulfilling than the passions of the moment indicated. Through their guiding principles one obtained instructions for prohibiting the hunt for a medicine which would cure individual and social sickness and nourish a healthier and ultimately much more satisfying life on earth that was also of immense assistance to one’s passage to eternal bliss. Here, in short, was a recipe for burial in familiar custom deadly to any kind of pilgrimage through life, both literal and figurative.

Still, this totally unacceptable rhetorical *spirit* was passed down together with the potentially valuable rhetorical *skills* that Plato himself had not only come to appreciate but also to recognize the need for philosophy to understand and perfect. Yes, any attempt to “dive into” a rhetorical discipline dominated by an evil spirit was dangerous. Yes, the daily experiences one generally had had with this, as with all the pillars and institutions of ancient life, were negative, repellent ones. But we have already recounted how Christ Himself sat down to banquet with men that “proper society” had solid rational grounds for studiously avoiding...*when His purpose was to convert them*. And we have already repeatedly indicated that He Himself cultivated rhetoric to be able to tell

## THE WORD

all the varied kinds of people inhabiting the world a good story about His true story.

Ironically, similar difficulties could emerge even when contemplating use of that Greek Socratic philosophical thought that was highly critical of ancient rhetoric and its obsession with the power of mere words. For how far, really, might one travel down the Platonic pathway praised and developed by Origen and his disciples in Alexandria and elsewhere, with their exploration of some of the Academy's more fanciful themes? Had this not led them into certain speculations concerning reincarnation and universal salvation deemed destructive to the substance of the Faith by everyone who remained free of the Platonic spell? Moreover, was it not possible that such a philosophizing of belief created exaggeratedly simplistic hopes for the ease of transformation in Christ? Perhaps Origen's Platonic-inspired and high-minded dreams of divinization in heaven obscured a sound estimation of the more mundane but fundamental problem of how to awaken Christian men to fight the relentless temptations of sin coming from the immediate world around them—not to speak of the real possibility of their eternal damnation.

On the other hand, was it not possible that failure to follow in Origen's direction would also risk a serious loss—the loss of the broader and more complete picture of the connection of the Old and New Testaments necessary for a proper understanding of the call to the transformation of nature and the deification of the individual? It was this connection that emerged so grandly from the application to Scripture of the allegorical, Platonic, Alexandrian method. Such a failure could throw Christianity into the hands of

enemies of Origen from the rival school of Antioch. And at least some of the students of this “anti-Academy” cultivated a literal scriptural exegesis that pulled supernatural spiritual concerns down to that purely earthly realm of linguistic and historical analysis so easily manipulated by the ancient rhetoricians for their own arbitrary, uninspiring, and basically naturalistic “business as usual” purposes.

If rhetoric and philosophy were potentially troublesome, what about the petty, practical difficulties emerging from the painful effort to confront the gamut of customs taken for granted by one’s pagan neighbors at each and every moment of daily life within the Greco-Roman *ecumene*? What would the practical effect of hunting for “Seeds of the Logos” among these practices actually be? Would it not entail an opening to the influence of powerful, ingrained beliefs and modes of behavior that might actually subvert and ultimately destroy the Christian ideal that was supposed to transform them? Was it not better to flee from such dangers for once and for all? A model for a flight of this kind was certainly close at hand. One could embrace the life of renunciation of the world advocated by those teachers of the monks of Egypt and Syria, active from the late 200’s onwards: men like St. Antony (c. 251-356), whom we call the Desert Fathers.

But a life of monastic renunciation was not without its potent dangers either. Ascetic emphasis upon the hard individual labor required to avoid hell and become transformed in Christ could be a recipe for despair for the average man. Moreover, it could blind a monk puffed up by the virtuous character of his flight from urban centers of imperial corruption to the deeper sins of the individual heart, with personal pride at the top of the list. It could also conceivably divert attention away from the urgent need to



## THE WORD

change that sinful and oppressive pagan society that most people would never have the slightest chance to escape from anyway. This society might at any moment strike violently even at the splendid isolation of the monks themselves. Besides, the life of renunciation might hide the truth that the monk in his monastery could also develop attachments to place and routine similar to those experienced by men still active in "the world", and that these needed to be crushed with a similar fervor. Then again, historical events would soon indicate that a number of heroes of the life of renunciation were regularly tempted to "cash in" on their reputation for holiness. All too many of them used their air of sanctity among believers as a tool for becoming active participants in political and social affairs. Wandering about the Empire, they sought and gained the unsavory but all too familiar rewards that "nature as is" could give in the form of worldly power and fame.<sup>8</sup>

Meditation upon such topics also brought with it questions regarding whether or not the idea of fighting sin and "working out one's salvation", either through flight from the world or participation in it, placed too great an emphasis upon man's freedom as opposed to the grace required to make the individual pleasing to God. Perhaps, some thinkers argued, the doctor's aid was everything and the patient's cooperation insignificant. Perhaps that *agmen* called the Church was meant only for those who recognized that they were personally incapable of offering anything useful either to themselves or to her communal march through history by

---

<sup>8</sup> P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", *Journal of Roman Studies*, LXI (1971-1972), pp. 79-101.

means of their own labor, and that they were merely passive recipients of her supernatural gifts. And then again, even if individual cooperation did play a role in this enterprise, just how many times could a man who was either in or out of the world leave the path of rectitude, return to a life of sin, and still be welcomed back to take a fresh and credible part in the Christian enterprise? Maybe the fruits of transformation in Christ were intended only for athletes of the Faith who never broke rank after enlistment, with weaklings cashiered mercilessly, thrust into the outer darkness to live out the rest of their hopeless existence.<sup>9</sup>

### *C. The Mystical Body of Christ and the Sacred Imperial Order*

In short, each reflection emerging from the basic question of how to function in a world that might not imminently be approaching its end brought still further and often deeper considerations along with it. Inexhaustible these might indeed seem, even without asking how the individual Christian and the Church as a whole might maneuver successfully through the minefield presented by the most powerful "Seed of the Logos" in their ancient environment—the Greco-Roman polis. This institution was by nature disposed to treat *any* independent-minded individual or society with deep suspicion. It had already proved to be an obstacle to philosophical hunters of the *logos*, with the execution of Socrates being the preeminent case in point, as

---

<sup>9</sup> For lengthy discussions of all of these themes, see Mayeur, I and II, and Quasten, I and II, *passim*; also, P. Hughes, *A History of the Church* (Sheed & Ward, Three Volumes, 1949) I, 96-156.

## THE WORD

underlined by St. Justin Martyr. The polis of a pagan society with only a natural frame of reference had to be troubled by the proclamation of a supernatural institution that transcended local and ethnic boundaries. It had to be especially disturbed when such an institution also possessed a body and structures more and more parallel to its own administrative organs and legions. Moreover, the Roman State's metamorphosis during the first centuries of the Christian era looked, at least in theory, as though it would strengthen its hostility to another body in its midst—namely, the Mystical Body of Christ.

Let us examine this Roman political transformation in some detail, by first noting that the imperial order as created by Augustus took the form of the tightrope-walking act that we call the *Principate* (from *princeps senatus*, first man of the Senate, a traditional title held by Octavian). This was a Bonapartist *mélange* whose proper functioning required the active collaboration of the highly conservative senatorial-equestrian oligarchy in Rome, along with its aristocratic equivalent in the provinces. It sought to rule through as many of the old republican forms as possible and thus hide the truth that the real backbone of the system was the support that the commander-in-chief, the *imperator*, could always count upon from the army. Tricky and occasionally explosive as the imperial organism from the very outset clearly was, its correspondence to an existing historical need meant that it basically managed to work for two centuries and more: an

impressive achievement for any temporal structure whatsoever.<sup>10</sup>

Armed force as the real mainstay of the regime finally became obvious in the course of the third century, due to succession squabbles, the impact of Persian and barbarian incursions, disastrous economic disruption, and other unsettling contemporary developments. By the time the situation was brought under control again in the 270's, the Roman State was transformed into that quite different institution that historians refer to as the *Dominate*. This name came from the increased work and quasi-totalitarian clout given by it to the emperor and his central governmental organs. The Dominate did what it did—namely, dominate—openly and unabashedly. Its taxes and other exactions made the innate aspiration to omnipotence of the Roman State under both its republican as well as its imperial forms infinitely more vivid to its subjects than anyone had previously dreamed possible. Under its sway, the power of the older aristocracy, in Rome and in the other cities of the Empire, was considerably weakened. New men, often from lower classes, replaced the representatives of the venerable, conservative elite. The latter sometimes grudgingly cooperated with the Dominate. If not, they retired to indifference on their vast country estates, where many members of an overtaxed and conscripted peasantry sought

---

<sup>10</sup> See M. Goodman, *The Roman World: 44 B.C.--AD 180* (Routledge, 1997), especially, pp. 81-139; Also, K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture* (Princeton, 1996).

## THE WORD

potential refuge under their still powerful protection from the crushing demands of the new State authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Christian problems with the Principate stemmed chiefly from the government's erratic approach to this novel religion. Officially, Rome labeled Christianity a superstition along the lines of the ancient cult of Dionysius, thereby suggesting that it was potentially capable of encouraging the vicious anti-social behavior associated with the *Bacchae*. In practice, this translated into a basically friendly indifference, punctuated by periods of persecution, generally brought on by non-governmental groups insisting upon the reality of Christian political and moral vice. Writers from the Apologists onwards took the State's general unwillingness to hunt down believers whom it did not really deem to be serious disturbers of the peace as a major proof that Roman Law might itself be another "Seed of the Logos"; a valuable natural tool whose evils merely reflected the illogical or sinful actions of individuals failing to live up to its innately more sensible and noble principles. Still, victims of the Principate there were, and the *Acts of the Martyrs* joined the accounts of the heroic deeds of the monks of the desert and the *paideia* of the Church Fathers in enriching the variety of the good stories told about the true story, its progress, and its tragedies in the imperial era.

Vexations from the transformed system were potentially much more substantive. The Dominate's divinization of the State, represented most vividly by "emperor worship", was

---

<sup>11</sup> A. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Johns Hopkins, Two Volumes, 1986) I, 3-76; II, 767-872; Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (Harcourt, 1971), pp. 9-80.

more rigid under its aegis than through the earlier Augustan settlement. Its rough army spirit and an accompanying willingness to appeal to force to clear away all obstacles in its path were more blatant, allowing for much more consistently brutal policies than under the Principate. Anything was possible with such a patent justification of the rights of brawn. On the other hand, the new men replacing a conservative civilian aristocracy filled with the pompous self-assurance of the old *paideia* brought with them a "pilgrim" willingness to experiment with society and social beliefs. This, too, could ultimately lead to anything. But that "anything" also perhaps included an opening to the Church more positive in character than the mere toleration she often experienced in the Principate centuries.<sup>12</sup>

Unquestioning acceptance of benevolence on the part of the new imperial government would have been foolhardy. Signs of friendship for Christianity arising from the Dominate could, after all, be the product of ignorance or purely willful opportunistic considerations. They might reflect a failure to understand what the new Faith really entailed in the way of changed human political and moral behavior. They could therefore be founded solely or chiefly upon a conviction that a legalized Christianity might prove to be somehow useful, so long as its spiritual energy could be channeled to the service of the openly totalitarian system under construction, which maintained an underlying, unchanging acceptance of "nature as is".

Still, a gruff dismissal of marks of State benevolence would mean rejection of the help of a natural tool that St. Peter and St. Paul themselves had both praised and exploited

---

<sup>12</sup> See Sordi, *passim*; also, Mayeur, I, 227-266; II, 9-39, 155-185.

## THE WORD

for the benefit of evangelization. Cooperation with the imperial authorities would offer obvious and immense assistance to the transformation in Christ of those public “spaces” so crucial in the work of taming open temptation to individual sinful behavior. Moreover, it would be a gratuitous insult to the role that the imperial government had already played at *most* times and in *most* places in providing protection for the Christian population from the animosity of demagogues and mobs. Support for a “libertarian” vision in the Greco-Roman *ecumene* would have been tantamount to unleashing forces ensuring the unregulated slaughter of the believing population.

As with all other natural phenomena, the only proper and realistic approach that the Church authorities could take under such circumstances would be the admittedly difficult one of grateful but cautious acceptance; the kind of attitude that would gain for her the advantages the State could provide while saving her the freedom to criticize its innate pagan flaws and its individual human abuses. Openness to the friendship of the State flowed automatically from acceptance of the teaching of the Word about the value of all the tools of created nature. But the fullness of that teaching required that the Church retain the ability to criticize, correct, lift up, and transform the State in Christ, harmonizing its mission together with that of other natural forces that she alone could appreciate fully and place within the proper hierarchy of values. As always, a pilgrimage spirit open to the risks of the dance of life necessarily had to work together with a complete docility to the Word, both supernatural and natural. This need could not help but fuel a yet more militant hunt for a still more profound knowledge of who that Word

made flesh actually was, how the Church that mystically continued His body in time had to be structured to reflect His true character, what, exactly, she was called upon to teach for the salvation of the individual and the guidance of the world in which he danced his way to sanctity, and how, precisely, Christians could put that teaching and the medicine of grace to practical use—in union with the imperial Roman State.

#### *D. The Grand Coalition of the Status Quo*

Men of all classes hungry for more out of life than the unquestioned gratification of immediate passions and the “appropriate explanations of strongly felt desires” justifying such indulgence were clearly ready to listen to the message of the Mystical Body of Christ. These included members of the governing elite itself, who, possessing all that could be owned on the natural plane, were perhaps more aware than any other group in the Greco-Roman *ecumene* of the inability of the existing system to satisfy the demands of the human mind and heart. Many honest seekers of wisdom from every strata of society could see that non-Christian philosophical “wise men” spoke to them ultimately only as representatives of different and narrow “schools of thought”—some decent, some cynical, but all ultimately crippled by an inert and smug society’s practical treatment of the hunt for truth as a frivolous parlor sport. All such schools of thought were active because none really was willing or able to exclude the others, thereby reflecting that terrible, deeply rooted, and paralyzing sense of “going nowhere” that a world sealed off from the full embrace of its Creator inevitably must display.

Religious wisdom transcending philosophy was required to break out of this crippling straitjacket. This explains why



## THE WORD

the "hunt for the highest God" gained more and more active participants, especially as the fortunes of the Empire tumbled in the third century, A.D. The Church, with her supernatural, authoritative, "final word" on God and man, eagerly offered these spiritually hungry truth hunters a tantalizing game that was quite different from anything they had previously encountered in the jungle of Hellenistic life. She did not "suggest". She knew. She made it clear that she knew. And her followers were ready to die in defense of that patent and life changing knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

From the standpoint of anyone willingly wrapped up in the familiar ancient rhetorical cocoon, however, the militant attack of the Incarnate Word could only mean that a revolutionary Monster had entered into their eternally frozen but peaceable kingdom. This Christian beast rejected the very idea of "closure" for closure's sake. Yes, it did tell men that they had to "move on", but not under the old rules; certainly not by merely accepting existing natural conditions as unalterable givens. Instead, it informed them that they had to "move on" by bringing the Kingdom of God into all the closed calculations of the existing Establishment, thereby transforming the entirety of life in Christ. If the Socratic hunters for the higher "logos" wreaking havoc with "the appropriate explanation of strongly felt desires" were already dangerous, the *agmen* we call the Mystical Body of Christ, with its universal, popular "touch", endowing it with the

---

<sup>13</sup> For this, and the following discussion, see Sordi, pp. 23-133, 194-205; R. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (Yale, 1984); Brown, pp. 22-80; Donfried & Richards; MacMullen, pp. 68-74; Barrois; Mayeur, I, 189-366; II, 155-185.

capacity for telling a good story about a true story, was infinitely worse.

For this crime the Church-Monster had to be destroyed. Hence, the emergence of a powerful but internally tense alliance dedicated to the maintenance of the existing order of things that I should like to call the *Grand Coalition of the Status Quo*. Although never a completely conscious union, either now or later, this force would eventually come to include in its ranks all men and women who, for immensely varied reasons, were contented with the old rules of "closure" and were repelled by boat-rocking rabble-rousers who would not allow men to "move on" to "get the job of real life done".

During the imperial era, the number of participants in this federation was already legion, with the Jewish opponents of Christianity opening the subscription list. Jewish leaders, like the Greeks and Romans, saw themselves as representatives of something old, venerable, and intellectually sound—qualities they in no way attributed to the "new" religion. Despite the great intellectual work done by Jewish inhabitants of cities such as Alexandria, no Platonic-inspired allegorical reading of the Old Testament with worldwide implications was to play a long-term role in their calculations. The Jewish rabbinic establishment condemned Christianity at the so-called Council of Jamnia, soon after the destruction of the Temple in 79 A.D. It also condemned most of its own prophetic history in the process.

One of the new religion's greatest crimes in rabbinic eyes was that universalism that stood in stark contrast to an ever more parochial post-Temple Judaism. Emphasis upon the evils of that revolutionary universalism was not only valuable for protecting oneself against the prophetic teachings that an open mind would have seen to be an

## THE WORD

integral part of the Jewish Tradition and a direct road to the Christian vision. It was also useful as grounds for poisoning reactions to the new Faith on the part of pagan populations and the Roman authorities. After all, everyone shaped by a parochial mindset could unite in considering such a cosmopolitan monster to be dangerous – not just Jews.

Following closely behind the Jews came the body of men whom we broadly call the Gnostics. These were people who rejected all thought of the goodness of nature or the possibility that nature's flaws were susceptible to any correction, whether natural or divine. Judaism, with its parochial vision of a good Creator God, was already a problem for Gnostics. Christianity, in teaching that that God took flesh of woman to redeem His fallen Creation and extend a general offer of an eternal resurrection of wicked bodies, was infinitely more loathsome. Gnosticism was particularly dangerous to budding Christianity through the form given it by the Persian thinker, Mani (c. 216-276). Mani taught his followers to co-opt the new Faith and use its sacred texts and language to instruct men on the need to flee all contact with matter in search of the hidden Gnostic God. Manichean principles were thus rhetorically "deconstructionist" in character, and destined to prove particularly successful in confusing and subverting the beliefs of the proponents of the most nature-friendly force in human history. They provided new and effective guidelines for all who were eager to put obstacles in the path of the life-changing message of the Word because they loathed nature

and did not believe that it could be corrected and transformed.<sup>14</sup>

Violently different from the Gnostics, but equally anti-Christian, were a wide array of pagan opponents from everyday imperial society. Their opposition generally took the shape of a closed-minded and very angry dismissal of the new religion on the basis of the infallibility of tradition and custom alone. In fact, at least to begin with, the bulk of Greco-Roman society seems to have been largely at one in reviling the obstinate Christians as an incomprehensible and alien force, neither pagan nor Jewish, that had to be eliminated from influence over a truly human society. An army of "common sense" crusaders on behalf of the founding customs of whatever the society in question—all of them confirming the raw pagan rejection of Christianity as the enemy of cut-and-dry "business as usual"—thus took the field inside the borders of the Empire.

This included, as one might expect, the tribe of word merchants that was active in both literary and legal spheres. Contemporary rhetoricians, such as the highly admired but painfully pedantic Marcus Fronto (c.100-170), Marcus Aurelius' tutor and friend, firmly called for political action against a Faith that demanded a substantive correction of personal and community belief and behavior. It is interesting to note that if we depended on many of the great men of letters of this era for our understanding of the life of the Empire, we might actually conclude that there was no such phenomenon as Christianity that was active in it at all. For numerous rhetoricians conducted their anti-Christian

---

<sup>14</sup> Mayeur, I, 292-366; Hughes, I, 77-93; H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Beacon, 1963).

## THE WORD

campaign without even mentioning their religious opponent by name, horrified as they were to acknowledge the reality of such an offensive intrusion into the Greco-Roman cultural realm. In fact, they tried to conjure away the barbarian threat in the same manner, thus demonstrating that unwillingness to deal with new steps in the dance of life can be deadly to one's physical as well as spiritual health.<sup>15</sup>

Also entering the fray were many scholars, scientists, philosophers, and statesmen. Admittedly, some of these expressed perfectly rational grounds for taking umbrage with a Christianity that was itself only just learning how to explain its message in the first place. The great physician, Galen (129-200/217), for example, articulated one common learned apprehension: the fear that Christian adoration of a God freely choosing to create the universe brought an arbitrary "willfulness" into an ordered cosmos that had been freed from the crudities of the most vulgar pagan myths through the work of generations of Greco-Roman thinkers; the fear, in short, that Christianity meant what William of Ockham (c. 1288-c. 1348) and his followers would much later suggest that it taught.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, these critiques missed the heart of the Christian message: the unchanging and innate truth, justice, and love at the center of God's plan. They also ignored what has been noted above: namely, that the justification of an earthly order whose divinized princes mirrored the character of the gods actually did require, in practice if not in theory,

---

<sup>15</sup> On pagan-Christian literary duels, see Hadas, *Latin Literature*, pp. 334-445; *Greek Literature*, pp. 244-298.

<sup>16</sup> Wilken, pp. 68-94.

precisely the sort of willful divinity that many philosophers reproved and that the Christians were the first to abhor. And yet this was the very order that Galen, whatever his personal self-delusions about its true nature might have been, actually participated in and accepted as unquestionable.

It is quite understandable, on the natural level, that concerned pagans would wonder why something that struck them as totally “new” should be so swiftly accepted to the detriment of what was old and venerable. And as we have seen, the Apologists took this complaint seriously as early as the second century, responding to it in innovative and convincing ways. Moreover, the fear that Christians, with their eyes fixed on eternal salvation, were not shouldering their share of the burdens of a public life providing an ordered existence that benefited them as well as everyone else, is by no means an eccentric one. Many Greco-Roman critics uttered this latter complaint, including the most famous early enemy of the Christians, Celsus, the great contemporary of the Apologists, in a work called *The True Word*. Irritation over a Christian failure to participate in the life of the State also may explain a number of the fitful persecutions under the Principate, such as that of the Emperor Domitian (81-96), who severely punished suspected believers among civil authorities for their manifest dereliction of duty.<sup>17</sup>

Early defenders of Christianity eagerly addressed complaints of this kind, pointing out that the sole reason for their apparent lack of participation in government was the pagan sacrifices that active public life required them to make. Beyond that, however, they insisted that the Empire only

---

<sup>17</sup> Wilken, pp. 94-126; Sordi, pp. 38-55.

## THE WORD

remained alive and strong because of the prayers and the moral strength of Christian believers. It was their Faith alone that gave to the concept of "public order" the respect for truth and morality that it needed to become both substantive and effective in securing the "common good".<sup>18</sup> In fact, as St. Augustine's complaints about pagan behavior later indicated, Christians were unconvinced that the painfully obvious self-serving opportunism of actively participating Roman "patriots" was a blessing for the State in any way whatsoever.<sup>19</sup>

Still, one finds even in more serious pagan arguments a strong tone of exasperated resentment over the intensity and sheer audacity of the Christian project. Educated gentlemen concerned for the proper performance of the pagan rituals handed down by tradition were just as convinced that these should be "kept in their place" and not translated into any "immoderate" religious "passion" or "exaggerated" love for their "deeper teaching". Such a passion and love could enter into all aspects of an ordered life where everything had already been hung securely on its accepted peg, move its comfortable furniture around, and thereby become terribly divisive and disruptive. Christianity brought such divisive and disturbing passion into daily existence. And the fact that this Faith was taught by fishermen and slaves thinking that they actually had something to add to the study of God and man undertaken by respectable members of society made the "uppity" character of its revolutionary enterprise still more

---

<sup>18</sup> Quasten, I, 186-253.

<sup>19</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, I, 32; Also, Hadas, *Latin Literature*, p. 213.

repellent. Knowledge that even members of the senatorial aristocracy had been won over to such impassioned madness proved that Christianity was not only detestable in theory and practice, but also a kind of disease that was "catching".<sup>20</sup>

In short, the idea that the foundations of Greco-Roman life could be re-examined and corrected was blasphemous in the extreme. The idea that members of one's own class would engage in such a re-examination along with the men who washed their feet, mined their minerals, and could not even physically look "upwards" at their superiors without impudence was nauseating. Even those finest of the late ancient philosophical "hunters for the highest God" that we call the Neo-Platonists wanted to rid themselves of this overly-zealous and messy Christian army that shook the pillars of the *ecumene* and introduced the lower orders into the closed fraternity of acceptable thinkers. It was sad if not surprising that a number of Neo-Platonists were to be found among the most convinced and influential proponents of State persecution.

Finally, ordinary men, always terrified by the potential consequences of thinking, and fearful lest satisfaction of their customary pointless or lewd appetites and entertainments be disturbed by an exhortation to avoid sin and strive for higher rewards, stormed the recruitment centers of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo. Personally vicious though they often were, they were nevertheless the first to believe that the Christian "superstition" involved hideous ceremonies and

---

<sup>20</sup> A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (U. of Wisconsin, Two Volumes, 1980), I, 69-78; Brown, pp. 22-80; Wilken, pp. 48-68, 94-105, 164-196; Sordi, pp. 57-58, 69, 96-133, 160-162, 180-205; Jones, I, 71-76, 119-123.



## THE WORD

indescribable orgies. In their moral outrage, they provided the bulk of the troops for the anti-Christian riots that periodically took place in the era of the Principate. They would, perhaps, also have been the chief members of the parallel, mass, pagan “church” that the Emperor Julian (360-363) “the Apostate” sought to create during the Dominate, in imitation of and for the purpose of opposing the Christian *agmen*.

Interestingly enough, the actions of Julian, as well as those of earlier persecutors such as Decius (249-251) and Valerian (253-260), indicate that the highest representatives of conservative, cultivated, Greco-Roman society themselves often became “ordinary men” where the Christians were concerned. Such “traditionalists” were ready to accept the most absurd of the pagan superstitions anathematized by gentlemen like Galen and prepared to unleash the most frenzied mobs in their repeated efforts to mobilize every otherwise disliked “friend” to block the militant Christian advance. Even the Jews were cultivated in this regard, as was demonstrated by the Emperor Julian’s abortive attempt to please them by reconstructing the Temple, thereby giving the lie to the Christian vision of a New Covenant permanently replacing the Old.<sup>21</sup>

Our Grand Coalition of the Status Quo thus obviously contained numerous internal contradictions and weaknesses. Its varied members can be compared to so many “Soviet Unions” and “United States of Americas”, temporarily linked

---

<sup>21</sup> Wilken, pp. 164-196; Sordi, pp. 96-133, 180-205; Vasiliev, I, 69-78; Brown, pp. 22-80; Mayeur, II, 337-353; E. Michael Jones, *The Jewish Revolutionary Spirit* (Fidelity, 2008), pp. 57-90.

together in a "United Nations Alliance" for the purpose of a world war against a common foe. Still, these disparate groups remained ever poised to fight out irreconcilable differences should their joint combat someday cease. Jews were on their guard against pagans; Gnostics against a State that was itself a central loathsome feature of an intrinsically evil nature. One group of rhetoricians supporting a particular "appropriate explanation of desires" useful to the established authorities was girded to oppose colleagues who might be paid to militate for another set of passions on behalf of a differing group of willful masters. Neo-Platonists unwilling to see their philosophy manipulated purely to serve ornamental purposes could chafe under a deadening rhetorical domination preventing Reason from completing its own hunt for the anti-Christian *logos* of things. "Practical" men who saw the "thinkers of great thoughts" as "losers" might be ready to jettison the intellectuals at the first moment their boring speculations interfered with their own common sense, pragmatic activity. Have-nots, envious of the people who had "made it" in imperial society, could easily rise up against the existing elite should their momentary alliance prove successful in putting believers to flight, thereby giving them time to satisfy the fullness of their own uncontrollable libido.

"Time Bomb" might be a better name for the GCSQ, since—the exaggerated fancies of future conspiratorial theorists notwithstanding—no absolutely reliable, indissoluble glue held its members tightly together. Ironically, only someone viewing life through the eyes of God, from inside the Mystical Body, and on the path to transformation in Christ, could really understand what the Grand Coalition and its strengths and weaknesses truly were. But the question of whether Christians would "put on Christ"

THE WORD

to undertake such an examination was another matter entirely.

## The Turbulent Battle for a Christian Imperial Order

### *A. A Good Story With a Happy Ending?*

Leaders of the Dominate did indeed prove to be ready to experiment. Unfortunately, their pagan totalitarian tendencies at first led them to innovation in the direction of a more vigorous confirmation of the traditional, conservative, “founder-friendly” concept of a divine State servicing the demands of “business as usual”. State worship brought with it the nightmare of Diocletian’s Great Persecution, which was all the more horrifying to Christians in that it followed so unexpectedly upon decades of peaceful – though admittedly rather badly documented – growth.<sup>1</sup>

It was the failure of this most organized of imperial harassments, along with the attendant questioning of its effective value, which then turned subsequent emperors to

---

<sup>1</sup> Brown, *Late Antiquity*, pp. 22-33; Mayeur, II, 155-185.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

the fourth century settlement with Christianity. Beginning with Constantine (306-337) and ending with Theodosius (379-395) and his descendants, East and West, this entente moved swiftly from a simple recognition of the Church as a legal entity to her adoption as an integral cornerstone of the Greco-Roman Establishment.

Given the fact that the emperors were themselves but novice Christians, and could not be expected, even under the best of circumstances, fully to appreciate the meaning of their new religion, benevolent and cooperative imperial action would depend upon a basic spirit of openness and good will in performance of their new role. And the practical consequences of that openness and good will, in turn, would rest upon two other factors: 1) the character of the imperial administrators most responsible for counseling the emperor and implementing whatever State policies were adopted by him; and, 2) the faith and courage of the Church leaders called upon not only to obey the just commands of the legitimate civil authorities but also to correct and transform them in Christ. With openness to a real conversion on the side of powerful rulers and their advisors, and a combination of both a courageous, authoritative steadfastness in the Faith and a pilgrim spirit on the part of the politically still rather helpless and naïve Christians, mutually advantageous results might gradually be achieved.

But where these necessary pre-conditions to cooperation were lacking, the emasculating consequences for the message of the Word would be horrendous. State support for Christianity would then lead to the subversion of true religion, and the elaboration of a doctrinal and moral revisionism useful primarily to the attainment of the secular

goals of "nature as is". Under these conditions, Church reliance upon the backing of a powerful civil authority would become nothing other than the lazy Catholic's easy way out. It would reflect a satisfaction with the outward pomp and mere appearance of a Christian order that abandoned the immensely harder work required for a truly substantive transformation in Christ. Such a situation would favor the unseemly career building of "Uncle Tom" popes, bishops, abbots, monks, and priests, all of whom would then shape the catechesis of an Uncle Tom laity. It would encourage a social-climbing, perk-seeking, and more and more cynical Christian population which would grasp the truth that its stale bread was buttered on its secular side; the development of a "Christendom" that saw that its secular master's will was to be baptized as eminently Catholic in order for even this insipid morsel to be swallowed in peace and quiet; a "Christendom" slavishly accepting of a life that was once again based upon "business as usual".

That attempts to secure such a perversion of the mission of the Word in history were likely from the government's side was due to the fact that some emperors and many civil servants clearly remained tied to a pagan appreciation of "nature as is" long past the time of official State conversion to Christianity. While ruling as they had always done, but under changed circumstances that required at least an outward commitment to the new official religion, all such men could consciously or unconsciously continue to sabotage the real work of the correction of natural evils and transformation in Christ.

Similarly, rhetoricians belonging to the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo did not disappear from the Roman scene in the fourth century. They understood that the Church, despite

## TURBULENT BATTLE

her newly established legal status, could still be tamed and diverted from her substantive mission. One highly effective way of assuring this was by dulling her awareness of her own emasculation; by telling “a good story with a happy ending” about the full conversion of the Empire to Christian beliefs and action, all the while that its foundation vision and related behavior remained unaltered. As with the Manicheans before them, their sabotage could be better promoted through an outwardly enthusiastic embrace of the institutions and the language of their “fellow Christians”, now co-opted for their own quite different purposes. Use of Christian media would block immediate suspicion of their motives, as they, in practice, supported and reinforced the spirit and standard operating procedures of ancient pagan institutions and ingrained custom.

The fact that there were emperors, civil servants, and rhetoricians who could go about their customary work while masquerading as believers, or even actually convincing themselves that they represented an enlightened as opposed to a vulgar Faith, was, of course, at least partially due to failures of perception or courage on the part of good willed Christian leaders of Church and State. Many of these men desperately wanted to believe the “good story with a happy ending” and could easily identify what seemed to be a number of serious reasons for embracing its teaching. After all, the faithful were no longer in fear for their lives. Who, therefore, but a madman would not revere the Roman State for the peace and security it now provided? Who could deny that, with persecution ended, and all public spaces opened to possible Christian penetration, an opportunity had arrived to bring the good news of Redemption freely to everyone on

every level of social life? Rome herself, as the great Christian poet, Prudentius (348-c. 413), exulted in his famous response to Symmachus on the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Senate, could now finally come to understand the true universal mission that the Providence of God had prepared her to fulfill. Through her change of heart and soul, this international empire would now work together with a Church called to the evangelization of the entire world for the greater glory of God and the salvation of all nations.

It cannot be sufficiently stressed that early imperial Christians, from emperors to peasants, grew to maturity in an environment where complete obedience to a prestigious, omnipotent State was generally taken for granted and where those well placed to serve its interests could gain handsome rewards of money, political influence, and fame for everyone around them to appreciate and envy. All that was needed for a believer who was either overwhelmed with awe before the majesty of Rome or himself tempted to bless the “converted” Greco-Roman Establishment in its “business as usual” activities for the sake of insuring himself a life of peaceful enjoyment of power and riches, was a solid, Christian-sounding cover for his adulation or his crime. A “good story with a happy ending” allowing an “appropriate explanation” for the satisfaction of one’s own strongly ingrained illusions or deeply felt passions was often too seductive for contemporaries to contest and correct.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of Christian and pagan attitudes in the era of the “great change”, see Mayeur, II, 189-227, 824-825; Brown, *Late Antiquity*, pp. 114-135; Prudentius, *A Reply to the Address of Symmachus*, in M. Hadas, ed., *A History of Rome* (Garden City,



## TURBULENT BATTLE

Among prelates who—to give him the benefit of the doubt—seem perhaps to have been more overwhelmed with awe than personal desire for riches and glory was the first great Church Historian, Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea (c. 263-339). His *Vita* and *Laudes Constantini* helped mightily to create an aura surrounding the Christian Emperor that was crucial to the transformation of his responsibility from one of mere protection of the *Pax Christi* to that of playing an unacceptable “apostolic” role in shaping it. Eusebius expressly rejected discussing anything in Constantine’s *Vita* that could be unedifying from a Christian standpoint, even though the full story might have sent the orthodox believer hunting for a much more certain shield and buckler. Having assured us of Constantine’s beneficence by suppressing any evidence that might contradict its validity, he then moved on, in the *Laudes*, delivered on the thirtieth anniversary of the Emperor’s reign in 335, to set a tone in praise of the faith-friendly ruler destined for a long history of imitation down to the present day:<sup>3</sup>

Eusebius begins with the assurance that he intends to avoid any display of rhetoric. He believes that the Emperor is a human being set apart from other human beings in that he is ‘perfect in wisdom, in goodness, in justice, in courage, in piety, in devotion to God: the Emperor truly and he alone is a philosopher, for he knows himself, and he is fully

---

1956), pp. 276-277; Sordi, pp. 133-145, 171-194; Jones, II, 873-1024; Quasten, III, 309-345.

<sup>3</sup> Quasten, III, 326-327; also, see Jones, I, 80-88.

aware that an abundance of every blessing is showered on him from a source quite external to himself, even from heaven itself'. Eusebius compares him to the sun: 'Thus our Emperor, like the radiant sun, illuminates the most distant subjects of his empire through the presence of his Caesars, as with the far piercing rays of his own brightness'. His Empire is 'the imitation of the monarchical power in heaven', because he has consciously modeled his government after that in heaven.

'Invested as he is with a semblance of heavenly sovereignty, he directs his gaze above, and frames his earthly government according to the pattern of that Divine original, feeling strength in its conformity to the monarchy of God. And this conformity is granted by the universal Sovereign to man alone of the creatures of this earth: for He alone is the author of the sovereign power, Who decreed that all should be subject to the rule of the one. And surely monarchy far transcends every other constitution and form of government: for that democratic equality of power, which is its opposite, may rather be described as anarchy and disorder.'

Throughout the rest of the oration Constantine is praised for his achievements, and for the blessings resulting from the freedom which he gave to the Church. In the last chapter Eusebius refers again to Constantine's own sermon: 'Discourses and precepts and exhortations to a virtuous and holy life, are proclaimed in the ears of all nations. Nay, the

## TURBULENT BATTLE

Emperor himself proclaims them: and it is indeed a marvel that this mighty prince, raising his voice in the hearing of all the world, like an interpreter of the Almighty Sovereign's will, invites his subjects in every country to the knowledge of the true God'.

This imperial aura was enhanced still further through the work of those less savory and much more openly political and self-serving personalities whom we refer to as "court bishops". Certain third century prelates, like that Paul of Samosata (200-275) who served the rebellious Zenobia of Palmyra (240-after 274) in the Middle East, already prefigured the type.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, court bishops became much more common from Constantine's day onwards, once being a prelate anywhere in the Empire really began to "pay".

It is hard to decide exactly where to place another Eusebius, the Bishop of Nicomedia (d. 341), an advisor to Constantine and a friend and strong supporter of the Egyptian heretic, Arius (250/256-336).<sup>5</sup> Was he a hidden member of the GCSQ, using his influence over imperial policy to twist Christianity to serve the cause of "business as usual"? Or was he a clever, though heretical Christian, himself manipulating the machinery of a State still fumbling towards an understanding of how it should act with regard to the demands of the Faith? Whatever the answer, the kind of violent, politicizing measures that he advocated and enforced were representative of the general approach of the court bishop, and the many prelates that followed his example are

---

<sup>4</sup> Mayeur, II, 86-89, 253-254.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; 83, 90, 102-103, 220-221, 225, 254-335; Jones, I, 86-88.

equally representative of the same spiritually destructive phenomenon. So numerous were they in the years to come that St. Basil the Great (330-379) could, with accuracy, respond to an imperial messenger startled to find a successor to the apostles who would not willingly agree to sign on the dotted line of yet another politically-motivated “religious” document that, perhaps, he had never actually met a *real* bishop before.<sup>6</sup>

Through the work of all three groups—disguised members of the GCSQ active in both governmental and rhetorical professions, overawed or venal prelates, and court bishops—the obedience of the Church to a State that proclaimed itself her “friend” began to be presented as the *sole* path to the creation of a peaceful and ordered Christendom, as God Almighty wanted it to be structured. The Mystical Body of Christ was thereby expected to accept everything ordered under its traditional aegis as normative, not simply from a customary Roman standpoint, but, much more importantly, from a Christian one as well. Obedience was due to the Empire because she was sacred and apostolic in and of herself, in addition to possessing the glory that came from being Roman and ancient. Isocrates himself could not have devised a better appropriation of a grand theme for a purpose of justifying unquestioned political power.

Despite the fact that the unconscious and conscious authors of this pleasant deception intended their ideas to apply only to the Roman imperial order, they produced a model that could be—and was—used to mould Church-State relations in Persia, Armenia, and Georgia also.<sup>7</sup> In fact, they

---

<sup>6</sup> Quasten, III, 206.

<sup>7</sup> Mayeur, III, 1103-1239.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

produced a model, *mutatis mutandis*, useful to anyone interested in defending the natural actions of the political and passionate powers-that-be from a supernatural Christian standpoint at any time or place in history. And this includes a contemporary America that has found that claiming that it is interested in doing nothing of the sort is more useful to working for “business as usual” against Christian interference with “nature as is” than any other previous willful approach to life. But in pointing to that truth, I am getting much too far ahead of the bad uses of this “good story” than is suitable for illustrating its immediate dangers in the imperial era.

***B. The Good Story Goes Awry***

Great doctrinal difficulties regarding this “good story with a happy ending” immediately arose during the reign of Constantine himself. This need not have been the case if the State and its advisors had acted properly, or even known what “acting properly” meant. Church leaders could not logically deny that there were many reasons why any political authority might *legitimately* be concerned with various disputes regarding the nature of the Faith. After all, Gnosticism espoused an anti-nature ideology denying the State’s very reason for existence. African Donatism, which based the exercise of ecclesiastical authority upon personal sanctity, could easily be applied to the civil sphere and become as threatening to the smooth functioning of the

machinery of the government as to that of the Church.<sup>8</sup> Men like Bishop Priscillian (d. 385) and his followers, rightly or wrongly accused of being members of a secretive, charismatic, orgiastic cult, could reasonably arouse the interest of all conscientious political officials.<sup>9</sup> Neither the bloodshed on the streets in Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria that accompanied Nestorian and Monophysite battles from the fifth century onwards, nor the bad morale of eighth century troops convinced that military problems at the front were connected with public appreciation of sacred images, could be looked upon as matters of little or no community interest.<sup>10</sup> Any State that refused to treat such issues as serious matters would not be worthy of its name or its God-given mission to maintain natural peace and public order. A Church that imperiously prohibited the State from asking questions regarding its duty in this realm—as many would insist appertains in our own time—would unjustifiably be overstepping the proper boundary between religious and political authorities.

Similarly, there ought to be no surprise that Church leaders might also be positively *happy* with active State involvement in such disputes. Both Scripture and theological logic argued the need for a *symphonia* of Church and State.

---

<sup>8</sup> Randers-Pehrson, *Barbarians and Romans* (U. of Oklahoma, 1983), pp. 132-155; Mayeur, II, 229-248; 435-451.

<sup>9</sup> Randers-Pehrson, pp. 122-124; R. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Catholic U., 1989), 1-43; Mayeur, II, 412-434.

<sup>10</sup> Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972); Mayeur, II, 499-550, III, 9-196; IV, 93-165; J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987, 307-343.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

Almost all contemporary believers grew up in a Roman world where the emperor was responsible for the *Pax deorum*. It would have been quite natural for most of them to presume that, once converted, he would be equally responsible for guaranteeing the *Pax Christi*. And what was the alternative? Should Christians be condemned to look on helplessly as Gnostic interlopers and heretical mobs forcibly took over dioceses and parishes that a friendly Empire might be willing to aid the orthodox to keep under their own control?

Assistance in maintaining the ecclesiastical peace in union with the dictates of the proper apostolic authorities would thus have been justifiable and profitable for both Church and State. In fact, a desire to offer just such a mutually justifiable assistance seems to have been the primary motive behind the first of Constantine's interventions in Church affairs, with respect to the Donatist Crisis in Africa.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, however, innovative and manipulative forms of interference in doctrinal matters very swiftly became the norm. Court bishops were actively associated with this interference from almost the very outset, from the moment that Eusebius of Nicomedia began his relentless efforts to win the emperor to a revision of the decisions of the Council of Nicaea (325) condemning the teaching of his friend, Arius of Alexandria.<sup>12</sup> Government officials immediately realized that the ambitions, envies, and fears of such bishops could easily be stimulated and directed to the support of the primarily political goals—once again, the goals of “nature as is”—that they believed required changes in Church teaching.

---

<sup>11</sup> Mayeur, II, 233-239; Hughes, II, 1-13.

<sup>12</sup> Mayeur, II, 189-337.

Perhaps the greatest basic structural victory for the State in this politicizing enterprise was its molding of the idea of the special importance of a number of imperial bishops—those who came to be referred to as “patriarchs”—into a tool for the more effective exercise of its “sacred” influence over the Church. If it won this victory on the practical level by stirring up ambition, envy, and fear among court bishops, it achieved it on the intellectual plane by relating the significance of a patriarchal See not to its apostolic origins but to its urban political role within the Empire. It was in this way that the Bishop of Constantinople gained entry into the camp of super dioceses forming the so-called Pentarchy, which, in its completed state, included the Bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. While it is true that there was a general, subsequent ecclesiastical acceptance of the utility of dealing with Church affairs through the structure provided by its various “patriarchates”, this *fait accompli* cannot masquerade their origin in the machinations of men who were eager to secure through them the predominance of traditional political considerations.<sup>13</sup>

In any case, the number of court patriarch, court bishop, and direct government ministerial campaigns involving unjustifiable and reprehensible paths to defining, changing, and obstructing religious doctrine of central importance to the work of correction and transformation of nature take us from Trinitarian through Christological to Iconoclast Controversies with depressing regularity. Rather than governing their dioceses, bishops complicit in these matters wandered the Empire, presiding over kangaroo courts that

---

<sup>13</sup> Mayeur, II, 289-398; 489-550; III, 485-543; Hughes, I, 227-230; Jones, I, 87-88, 165-166, 212-213, 220; II, 883-894.



## TURBULENT BATTLE

persecuted orthodox prelates and laymen openly critical of the secularization of religious affairs. Rather than focusing on their primarily political tasks, state bureaucrats aided such court bishops by “going clerical” – doing dubious, threatening, and often outright subversive service as officials at religious councils derailed for governmental purposes.

Every tool imaginable was utilized in such proceedings, with personal libel and slander – such as the accusation that St. Athanasius of Alexandria was conspiring to cut off the Egyptian grain supply to Constantinople and that he was guilty of manslaughter – often at the top of the list.<sup>14</sup> Even the intellectual historical record was brutalized, with the reputations of long dead theologians who were incapable of defending themselves blackened in the process.<sup>15</sup> The consequence was the exile, imprisonment, and death of many good prelates, the disruption of normal diocesan life, and – ironically but not surprisingly to the man who sees the world through the eyes of Christ – damage to the long-term security of the imperial order itself. For unwarranted state religious policies adopted by men with a political tunnel vision often actually aided and abetted local parochial-minded forces totally indifferent or hostile to the survival of a cosmopolitan Empire.

Unwarranted interference in doctrinal affairs was always reprehensible. But it is only right to indicate that a number of Church Fathers and solid believers found even the justifiable assistance offered by the newly Christian Roman State to be

---

<sup>14</sup> Hughes, I, 196; Mayeur, II, 249-335.

<sup>15</sup> Herrin, pp. 119-127; Richards, pp. 151-154; Mayeur, III, 389-481.

often somewhat problematic. St. Augustine (354-430), who openly favored the use of government authority for peacekeeping purposes, made it clear that he himself never actually liked dealing with the civil authorities.<sup>16</sup> His reasons are not difficult to grasp. After all, anything “new”, like the Church, confronting a force and a set of standard operating procedures as ancient as those of “Eternal Rome” was bound to be at something of a disadvantage even in the best of situations.

A major difficulty inherent in this interaction was that one could never fully predict what would come of Roman State involvement in the long run. Libertarians would argue that such a comment speaks clearly on behalf of the abandonment of all governmental interference in religious concerns. If so, it would also argue for the abandonment of any help from any individual or any institution in any religious endeavor whatsoever, perhaps all the more especially in this springtime of Christendom. The fact is that human action in and of itself is “dangerous”, and those who insist that this danger can be avoided through the separation of Christianity from whatever natural force is brought into question by them are merely concocting another “good story with a happy ending” hiding the real truth about the facts of life. By, in effect, abandoning *living* due to the dangers of *life*, they simply create a different kind of situation wherein the impact of the Word in history will inevitably be severely limited. They euthanize the message of the Word for the sake of supposedly maintaining its purity. Still, there is no denying that imperial unpredictability was indeed a fact of life, and that this was to a large degree due to the second

---

<sup>16</sup> Quasten, IV, 350.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

problem stemming from a merely rhetorical proclamation of the State's full Christian conversion: the reality of the continued hold upon it of that pagan moral vision that precisely needed to be corrected and transformed—with all the tools at one's disposal.

In addressing this issue, let us give credit where credit is due. There is ample evidence that the imperial State rather swiftly recognized a need for at least a theoretical public commitment to truly substantive Christian moral change. Various revisions of the Law Code from the 400's onwards incarnated an awareness of the consequences of this dedication quite vividly. Moreover, governmental support for Church control of numerous public spaces did allow for a great deal of influence over communal and individual human action conducive to effective, practical, long-term moral change.<sup>17</sup>

But the penalty-rich clauses of Law Codes, along with formal Church control of public spaces, are no absolute indicators of what people were actually doing in daily life to enforce or respond to their theoretically powerful impact. Examination of contemporary evidence thus reveals what should be obvious: the enormous amount of work that still needed to be done in the moral sphere, both in instilling a general sense of Christian justice and charity as well as in awakening a specific consciousness of what was and was not acceptable State and individual behavior in the eyes of the Church.

---

<sup>17</sup> Mayeur, II, 553-717; Hughes, I, 176-186; Vasiliev, I, 241-244; D. Geanakoplos, ed., *Byzantium* (U. of Chicago, 1984), pp. 73-86, 131-144.

Hence, the traditional pagan severity of the Rome State at times easily overcame all of its professed Christian sentiments. This was especially noticeable when it engaged in practical “defense” of a Faith that was both eager to display compassion and also quite aware of the complexities of the human comedy. Government implementation of justifiable anti-heretical policies often lacked all nuance, dismayed orthodox leaders, and created bitter animosities among their victims in consequence. The imperial authorities’ ingrained pagan willfulness, and their tendency arbitrarily to change their spiritual policies for some perceived—and quite temporary—secular good, often wreaked further havoc. Whenever such changes suddenly led to an end to persecution and an opening for heretical vengeance, bitterness then overflowed from the inner to the outer realm. The results were almost invariably detrimental to orthodox belief and believers. Periodic State attack and retreat in dealing with the Donatists of Africa in the 300’s and 400’s offer a major illustration of the evils experienced by faithful clergy and laity from the combined flaws of such exaggerated severity and unexpected tolerance.<sup>18</sup>

Any serious investigation of the Donatist controversy also must bring with it mention of another broad area of imperial moral failure that certainly played a major role in that particular struggle: addressing what modern theologians would call the economic “structures of sin”. Shabby treatment of the poor and the powerless at the hands of a fabulously wealthy senatorial aristocracy was endemic to the Roman system. Any supposed conversion of the imperial order to Christianity that did not confront the moral problem

---

<sup>18</sup> Jones, II, 954-970; Mayeur, II, 229-248, 435-550.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

of social injustice risked arousing people against the Faith, when their argument was really with an Establishment that was as yet but “baptized” in name only. Politically useful manipulation of the language of religion thus served to obscure the real teaching of the Word in history with respect to economic social issues, turning men against the Church instead of the deconstructionism of the storytellers. Alas, as our own daily experience teaches us, it would not be the last time a shameful political use of religion in this realm would cause similar mistakes to be made.<sup>19</sup>

A list of further woes stemming from traditional perceptions of acceptable State behavior is easily compiled. Theodosius’ indiscriminate massacre of innocent and guilty Thessalonians in the wake of a seditious riot in 390 reflected customary political wisdom in desperate need of Christian moral correction. Moreover, to say that court marital and sexual practices were less than satisfactory from the standpoint of transformation in Christ would be a “howler” of an historical understatement. If the women of the Theodosian Dynasty were the models for Christian marriage and motherhood, what possible change could one say had been effected in upper class, familial “business as usual” through the Incarnation of the Son of God?<sup>20</sup>

Not that one should idolize the ordinary man’s behavior in these matters either. Generally, of course, aside from periodic explosions in politically significant mob action, the story of the average individual’s comportment in any sphere

---

<sup>19</sup> On the social order, see Jones, II, 767-1068.

<sup>20</sup> Randers-Pehrson, pp. 83-93; Quasten, III, 426-428; Mayeur, II, 481-497; K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses* (U. of California, 1982).

of life remains imperfectly recorded. Nevertheless, it appears to be obvious that the most historically significant moral problem of the Late Empire was the seemingly total indifference of most of the Roman population, low as well as high, to any sense whatsoever of the greater common good. This indifference combined nicely with a desire to satisfy momentary and rather pointless pleasures whenever opportunities to do so arose.

It is for this reason that the powerful had no problem stirring up the vile passions of the popular horse racing factions in the circus in order to shore up a longed-for or endangered imperial political position. Hence, also, men of all classes were ready to risk the very survival of the State for protection or enhancement of their political and financial position, as the maneuvering surrounding the Gothic invasion of Italy in the first decade of the fifth century so amply indicates. Who thinks of the Empire, St. Augustine wondered aloud, absolutely bewildered that refugees arriving from Rome in 410 were more interested in the theater schedule and the successes of their favorite stage actors in Carthage than they were moved to any anguish over the unprecedented sacking of the Eternal City. And Salvian refers to a similar phenomenon in southern Gaul somewhat later in the same century, noting that the individual members of the population somehow had “a smile” on their faces, happy with the satisfaction of their base passions, even though anyone with eyes to see could realize that they were rapidly dying as a viable Roman community.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Hadas, *Latin Literature*, p. 455; St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book I, 32; similarly, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 14.6.18; J. Randers-Pehrson, pp. 54-155.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

*Christian* failings once more helped to aid and abet these moral flaws. Yes, there were powerful voices from among the faithful that were raised to forward the work of correction and elevation of minds and spirits. Some, among them St. Ambrose (c. 340-397), Bishop of Milan, who lashed out at Theodosius over the Thessalonica issue, were actually even successful in their intervention. Others, like St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407), Patriarch of Constantinople, who vigorously fought injustice to the poor, conspicuous consumption, marital abuse, and general lasciviousness, endured public humiliation and exile as the price for speaking out.<sup>22</sup>

Sadly, however, all too many Christians were themselves uncertain trumpets in the war for a change in moral behavior. Some, of course, could not bring themselves to say or do anything in this realm because they were overawed or venal prelates and court bishops of the type discussed above. Others were simply not yet themselves fully awakened to the revolutionary moral consequences of their transformed life in Christ. Unaware of just how deeply revelation and grace were meant to touch them, they were thus incapable of changing their own behavior sufficiently to serve as an example to others and palpably to affect their entire social environment.

This is certainly true with respect to marital concerns. An early example of the problems caused by the influence of the

---

<sup>22</sup> Hughes, I, 217-236; P. Phan, ed. *Social Thought*, (Message of the Fathers of the Church, Vol. 20, M. Glazier, 1984); J. Chrysostom, *On Wealth and Poverty* (St. Vladimir's, 1984); Quasten, III, 424-482; IV, 144-150, 535-537.

power of mere custom can be seen within the ranks of Church officials themselves, including holy ones. Hippolytus (d. c. 236), an antipope and yet a saint, brutally attacked his fellow hero of the Faith, Pope St. Calixtus (d. 222), as an immoralist. What, exactly, was the nature of Calixtus' "crime"? It appears to have been merely that of violating traditional Roman practice by permitting the marriage of slaves with freemen. But difficulties in the marital realm were much broader still. In fact, one has the impression that many and even most of the Church Fathers could not bring themselves joyfully to admit the full, sacramental beauty of sexual union in a marriage open to children—and this, despite the fact that their own fundamental theology ought to have led them to embrace such a concept with understanding and joy.<sup>23</sup>

Christian embrace of the struggle for social justice was another palpably weak spot. Yes, others beside St. John Chrysostom were deeply concerned about this important issue. Still, it does not appear to have been as important a matter as its significance in daily life ought to have made it, especially when one considers the misery of the mass of the Roman rural population. Perhaps influential orthodox Christians may have not concerned themselves with rural poverty due to the continued paganism of much of the peasantry. Perhaps they may have been frightened off all serious treatment of moral questions concerning wealth and indigence given that both Pelagius (c. 354--c. 420-440), as well as a number of heretics from Africa, where we have seen that

---

<sup>23</sup>Quasten, II, 205-207; H. Jedin and J. Dolan, *History of the Church* (Crossroads, Ten Volumes, 1981), II, 394-401; see, also, St. Gregory of Nyssa, in Quasten, III, 271.



## TURBULENT BATTLE

the problems of social injustice were very pronounced, openly expressed interest in them.<sup>24</sup>

It is also conceivable that a focus on such social issues was deflected by notable changes in the character of the higher clergy from the late fourth century onwards. Clearly, with the legalization of Christianity, members of the senatorial aristocracy began to occupy major positions in the Church. This was partly due to the fact that obtaining a prelature became ever more socially acceptable. Fairness, however, dictates indicating that it was also owed to significant pressure from below, since the average man, accurately judging contemporary realities, often encouraged acceptance of the rich and the powerful as bishops. After all, only they had the education granting them an ability to “tell a good story” in defense of the Church and her true needs, as well as the wherewithal from their families to pay for houses of worship and ecclesiastical activities in general. Whatever the reason for their investiture with Church authority, such prelates would quite naturally have been tempted to bring with them their own customary vision—religiously, politically, and socially—when they entered upon their episcopal tasks. And such a vision took for granted the need to focus their attention more upon cementing the advantages and honors given by the imperial government to the clergy as a social class than upon the perennial sufferings of the poor.

Co-option into the existing establishment was also effected through State policy regarding the lower clergy. Christian priests were an administrative godsend to Rome.

---

<sup>24</sup> Quasten, IV, 114-126; 475-476; Hughes, II, 2-18; Mayeur, II, 435-479.

One of the greatest problems of the Dominate had been the increasing flight of those elements of the local urban population responsible for maintaining civil services – the so-called *curiales* – from their traditional duties. These tasks were swiftly handed over to the clergy in exchange for their exemption from taxation and certain other public burdens. But whether positively sought after or unwillingly foisted upon it, the greater the clergy's devotion of attention to traditional corporate class concerns, the less the time and inclination available to them to probe the full meaning of a corrected and transformed Christian social order and to work to achieve it.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, yet a third problem emerged from the “good story with a happy ending” regarding the “obvious” conversion of the Roman State, turning it into a trustworthy, sacred, and apostolic guide for the faithful. This centered round the rather important matter of the imperial government's actual ability to perform its tasks as defender of *any* kind of order, *Pax Christi* or otherwise. If the Roman State were somehow divinely written into the very nature of things, then it must be supported and invoked for proper protection under all circumstances. No one could be permitted to look anywhere else for political and military assistance than to the Sacred Empire. But if, in practice, it were not an absolutely unalterable element in the eternal plan

---

<sup>25</sup> Jones, I, 80-91, 118-119, 151, 166, 362, 432, 480, 491-498, 745-759, 791; II, 902-929; R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (U. of California, 1985), pp. 141-157; Randers-Pehrson, pp. 56-57; J. Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages* (Routledge & Keagan, 1979, pp. 7-55; Mathisen, pp. 1-27; Brown, *Late Antiquity*, 130-135; Mayeur, II, 557-584.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

of God, and could be subject to decline and even actual collapse, such unquestioning support would be a dangerous delusion. Church failure to maintain the proper pilgrimage spirit and remain open to the new steps regularly required to dance the ever-changing dance of life on the political level would be tantamount to flirtation with physical disaster.

To the great sorrow of many Christians of good will, the question of the real power of the Empire became an immediate and demoralizing issue from the late 370's onwards—precisely the moment of its full public “conversion”. Interestingly enough, the initial reason for this development stemmed directly from the moral flaws discussed above. Goths terrified by the approach of the Huns had begged permission to cross the Danube, and were robbed and humiliated by the self-serving imperial officials responsible for their admission into the Empire. Desperation drove the despoiled barbarians to a rampage, ending in the Battle of Adrianople in 378 with the unexpected, disastrous defeat of the Roman Army and the death of the Emperor Valens—ironically, another political manipulator of the Faith—himself.<sup>26</sup>

Through a number of twists and turns in the following forty years, aided, once again, by a self-serving short-sightedness on the part of imperial officials, this victory led the Goths to a development of their knowledge of Roman military discipline and strategy, a ravaging of the Balkan Peninsula, a migration to Italy, and a final settlement further

---

<sup>26</sup> For all the following, see Jones, I, 217-317; Herrin, pp. 19-53; H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (U. of California, 1988), pp. 117-171; Randers-Pehrson, pp. 34-115.

westward, in southern Gaul and Spain. Complications related to the Gothic advance into the West brought the withdrawal of Roman forces from Britain and their all-too predictable diversion from public service to private empire building on the Continent. Angle and Saxon mercenaries hired by the unwarlike British population to shield its now unprotected cities soon exploited that island to their own advantage. Roman Britons retreated to the far west and an ever more impoverished and ultimately quite pathetic parochial existence. Withdrawal of Roman forces from the northern frontiers on the Continent also precipitated a massive invasion of a mixture of Vandals, Sueves, and Alans across the Rhine in 406, an assault which led to an advance all the way to Iberia and North Africa. Rome was sacked twice in the course of these various incursions, in 410 and 455.

Although the Roman State in the West broke down in its attempts to deal with such an absolutely unexpected and unprecedented disaster, its eastern machinery seemed, at first, up to the task of coping with it. German Gothic forces near Constantinople and in Asia Minor, though very threatening indeed, were brutally and thoroughly destroyed in the course of the fifth century. By the 530's, the western-born Emperor Justinian (527-565) felt strong enough to conduct a massive campaign to assure the re-conquest of North Africa, Italy, and Spain. While partly successful in the short run, this effort nevertheless had many unintended negative consequences.

For one thing, the Empire in the East found that its campaigns far afield left it exposed to military problems closer to home. Slavic and Bulgar incursions into the Balkan Peninsula now became regular, and a major Persian invasion in the early 600's almost brought the Empire to its knees.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

Even though the Emperor Heraclius (610-641) brilliantly repelled this latter attack, bringing disaster to Persia rather than Rome, his victory proved to be bittersweet. It was quickly followed by defeat after defeat at the unexpected hands of the upstart Arab Moslems, who not only took over the crushed Persian realm but also stripped the Empire of Egypt, North Africa, the Holy Land, and Syria. The loss of Egypt by 642 was particularly painful, since it meant an end to the distribution of the food supplies that had arrived for centuries from this granary of Mediterranean wide significance.

Roman power, therefore, was by no means an absolutely certain divine pillar upon which the Church could base her hopes for defense of the *Pax Christi*. On the other hand, Rome's apparent inability to protect *any* political and social order meant that the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo could not be shielded by it either. Patronage for hidden pagan bureaucrats, sophist word merchants, and court bishops was threatened. Even the bellies of the easily suborned mobs that had counted upon government handouts for survival since the days of Gaius Gracchus under the old Republic could no longer be filled.

But the GCSQ really did not need to despair. Ironically – if not really surprisingly – each and every frighteningly new force that menaced the Greco-Roman *ecumene* brought fresh recruits into the ranks of that multi-faceted alliance. The short-lived but highly disruptive Persian invasion of the early 600's aided it chiefly by temporarily unchaining the long repressed parochial wrath of the Jews of the Levant. Thrilled by this obstacle to the relentless progress of Christian evangelization, they actively assisted Persian Zoroastrian

persecution.<sup>27</sup> Permanent Germanic and Slavic penetration from the late fourth century onwards, on the other hand, insured long-lasting assistance to the GCSQ through the reinforcement their peoples offered for the whole of the pagan vision of nature as the realm of “business as usual”. They provided such assistance even when they had converted to Arian Christianity. After all, this heresy, with its emphasis upon descending levels of divine persons, supported the concept of a great chain of being that, in practice, allowed a continued space for other gods of nature, divinized secular customs, and sacred pagan kingship to flourish. In fact, one might conjecture that it may have been for this very reason that men like Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia promoted its victory in the first place.<sup>28</sup>

Despite its semi-Christian flavor, Islam also gave solid aid to the cause of the GCSQ. Yes, the Moslems, reflecting definite Christian influences upon Mohammed, seemed to be concerned for a life of moral change in service of the one true God, with the final purpose of obtaining eternal life for both body and soul. In reality, however, their description of eternity was quite simplistic and carnal in character. It itself appeared to be shaped by natural desires rather than possessing a distinct supernatural character capable of correcting and transforming the everyday mental conceptions and passions of a fallen world.

Similarly, Moslem doctrines could be seen to have provided a noble sounding masquerade—a higher “point of view”—for the furtherance of the interests and successes of a

---

<sup>27</sup> Vasiliev, I, 195; Mayeur, IV, 9-28; Herrin, pp. 205-206.

<sup>28</sup> J. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 107-145; Brown, p. 90.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

variety of “super clans”, first Arab Bedouin, then those of other ethnic groups as well. Such self-interested manipulation took place everywhere, from Spain to India. These super clans shaped the “appropriate explanation” of what was true, good, and beautiful for the Moslem community—the *Umma*—as a whole. Many Moslem beliefs and behavioral patterns, and even the accepted text of the Koran and sayings of the Prophet, thus underwent changes according to the specific demands of each of these willful forces, according to place and time. In short, a “good and noble foundation story” was molded to the needs of the strongest factions in classic, Isocrates-friendly fashion. Needless to say, those clan interests, in practice, do not appear to have been particularly concerned for a “boat-rocking” correction and transformation of natural life truly threatening to the standard operating procedures of the status quo.

Yes, there is no denying that certain ideas and labors analogous to Christian ones can indeed be found inside the Moslem community. This is especially true with respect to two phenomena: 1) the hunt for union with a supernatural God pursued by a number of Sufi mystics, and their desire to pass on an understanding of its consequences through their many varied “brotherhoods”; and 2) the speculations of Shiite thinkers in trying to guide daily life in the absence of the true ruler of the *Umma*, the Hidden Imam. Nevertheless, I would argue that all such highly interesting and often laudable enterprises do not represent the kind of life-changing force rooted in the truly supernatural vision of Christianity. Their value is of the “Seed of the Logos” genre, enhanced, in the case of Islam, by the impact of those Jewish and Christian elements that did form a major component of Moslem beliefs

and behavior. But, once again, as St. Justin Martyr indicated, it was only the Catholic Faith that could properly understand and bring such noble endeavors to safe and profitable port.<sup>29</sup>

### *C. The Troubled Progress of the True Story*

Great theological progress in understanding the “true story” regarding the meaning of the Incarnation occurred throughout the various stages of the imperial era, even amidst the seemingly endless turmoil and the political manipulation masqueraded by the “good story” of the sacred State and its protection of the *Pax Christi*. This progress, as briefly indicated above, took place in the context of intense discussions concerning the nature of the Trinity (Arianism), of Christ (Nestorianism and Monophysitism), of the character of the Church and her ministers (Donatism), of the relationship of grace and freedom (Pelagianism), of the created universe as a whole (Iconoclasm), and of proper Christian behavior and the path to perfection (sacramental theology, monasticism, mysticism, marriage, social justice). Through this progress, believers gained an ever-deeper knowledge of the Word Incarnate *in se* and the Word Incarnate continued in time – namely, Christ and His Church. They also advanced in understanding both the meaning of individual “divinization” in and through mankind’s Redeemer as well as the proper use of the natural environment in which we perform our pilgrim dance through life to eternity.

---

<sup>29</sup> On Islam’s development, see I. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, 1988, pp. 11-237.



## TURBULENT BATTLE

Although a myriad of thinkers played important roles in ensuring this magnificent growth in supernatural wisdom, the key figures in Christian progress in the Faith are St. Athanasius (c. 296-373), St. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368), the Cappadocian Fathers—St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory Nazianzen (c. 325-389), St. Gregory of Nyssa (d.c. 386)—St. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 375-444), St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662), and St. John of Damascus. Their work was reflected in the decisions of almost all of the initial ecumenical councils—Nicaea, First Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Third Constantinople (687-688), and Second Nicaea (787) —and in that of numerous secondary, local synods as well.<sup>30</sup>

In *The Whole Christ*, his seminal work of the 1920's on the concept of the Mystical Body and individual Christian deification, the Jesuit writer Emile Mersch catalogued this historical development in knowledge of the consequences of the Incarnation in powerful detail for western readers.<sup>31</sup> And it was one of the finest accomplishments of Werner Jaeger, in his somewhat later studies of Greco-Roman and Christian *paideia*, to have demonstrated the increasing awareness on the part of the Church Fathers of just how much Christian

---

<sup>30</sup> Following these struggles is much of the story of Mayeur, II, 249-550; III, 9-196, 389-481; IV, 9-165; Hughes, I, 185-305; II, 118-126; Also, Quasten, III and IV, *passim*.

<sup>31</sup> E. Mersch, *The Whole Christ* (Dennis Dobson, 1936), pp. 209-440.

revelation could and did work providentially together with the best fruits of ancient natural wisdom.<sup>32</sup>

Theological development, as we have seen, was not assured without serious struggles and limitations. One of the most instructive battles illustrating this problem-laden progress concerns the reception of the teaching of St. Augustine, which was seriously resisted not just by friends of Pelagius but also in a number of quite distinct monastic circles. Many monks saw in the Bishop of Hippo's emphasis upon the central importance of grace a condemnation of their efforts to labor for personal salvation. Here, once again, both an appreciation of the complexity of the individual human dance to sanctity, as well as an intellectual openness to the varied insights of distinct personalities, did a great deal to overcome such misunderstanding.<sup>33</sup> We will have something more to say about such perception and openness in the final section of this chapter. Furthermore, much of the labor leading to theological progress was pursued under the pressure of combat with heretical enemies whose thorough defeat and unconditional surrender heroic fighters for the Faith judged to be essential to Church survival. This conviction was indeed correct. Nevertheless, progress through difficult combat against highly specific, frightening, and often extremely gifted opponents over long stretches of time had unfortunate as well as happy consequences.

Two nefarious side effects are especially important to mention, the first of which was the encouragement that a number of orthodox victories gave to certain understandable

---

<sup>32</sup> See Jaeger, W. *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Harvard, 1961).

<sup>33</sup> Quasten, IV, 463-558; Mayeur, II, 453-479.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

but unfounded conclusions regarding the way in which the Faith should be protected. Unfortunately, these included the hope that the mere reiteration of words—*even meaningful doctrinal words*—along with an exaggerated reverence for the work of heroes—*even real heroes in justifiable battles versus error*; the pronounced demonization of heretics—*even true heretics*—along with an excessive reliance on force—*even when the arm of the State could and should be legitimately applied*—were sufficient in and of themselves for a complete defense of the Christian vision.

A second unhappy side effect was the fact that progress through combat against very specific heresies and heretics frequently diverted attention away from a global presentation of the whole of Christian doctrine. By this, I do not mean to say that some already existing, complete, and calm endeavor of this type was somehow stopped in its tracks by the more specific Trinitarian, Christological, and manifold other battles that actually did take place historically. Nor am I arguing that the task of probing the import of each and every aspect of Revelation simultaneously is a painless enterprise, or even, in the short or long run, that it is humanly possible.

What I do wish to illustrate is the simple truth that the path to doctrinal clarification was historically piecemeal and, as such, often so concentrated on narrow issues as to lead to the neglect of other problems that would return to haunt men, often in the very near future. In the midst of battle, new “good stories” and “appropriate explanations of a passionately desired victory” of dubious character were all too readily concocted. Individual theologians, given ethnic groups, and certain monks, all of them of real merit in one set of conflicts, were lent an air of infallibility and

unquestionable holiness that masqueraded dangerous errors and moral failings in other, subsequent clashes. Alliances formed to fight one narrow group of heretics proved to include thinkers harboring contrasting but equally heretical positions. Partisan spirits were cultivated and base actions embraced to ensure what amounted to tainted victories. Maginot Lines built to fight off one enemy ignored the fact that all of their weapons were turned in a single direction, encouraging outflanking maneuvers emerging from different starting points, and even from unrecognized troublemakers already subverting the orthodox camp from within.

All of this disheartened men of sounder doctrine and Christian charity. In fact, it sometimes drove them away from involvement in battles that desperately required their more balanced participation. It also inevitably led to eventual surprises and disappointments for the heroes of the latest, exaggerated "good story", once their own failings were exposed for everyone to see. Such men were then often tempted to vent their outrage over the "injustice" perpetrated against them by turning against the Church whose sole real defenders they had unquestioningly considered themselves to be. Many even ended their careers by entering, for their own varied reasons, into the already terribly complicated and conflicted ranks of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.

Theological eyeteeth were cut during the Trinitarian conflicts, the most important of which was the long-lived and variegated Arian Crisis. Still, a good argument can be made that the most difficult matters and the most fruitful long-term developments emerged from two other doctrinal battles: the seemingly innumerable combats over Christology and the subsequent Iconoclast Controversy. Let us look at each of these two struggles in some detail before turning our

## TURBULENT BATTLE

attention to the equally painful—but comparably productive—question of Church response to the Roman State’s political and social decline.

Christological quarrels were an inevitable corollary of the earlier Trinitarian fray. Once the Church had somewhat satisfactorily clarified the relationship of the Word to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, the study of the relationship of Word and man in Jesus Christ had to rise to the fore. Grave public strife over this topic was first engaged over the supposedly all too humanized understanding of Christ promoted by Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople (c. 386-c. 451), whose views and person were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431. It then exploded into a centuries-long fury regarding the beliefs of Nestorius’ enemies, the Monophysites.<sup>34</sup>

Monophysites were deeply attached to St. Cyril of Alexandria’s doctrine of Christ as the “one incarnate nature—*monophysis*—of the Eternal Word”. They argued that the definition by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 of Our Lord’s possession of two natures, human and divine, united in the single Person of the Divine Word, blessed a dogma that actually “divided Christ”. Such a division, Monophysites claimed, lessened a proper sense of Christ’s overwhelming “otherness”. And thus, they asserted, it promoted the dangerous naturalist tendencies lurking in the bowels of the Nestorian vision.

---

<sup>34</sup> See all of Frend; Mayeur, II, 499-550; III, 9-196, 389-481, 592-608; Hughes, I, 250-292; J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 9-29.

Intense struggles over Monophysitism had already begun in the discussions at Ephesus concerning the true import of Nestorius' teachings. Some of that quarreling was, quite frankly, embarrassingly silly—a combat over mere words that could have been explained in a variety of acceptable fashions, had Nestorius' arrogance, the general party passions on both sides, and a mutual desire to destroy one's opponents rather than understand their meaning not dominated the "debate". Much of the discussion, on the other hand, was very significant indeed. Still, one really has to await the seventh century Monothelite flip on the basic Monophysite argument in order to get a sense of the full consequences of adopting or rejecting the substantive doctrines of the pro- and anti-Chalcedonian partisans.

Before doing so, however, it is necessary first to return to the problem of the Roman State's responsibility for the maintenance of public order. However much the imperial government might have wished to avoid interfering in ecclesiastical dogmatic definition, Monophysites, their prelates, and their local supporters in Egypt, Syria, and Constantinople—militant and sometimes quite brutal monks prominent among them—made it difficult to resist that temptation. Devout followers of St. Cyril proved themselves ready to ally together with and even imitate the vices of men driven by more specious spiritual and secular considerations. They then became dangerous disturbers of the peace and agents of official corruption. *Any State qua State* would have been shaken by the tumult these Monophysites caused. Effective Roman control over whole provinces was brought into question by it.

Hence, the manifold efforts by the Emperors in Constantinople, starting with Zeno (474-491), Anastasius

## TURBULENT BATTLE

(491-518), and that ambivalent reconciliatory document called the *Henoticon* (482), to find some kind of rhetorical play on words—some “good story”—to overcome the divisions that the Chalcedonian definition had sharpened and come to symbolize. These endeavors continued with various projects of the Emperor Justinian. The most despicable of his “pacifying” doctrinal interventions once again involved the condemnations of deceased thinkers disliked by the Monophysites and unable to defend themselves against charges of heresy. Such game playing came to a conclusion with the work of the Emperors Heraclius and Constans II (641-668) in support of the last of these rhetorical flights of fancy—the one developed by Patriarch Sergius I (610-638) of Constantinople.

Sergius’ theology was first built upon Monoenergism. This argued that the doctrine of Christ’s two natures as defined by Chalcedon did not destroy His unity because the Savior’s “oneness” was manifested by His possession of a single divine energy. Various reasons led Sergius to modify the Monoenergist approach, substituting divine will for divine energy as the unifying principle. It was this “one divine will” or *Monothelite* vision that Heraclius promoted through a document known as the *Ecthesis* in 638. The *Typos* (648) under Constans II came out of the inevitable turmoil created by the *Ecthesis*, and sought to ensure acceptance of the Monothelite position by the simple expedient of prohibiting all discussion of its doctrinal purity from the orthodox camp. Once again, “pragmatists” thought that the time had come to deal with a substantive religious issue crucial to the meaning of the Word by declaring its “closure” for the sake of “public

order” and the need to “move on” to the “real life” concerns dictated by “nature as is”.

Every stage of the politically and socially troubled Christological debate provides ample lessons to learn. Still, there are two chief reasons why the Monothelite flip in particular offers one of the best ways of tackling the whole of the tumultuous imperial advance in knowledge of the full impact of the Word as the redemptive force in history. First of all, on the practical level, the resolution of this controversy clarified the position of the pope, the so-called Patriarch of Rome, more sharply than ever before. Secondly, in the speculative realm, the struggle against Monothelism provided a means for “summing up” the thrust of the entire Christological battle. Both of these reasons are best discussed in tandem.<sup>35</sup>

Roman Pontiffs repeatedly fade in and out of the life of the universal Church in the early centuries of Christian History.<sup>36</sup> Yes, Pope St. Clement I (88-97) powerfully outlined the nature of the *agmen* we call the Mystical Body of Christ. And, true, the roles of Popes Julius I (337-352) and Liberius (352-366), the one positive and the other negative in character, are important to confront in any attempt to grasp the complex story of the Empire-wide battle over Arianism. Nevertheless, most of what we hear concerning Rome in those first years of ecclesiastical growth involves issues important to the Eternal

---

<sup>35</sup> For all of the following, see Mayeur, IV, 9-60; Herrin, pp. 206-280.

<sup>36</sup> M. Maccarone, *Il Primato del Vescovo di Roma nel Primo Millennio* (Libreria Editrice Vatican, 1991), pp. 219-251, 275-362; Mayeur, I, 579-670, II, 771-798; Hughes, I, 98- 261



## TURBULENT BATTLE

City herself or her relations with the Church of Carthage in North Africa.

Temptations to parochialism were intensified in Rome by the political problems of the Empire in the West from the early fifth century onwards. These crises led to the domination of Italy, Gaul, Spain, Britain, and Africa by various German tribes. The paganism and Arianism of the tribesmen concerned then dragged western bishops in general into difficult battles with forces that, from the standpoint of the rest of the Empire, were more and more anachronistic in character.

All this changed as the Papacy's universal role grew in significance in the context of the Monophysite Controversy. Let us begin discussing that growth by remembering that it was Pope Leo the Great's (440-461) *Tome* (451), with its formula teaching of Christ's possession of "two natures in the unity of one Divine Person", which dramatically shaped the dogmatic definition adopted at Chalcedon. Hence, the Papacy understood its own honor to be on trial in the post-conciliar campaign against that teaching's ecumenical acceptance. Luckily, the Roman Pontiffs were in a better position than anyone else to defend the decisions of Chalcedon. And this was precisely due to the otherwise parochial effects of the barbarian domination of the Italian peninsula and the protection it offered from the possibility of imperial retribution for failure to heed the *Henoticon*. It is no surprise that it was with reference to the fight *against* this imperial word merchandizing and *for* the complete victory of Chalcedonian orthodoxy that Pope Gelasius (492-496) produced his famous "two swords" argument. In this he elaborated and distinguished the roles of the "ordering" State

and the “correcting and transforming” Church in the life of Christendom.<sup>37</sup>

Ironically, papal defense of Chalcedon and the very prestige of the Holy See itself were to become still more significant due to a stimulus arriving from outside of the Eternal City. From the second third of the sixth century onwards, an increased eastern “pilgrim” involvement in Italy not only counteracted the effects of the barbarian incursion but also brought with it an overwhelming increase in papal self-awareness and power. Such Greek-speaking influence then proved to be of crucial significance in fighting against unacceptably pro-Monophysite policies promoted by the supposedly “sacred and apostolic” imperial State.

This is not to say that events seemed propitious from the start. Heightened eastern participation in Italian affairs began with the Emperor Justinian’s re-conquest of the peninsula from the German Ostrogoths, who had first been dispatched as imperial agents under Theodoric in the 490’s. The Ostrogoths were now to be destroyed in a terrible war extending from the 530’s through the 550’s. Bloodshed continued through the subsequent need to defend imperial gains against a new wave of Germanic Lombard invaders first arriving in Italy in 568. Due to the never-ending conflict, Rome and other imperial-ruled sections of the peninsula found themselves playing host to administrative and military personnel from the East, many of them totally ignorant of Latin. These new arrivals could be counted on to support whatever religious word games the Empire might wish to play. Such games were played not only with respect to the

---

<sup>37</sup> Maccarone, pp. 261-274; Richards, pp. 101-185; Mayeur, III, 147-196; Hughes, I, 248-290.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

doctrinal life of the Church but also with regard to her structure. This could be seen through exaltation of the roles of the bishops of the two imperial centers East and West, Constantinople and Ravenna, to the obvious detriment of that of the pope of “provincial” Rome.

As important and potentially dangerous as such a major bureaucratic and military migration might be, it was overshadowed in future significance by the positive impact of the highly cultivated Christian Hellenists who arrived in one impressive wave in the early 600's. These later colonists were Greeks or Greek-speaking Syrian, Palestinian, and North African migrants coming to Italy for two related motives. One was to escape the disastrous invasions of the eastern parts of the Empire mentioned above—first by the Persians, and, immediately after their crushing defeat at the hands of imperial forces, by the much more successful Arab Moslems. Another was to flee imperial, pro-Monothelite religious persecutions.<sup>38</sup>

Many Greeks and Greek-speakers headed to the more culturally related Sicily and southern Italy. Some went on to work as missionaries in the northern part of the peninsula, where, under the name of *decumani* and *pellegrini*, they played a definite but little known role in the evangelization of the fearful Lombards. Those who went to Rome tended to settle at a spot that had already become a small Hellenic neighborhood beforehand: the foot of the Aventine Hill. Traces of their presence remain imprinted on this spot still

---

<sup>38</sup> Follow this discussion in Richards, pp. 181-215; Herrin, pp. 206-219, 250-259; Maccarone, pp. 363-430; Mayeur, IV, 40-53, 642-645.

today. The Roman immigrants included numbers of very energetic monks who were formed by a spirituality best represented by St. Sophronius (560-638) of Palestine and his great disciple, the former civil servant and friend of emperors known to us as St. Maximus the Confessor.

This spirituality, among other things, gave open and intense support to the idea of life as a pilgrimage, one of those core principles we have identified as being supremely important for rendering more effective the Church's labor as the Body of Christ continued in time. St. Sophronius and his followers started with the general monastic recognition that the baggage we carry with us in the form of property and other possessions can very much obscure our vision of our eternal destination. They took this valuable insight still further, noting that ties to one's home and all the customary aspects of life within it—even though this might be an ascetic monastic center—can be the biggest piece of extra luggage blocking passage to our eternal fatherland. True abandonment to God and His providence thus required a spirit of pilgrimage reflected most palpably in a *physical* break with everything personally familiar. It involved a taking to the roads and the high seas; a wandering and ever challenging "exile" for Christ's sake. Wander these men and their spirituality did: from the Holy Land to North Africa; from North Africa to Spain; and perhaps from Spain to Ireland, whence their heirs were destined to wander to Britain and then back to the European Continent—enriched, by then, by yet another, different, but complementary spirituality to be addressed below.

For the moment, let it suffice for us to make two points: first of all, that this spirit of pilgrimage could not help but open up its adepts to that variety and flux of existence, that

## TURBULENT BATTLE

ever changing dance of life, which would play such a prominent role in the future activity of papal Rome; and, secondly, that these same pilgrim spirits nevertheless insisted that the world of diversity that they encountered must uniformly dance to the tune sung to it by the unchanging Word. As men solidly rooted in the truth, they understood that none of this diversity would be lost through union with and submission to the correcting and transforming grace of Christ. All that would be lost were those aspects of fallen nature truly worth abandoning.

Having reached the Eternal City, the "Greeks", those from the Holy Land in particular, took over and transformed some already existing monasteries and built many new ones. Greek-speaking monks and clerics then swiftly rose to importance in the seventh century Roman Church. Abbot John Symponus became a kind of "Secretary of State" to Honorius I (625-638) and John IV (640-642). Pope Honorius sent the deacon Sericus to Constantinople as papal ambassador — *apocrisarios* — to the imperial court. By the time of the reign of Pope St. Martin I (649-653), Sericus held the key position of Archdeacon of the Roman Church.

Greek officials were henceforth omnipresent: in Rome, as papal envoys abroad, as bishops scattered throughout Italy, and as representatives to General Councils, freely and fluently translating from Latin into Greek and back again. St. Maximus the Confessor, who arrived in the Eternal City at that same time, found that there were so many Greek-speakers active in the Roman clergy that he could even play a central role in Church affairs without knowing any Latin whatsoever. So numerous were these local and peninsular "Greeklings" that "the biographer of St. Wilfrid of Hexham

noted rather disapprovingly that when his hero presented himself to a synod in Rome in 704 to argue his case against deprivation of his see, the bishops present chatted and joked amongst themselves in Greek".<sup>39</sup>

Still more importantly, Greeks and Greek-speakers soon became popes themselves. Although the first of these, the Palestinian refugee Theodore (642-649), was elected in the beginning half of the century, and Pope Agatho (678-681) from Sicily may also have been of eastern Greek origin, it was not until 685 that the "Hellenic Papacy" really took flight. At that time, the Archdeacon John V (685-686), born in Antioch in Syria, ascended the papal throne after a normal career in the Roman clergy. Conon (686-687, a Greek speaker from Sicily), Sergius I (687-701, Syrian/Sicilian), John VI (701-705, a Greek of unknown origins), John VII (705-707, another Greek), Sissinius (708, Syrian), Constantine (708-715, Syrian), Gregory III (731-741, Syrian) and the extremely impressive Pope Zacharias (741-752, Greek as well) followed thereafter.<sup>40</sup>

If we were to speak of that pilgrim-spirited Greek domination of the Roman Church using modern terminology, we might say that it presented a multicultural success story. It showed that "multiculturalism" can be a positive force for good, so long as it allows one culture to serve as a "pilgrim" fuel, giving needed backbone to and thereby raising the level of another one that is in trouble. Perhaps Greek Rome is not so well known precisely because it does not fit the *pluralist* multicultural call for civilizations to melt into some least common denominator shaped "mush" susceptible to mass

---

<sup>39</sup> Richards, *Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 277.

<sup>40</sup> For Greek influence in general, see Richards, pp. 249-285; Mayeur, IV, 642-648.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

commercial word merchandizing. This was a multiculturalism that was valuable because it was a *rooted* multiculturalism; rooted in a deeper understanding of the consequences of correction and transformation in Christ coming from a committed union with the teaching and grace of the redeeming Savior. The new steps in the dance of the life that it taught the Romans were, therefore, brilliant ones indeed.

Eastern influence in Italy, whether under Greek-or Latin-speaking pontiffs, was felt in a variety of specific ways. One of these, the spirit of pilgrimage for the love of Christ, we have already amply discussed. A second eastern influence came in the form of the popularity of certain practices bringing the reality of the changed life stimulated by the Incarnation of the Word into many spheres of daily existence. Easterners were very much active in creating *xenodocheia*, hospices for foreigners and pilgrims, of whom there were, of course, many in Rome. These were frequently related to *diaconia*—charitable organizations, often monastic in character, providing aid to the poor and the sick, and attached to Greek churches and chapels in the Eternal City such as St. Maria in Cosmedin, St. George in Velabro, Saints Cosmas and Damian, Saints Sergius and Bacchus, St. Theodore and St. Hadrian.

Additional eastern influences were important in developing the Church's ability to "tell a good story about a true story", with significant contributions to liturgical life at the top of the list. For it is no insult to indicate that properly rooted liturgy focused on true worship of God is solid, effective theater as well. It tells the good story about the true story with a power and a range that nothing else can imitate

and match. Such eastern liturgical impact took shape in three clear ways.

One was through music, and not simply because of the appearance of Greek-inspired hymns in Latin translation for use in the Mass. Music was much more affected by eastern influence through the greater honor that it now received from high Church officials. Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-603), for all of his association with chant and his creation of a *schola cantorum*, was worried about the clergy's over-involvement with singing and sought ways to control and limit it. From the time of Pope Vitalian (657-672) onwards, however, the new, eastern-inspired spirit dominated. That spirit so exalted the role of music that musical accomplishments were soon seen as providing superb preparation for still higher ecclesiastical office. Men like John, Archcantor of the Roman Church, were sent on important diplomatic missions under their cultural cover as musicians. Gifted singers such as Sergius I became popes themselves.

Secondly, the Greek-speaking presence also enhanced liturgy through the impact of elaborate eastern ecclesiastical and court ceremonial on the various rites of the generally more sober Latin Church. Imperial splendor was especially noticeable in those ceremonies emphasizing the sacred role of the Papacy, rites that were enshrined in the mass books of the Latin-speaking Pope Gregory II (715-731). These more splendid and formalized liturgical practices were then carried out in churches beautified in the magnificent and icon-friendly eastern manner.

A third eastern liturgical contribution to the "good story about a true story" came through its development of the Church's devotional life. Eastern festivals, such as those of the Exaltation of the True Cross and the Nativity,



## TURBULENT BATTLE

Annunciation, and Dormition of the Virgin Mary were introduced to Rome. The cults of saints popular in the East, including those of the martyr St. Simeon, the doctors Cosmas and Damian, and a battery of warrior heroes like Saint George, who was venerated by the army, also took root. Saint George became so popular that Pope Zacharias himself carried his head in a grand procession from the Lateran to install it in a place of honor in the Church named after him.

Finally, the Greek-speaking migration also had a significant impact on Roman ability to root the "good story" of the Christian God in learned theological studies. This rekindled the deep concern for the old and new *paideia* that could be found both in the work of Italians of the fifth and sixth centuries like Martianus Cappella, Cassiodorus, Boethius, and Bishop Ennodius of Pavia as well as in the labors of large numbers of Gallic prelates from the senatorial aristocracy. The influence of these men, especially their emphasis upon maintenance of the structure of a Liberal Arts education and the need to translate into Latin the Greek classics that westerners were no longer able to read in their original language, was overturned by the unfortunate anti-scholarly tendencies favored by Pope St. Gregory I.

Not that Gregory, as we shall soon see, would have been in any way hostile to the pilgrim spirit and openness to the reality of the ever-changing dance of life also entering Rome with the eastern disciples of St. Sophronius. Nor was he opposed to telling a good story about the true story himself. Quite the opposite is the case. Nevertheless, his chief concern for the newly Christianized western Roman population was its protection from ancient pagan influences and fresh barbarian ones. He thus denounced the classical training of

the older intelligentsia as an obstacle to the effective catechesis of common people. From Gregory's standpoint, the ancient *paideia* was at best a simple waste of time, engaging bishops in literary word games and the preparation of sermons that no one in their congregations understood anyway. At worst, it was an introduction either to pagan intellectual and moral perversions or to heretical hair-splitting in dogmatic theology cultivated by subtle Greek word merchants. And if such were the case, it was a danger to the Christian soul in general.<sup>41</sup>

Gregory's impact was reversed through this eastern influx, first and foremost because the Greek language and Greek theological arguments became well known in Rome once more. Whereas men like Popes Vigilius (537-555), Honorius, and probably Gregory himself, could not understand Greek, this was no longer the case in the late 600's. By that time, an "elitist" classical training had once again become a ticket to higher office and deep esteem. One sees this in the election to the Papacy of a scholarly man like Zacharias who, ironically, translated the anti-Hellene Gregory's *Dialogues* into Greek. Hence, also, the praise given by the *Liber Pontificalis* to Pope Leo II (682-683), who rendered the Greek proceedings of the Sixth General Council into Latin and who was honored for both his scholarly and catechetical successes.<sup>42</sup>

By this point, we are ready to turn back to the question of Monophysitism and the importance of the Monothelite stage of its history. We must examine this era, first of all with

---

<sup>41</sup> Richards, pp. 167-180, 259, 269-285; See also, J. Richards, *Consul of God* (Routledge & Kegan, 1980); Mayeur, IV, 607-642.

<sup>42</sup> Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, p. 281.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

reference to the role of the Papacy in the life of the universal Church and then in terms of its value as a time of “summing up” the entire sense of the Christological battle. Eastern influence in both these realms was to prove to be a long-term blessing for Rome in particular and the cause of the Word in general—even if that lasting blessing had to be paid for through short-term suffering and abject humiliation.

An all too familiar “shock and awe” in the face of imperial power on the one hand, as well as a venal ambition to exploit that strength for personal benefit on the other, had entered Rome in the 530’s along with the troops from Constantinople. It did so to the great detriment of the reputation of the Holy See. A huge gap soon separated the energetic demeanor of Pope Gelasius and other defenders of Chalcedon at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries from Pope Vigilius’ ambivalence and pusillanimity at the time of the Emperor Justinian’s reconciliation efforts. Justinian’s endeavors involved the unseemly badgering of prelates into *pro forma* acceptance of “appropriate” conciliatory “words” at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), and that shameful condemnation of long dead theologians disliked by Monophysite thinkers already mentioned above.<sup>43</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Gregorian anti-intellectualism began to take root, giving all theological speculation a bad name in Roman eyes. Anti-intellectualism made it seem as though dogmatic theology were a rhetorical game played by pointlessly subtle snobs. It was almost as though someone with a Platonic spirit could be chastised as being a follower of Isocrates. This anti-speculative outlook did not take the issues

---

<sup>43</sup> Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, pp. 139-161.

that were still at stake in Christological disputes all that seriously, and thus, at least at first, missed the significance of the substantive points being made by participants in the Monothelite struggle. Hence the confusion of one of Gregory's most loyal followers, the hapless Pope Honorius, who dismissed the whole battle over energies and wills as the work of "croaking frogs".<sup>44</sup> Rather than freeing him from that "elitist" conflict, however, his air of contempt made him an unsuspecting agent for encouraging seriously "frog croaking" attacks on Chalcedon, along with broad Monothelite attempts to overturn the work of St Leo the Great. Would that such an outcome were the last manifestation of the dangers of an anti-theological position in the life of the Church!

Seventh and eighth century Greek-speaking monks, clerics, and popes reversed this emasculation of the Papacy as they also ended papal disdain for theology. They did so in two ways. First of all, they strengthened Roman recognition of the Holy See's responsibility for the universal Church and its spirit of independence vis-à-vis the State. Secondly, they used the power and prestige of the Roman Pontiff as the *legitimate*, authoritative, sacred and apostolic voice in the concluding battle for a complete and proper understanding of Christ as God-Man against its *illegitimate* sacred and apostolic imperial competitor.

Eastern efforts to enhance the role and prestige of the Roman Pontiffs were conscious ones. Everything—from treatises regarding the fullness of papal authority to Pope Sergius I's symbolic translation of the body of St. Leo the Great to a new and more splendid and prominent tomb—testifies to this fact. Despite occasional setbacks, owed more

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

to the advanced age and personality of one or two Greek and Latin-speaking popes than to anything else, the reputation of the Papacy was infinitely higher by the end of Pope Zacharias' reign than at the beginning of Pope John V's. The words of St. Maximus the Confessor then rang visibly true:<sup>45</sup>

The extremities of the earth, and all in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord look directly towards the most holy Roman Church and its confession and faith, as it were to a sun of unfailling light, awaiting from it the bright radiance of the sacred dogmas of our Fathers according to what the six inspired and holy councils have purely and piously decreed, declaring most expressly the symbol of faith. For from the coming down of the incarnate Word amongst us, all the Churches in every part of the world have held that greatest Church alone as their base and foundation, seeing that according to the promise of Christ our Savior, gates of hell do never prevail against it, that it has the keys of a right confession and faith in Him, that it opens the true and only religion to such as approach with piety, and shuts up and locks every heretical mouth that speaks injustice against the Most High.

---

<sup>45</sup> Maximus, *Opuscula theologica et polemica*, 12, translation from "Maximus of Constantinople", *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton, Fifteen Volumes, 1911), X, 80; see, also, Maccarone, pp. 363-430; St. Maximus Confessor (Newman Press, 1956, pp. 3-28, 76-77; Mayeur, V, 40-53, 198-208, 642-644; Herrin, pp. 255-259.

Shortly after the reign of Honorius, wandering Greek-speaking monks, St. Maximus prominent among them, began to transform Rome intellectually through the influence of Eastern learning.<sup>46</sup> They brought along with them a passion to use that wisdom to fight against the Monothelites. Anti-Montheletism, as St. Sophronius had made crystal clear, was a position that emphasized the impact of the Word on absolutely every aspect of life, demonstrating that even such natural human qualities as “energy” and “will” had to have been assumed by Christ if all that was human were fully to be saved by Him. Far from being rooted in some naturalist enterprise, as the Monophysites claimed that Chalcedonian insistence upon Christ’s simultaneous humanity and divinity inevitably was, St. Sophronius underlined the fact that the Council’s teaching was central to any proper appreciation of the ultimate divinization of the whole of the redeemed individual.

It was this outside eastern stimulus that inspired Pope St. Martin I (649-653) to call the Lateran Synod of 649 to attack both Monothelites and their sacred imperial political supporters. Easterners were most active at that Synod, through the *primicerius notariorum*, Theophylact, the senior notaries—Paschal, Exuperius, Theodore, Anastasius and Paschasius—the four Greek abbots long time resident in the city of Rome—John of St. Saba, Theodore of St. Saba in Africa, Thalassius of Saints Maria and Andreas, and George of Aquae Salviae—and, most significantly, a memorial signed by thirty-seven monks demanding pro-Chalcedonian action on the part of the Papacy. It was St. Maximus who most nobly responded to complaints from Constantinople that the synod

---

<sup>46</sup> Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, pp. 249-285.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

was invalid since it had been held without the sacred Emperor's orders. "If it is not pious faith but the order of the emperor that validates synods," he thundered, recalling previous imperial intrusions in Church affairs, now generally recognized as noxious by everyone: "let them accept the synods that were held against the *Homoousion* at Tyre, at Antioch, at Seleucia, and the robber council of Ephesus."<sup>47</sup>

Emperor Constans II retaliated by having imperial representatives in Rome kidnap St. Martin and bring him to Constantinople. When the pope still refused to accept the state's approval of Monothelitism, he was shipped off to a harsh exile, dying a confessor/martyr in the Crimea in March of 655. St. Maximus was also captured and subjected to terrible personal humiliation and bodily suffering, including severe mutilation of the flesh whose dignity he had done so much to defend. He died in 662, seven years after St. Martin. But he left behind him a very modern sounding testimony to the real meaning of the Word as a corrective and transforming force on earth totally destructive to the "good stories" of a "sacred" secular system more concerned about matters of "inclusivity", "divisiveness", and "public order" than truth.<sup>48</sup>

If, to realize an economy {a compromise} one suppresses the salvific faith at the same moment as heresy, one does not do anything other by that supposed economy than amputate God rather than

---

<sup>47</sup> Translation, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, X, 80; Mayeur, IV, 40-53; Hussey, pp. 14-15, 19-22.

<sup>48</sup> Maximus, as cited in Mayeur, IV, 48; Geanakoplos, p. 138.

maintain His unity. Tomorrow, the Jews...will say to us: let us arrange a peace among us and unite. We will suppress circumcision on our side and baptism on yours and we will cease to combat one another. The Arians proposed the same when they wrote to Constantine the Great: let us suppress the words 'consubstantial' and 'different substance', so that the churches may unite. That was not the judgment of our Fathers, inspired by God: they preferred to be persecuted and put to death rather than to keep silent one revealed word of the unique divinity, superior to all substance, the divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And that happened when Constantine the Great allied with the authors of this type of proposition, as those who scrupulously related all that happened then have testified. No Emperor could persuade the Fathers, inspired by God, to consent to a rapprochement with the heretics by compromising expressions. They employed clear and precise expressions corresponding perfectly to the dogma placed in question, and they proclaimed loudly that only the bishops had the right to search for and formulate salutary dogmas of the universal Church.

'You then say: What? Is it not true that a Christian Emperor is also a priest?' I respond: No; since he has no place at the altar; he does not consecrate the bread and does not say thereafter on elevating it: 'Holy things to the holy!' He does not baptize, does not anoint with holy oil, does not choose and does not create bishops, priests, and deacons; he does not



## TURBULENT BATTLE

sanctify liturgical sites; he does not wear the distinctive signs of the priesthood, the *omophorion* and the Gospel, but those of royalty, the crown and the purple. 'And why does Scripture say that Melchisedech is king and priest?' (Gen., 14, 18; Heb., 7,1), you say. I respond: he is the sole natural king, the God of the universe, become for our salvation the sole High Priest, of whom Melchisedech is the unique type. When you affirm that another is king and priest according to the order of Melchisedech, dare to cite the text that follows: '...who is without father, without mother, without genealogy, whose days have no beginning and whose life has no end' (Heb. 7, 3). And see what will be the false consequence of your affirmation: (that other 'king and priest') will be another incarnated God, working for our salvation as a priest in the order of Melchisedech and not in the order of Aaron. But what good is it to multiply the arguments? During the holy sacrifice, at the sacred altar, it is after having mentioned the bishops, the deacons, and the whole of the clergy that one recalls the emperors, with the laity, when the deacon says: 'and the laity who have fallen asleep in the faith, Constantine, Constantius, etc'. Again, he recalls the living emperors after having mentioned all those who have been consecrated to God. At these words, {Patriarch} Menas cried out: 'your words have caused division in the Church'. Maximus responded to him: 'if he who cites the texts of Holy Scripture and the Fathers causes division in the Church, what treatment will he {the emperor} who suppresses the dogmas of

the saints, without whom there would not even be a Church, inflict upon the Church'?

A Rome strengthened by such powerful eastern influence did not retreat, despite the fate of Martin and Maximus. Greek-speakers like Theodore, Bishop John of Philadelphia, Theophanes of St. Caesarius ad Baias, George, priest and monk of Saints Maria and Andreas, along with Conon and Stephen of the Domus Arsicia Monastery, continued to deal vigorously with fall-out from the Monothelite Controversy down through the end of the century. By that time, however, the Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatus (668-685) ruled over a territory in which the Monophysite population had been reduced to a negligible minority and therefore ceased to be a major political problem to be resolved by "business as usual" doctrinal manipulation on the part of the sacred and apostolic government. He therefore called for a new empire-wide synod to bring the battle to an official conclusion. Pope St. Agatho sent representatives to the Third Council of Constantinople, in November, 680, with the Emperor presiding and the papal legates in the place of honor at his right hand – both "sacred" authorities now, seemingly, in full accord.<sup>49</sup>

Monothelism, and with it Monophysitism, were condemned. All the developments in Trinitarian and Christological thought taking place until this point were effectively "summed up" through this condemnation. Jesus Christ as fully God and fully man, as the Incarnate Word divinizing every aspect of the human individual, including

---

<sup>49</sup> Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, pp. 181-215; Herrin, pp. 207-280. See also Vasiliev, I, 222-231.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

his energy and will, had won this long raging theological conflict. In the process, the Holy See had much more clearly than ever before been confirmed as the final, authoritative, sacred and apostolic voice of Christ's Body, continued in history as His Church. But it was a Rome whose confidence in its right to rule that Church and whose ability to tell a good story about the true Christian story in doing so had been strengthened from the "outside": through the spirituality of wandering Eastern pilgrims and pilgrim pontiffs of Greek blood and language, all of them committed to the use of each and every human talent for the benefit of understanding the Faith. Once again, this was a multicultural, "Word-drenched" success story if ever there was one.

By now, however, the struggle over Iconoclasm was ready to explode. It was logical that it should do so, since that conflict was destined to aid the summary of the flaws of the "good but false story" about the relationship of the Sacred Empire and the Church, and complete that magnificent advance in knowledge of the full meaning of the Word in history discernable throughout the whole of the turbulent imperial period. It did so by bringing up questions regarding the sacred character of the entirety of nature emerging logically from discussion of the tools needed for a complete deification of all the varied aspects of an individual human personality.

While not as complex or enduring as the conflict over Christology, the Iconoclast Controversy does divide neatly into two distinct stages.<sup>50</sup> A first outburst took place in the

---

<sup>50</sup> For Iconoclasm, see Mayeur, IV, 93-165; Herrin, pp. 307-465; Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, p. 216-232; Vasiliev, 1234-299;

early eighth century when a variety of natural and military disasters befell the Empire, and commanders of the army along with ordinary soldiers sought out viable reasons for all these setbacks. Two “appropriate explanations” immediately came to the fore. If campaigns against image smashing (i.e., *iconoclast*) Arab Moslems were going badly, might it not be the case that the image friendly (i.e., *iconodule*) Romans were engaged in an activity displeasing to God and being suitably punished for their sins? And should that be true, was it not the case that the supporters of such blasphemy must be chastised?

Who was it that actually made and promoted the use of these blasphemous images? It was monks, whose influence over the religious and political life of the Empire had always been enormous. Yet these same blasphemous monks gave to the Empire neither service under arms nor children for the armies of the future. What possible grounds could there be for those who recognized such obvious, common sense evidence not to punish these fraudulent ascetics for their anti-social and self-interested uselessness? What possible reason for not tossing both them and their idolatrous icons onto the bonfire of the vanities? Even the supposed miracles that had once taken place at the feet of such diabolical images had ceased occurring anyway, thereby adding further naturally-discernable proof of God’s displeasure at their veneration by deluded Christians.

Supporting the message recounted by such well-constructed tales, the Emperors Leo III (717-741) and Constantine V (741-775) pressed the Church for acceptance of

## TURBULENT BATTLE

an anti-image policy. Governmentally-backed Iconoclasm was pursued most openly and authoritatively through a Council at Hiereia in 754. Interestingly enough, not a single member of that Pentarchy so deeply cherished by past imperial ministers, court bishops, and word merchants was present at the gathering. Consultation with the Pentarchy was discarded as a prop for sacred imperial action, since it was no longer trustworthy and therefore politically useless. Instead, the State resorted to cultivation of a concern for "original intent" in support of its entry onto the iconoclast path. It claimed to be defending an Apostolic Christian Tradition that firmly and openly rejected the use of images against the innovations of the monastic iconodules and their fellow idolaters. Hiereia hurled anathemas against the chief villains among them: Patriarch Germanos of Constantinople (715-730), George of Cyprus (the author of the *Admonition of an Old Man on Images*), and St. John of Damascus—the last of whom wrote, ironically enough, from the safety provided him by his own iconoclast but tolerant Moslem rulers. Assaults on iconodules, especially monks, a large number of whom were forcibly married off to female religious to provide future soldiers for the Empire, intensified. Refugees fled imperial wrath to the traditional places of exile, with an iconodule Rome, under the ever more effective control of a Papacy reinvigorated with Greek assistance, at the top of their list of secure destinations.

Iconoclast pressures began to ease under Leo IV (775-780). After his death, his image-friendly wife, Irene, along with Tarasius, an ally from the imperial bureaucracy whom she made priest and patriarch (784-806), took advantage of her regency for her young son, Constantine VI (780-797), to begin

to put Imperial Christendom back in order. Despite the continued hostility of the Roman troops, who for a time successfully blocked it, she finally managed to open the Second Council of Nicaea on 24 September, 787. This reversed the decisions of the preposterous gathering of politically and rhetorically minded prelates at Hiereia. Nicaea was clearly a more acceptable synod from any canonical or even merely customary standpoint, since representatives of the once favored Pentarchy, including those of the Patriarch of Rome, were all present and accounted for.

Unfortunately, the military situation of the Empire did not improve under the succeeding iconodule rulers. Soldiers, fondly recalling the victories they had won under image-smashing inspiration, followed commanders who were happy to exploit their sentiments and lead them into open rebellion. Leo V (813-820) then called yet another synod in 815 to begin the attack on images anew. Assaults on icons and iconodules resumed. They continued under Michael II (820-829) and his son, Theophilus (829-842), with the theological support of a scholarly Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Grammarian (837-843). This prelate's more learned Iconoclasm was nevertheless accompanied by a still more brutal persecution. Icons were now even tattooed on the bodies of their supporters as punishment for their belief in the importance of using images in the worship of the Creator of the universe.

Despite the disturbance of normal ecclesiastical life, a fruitful doctrinal development nonetheless took place yet again in the midst of this two-stage period of turmoil and sorrow. Iconoclasts themselves brought up serious arguments as fuel for debate. They pointed to indisputable statements by a number of early Church thinkers that did indeed seem to

## TURBULENT BATTLE

require the rejection of images as objects of idol worship. In doing so, they helped to stimulate historical and philological studies with long-term consequences for the future of learning in the Eastern Empire. Iconoclasts also spoke of the need to follow the true image of Christ, which was said to be found in the words of Scripture, the dogmatic teachings of the Church, and, most importantly, in the Holy Eucharist. They called for "painting" the image of Christ, not in picture form, but through the formation of individuals more dedicated to the cultivation of good behavior and the rejection of wicked deeds. The more moderate among them even engaged in significant discussions of catechetical methodology, admitting that icons might be useful as teaching tools, but only if placed in such a way as to avoid their illicit worship by the faithful.

Confronted intellectually, the orthodox defenders of icons were somewhat slow in deepening their own understanding of the truth of their position and their ability to teach it. Yes, a sophisticated defense of icons was to be found in the work of St. John of Damascus, and the dogmatic pronouncement of the Second Council of Nicaea made that crucial distinction between the veneration and the adoration of images that remains essential to the proper understanding of their use down through to the present. Still, first stage iconodule apologetics were more emotive in character than anything else, reflecting a hunt for a 'good story' that was not necessarily pertinent to the issue or sometimes even true at all. Vitriolic attacks on iconoclast Jewish and Moslem tendencies often dominated its approach. These were accompanied by moving accounts of supernaturally produced icons of apostolic pedigree, along with catalogues

of the miracles brought about through appeals to their holy assistance. Such stories gave to images the prestige of relics and a noble lineage as ancient as that of Holy Writ. But could miraculous tales, true or false, hold up against the theological objections presented by the iconoclasts?

Although accounts of supernatural icon production, along with catalogues of the miracles associated with them, continued to be a major source of future iconodule defense, a much more profound understanding of the real meaning of image veneration finally took root. Yes, the iconodules admitted that the Eucharist, as the Body and Blood of the Savior, was the greatest "image of Christ". And, yes, that greatest of images had to be painted on the souls of believers who rejected evil and cultivated good deeds. On the other hand, the friends of images came to see that the strength of their position lay in the fact that they possessed a broader and more accurate grasp of the sacred mission of nature as a whole than the iconoclasts did. Unlike the latter, who generally sought to limit the sacred in nature to a narrow liturgical space that could, in practice, be shaped and controlled more easily by the Sacred Emperor and his court bishops, the iconodules extended it to encompass the entirety of a universe that was destined for correction and transformation in Christ.

Thinkers such as Patriarch Nicephoros (806-815) and St. Theodore the Stoudite (759-826), building upon the work of St. John of Damascus, thus related all of Creation to God as an image to its source and painter. They insisted that everything natural was meant to speak to man of things divine. They held that a nature corrected and exalted by supernatural grace spoke infinitely more fully and effectively than one that was struggling along with only its own valuable but stunted



## TURBULENT BATTLE

Seeds of the Logos. Moreover, they continued, failure to recognize that Christians learned of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from sources other than ancient written documents, and that knowledge of Christ's message could actually grow and develop through the ages, was part and parcel of a critical limitation of mind and spirit that also narrowed the effects of the Word made flesh over time and space. Victory over the iconoclasts thus meant that Christ's Church recognized the rights of the Eternal Word as King of all of Creation, with individual men and their communities as His standard bearers and stewards. It spelled recognition of the fact that the march of Christians through history could be one that actually deepened their grasp of the Faith and its significance—in this particular case, precisely with respect to icons and their veneration.<sup>51</sup>

Such developments were also important in weakening the continuing hold of dangerous aspects of Neo-Platonic thought over the Christian mind. Neo-Platonists and their Christian followers saw all of existence as a "great chain of being" stretching from the highest rung—God—down to man and the varied component elements of the universe. The vision of a Great Chain of Being as such was not the problem here, nor the conviction that that Chain was structured according to a "hierarchy of values". Difficulties emerged chiefly with the belief that greater corruption entered into the created universe the more earthly and fleshly the element involved, and that ultimately the entirety of this material cosmos was shut off from any real union with its all too sublime and unreachable spiritual center. Truly substantive

---

<sup>51</sup> See Mayeur, IV, 147-155.

Monophysites, as opposed to those merely quibbling over the definition of words, were all subject to Neo-Platonic temptations. So were many iconoclasts. These temptations were made manifest in their psychological fear of contaminating the Godhead through too close a contact with anything natural, human or otherwise. It was just this type of overly friendly embrace that both Chalcedon and iconodules together were accused of stimulating.

Opponents of Monophysites and iconoclasts effectively countered such a vision. They showed that each and every level of a Great Chain of Being organized according to a true, Christian grasp of the hierarchy of values had intrinsic worth. And, corollary to that, they demonstrated that the more earthly and fleshly aspects of Creation were not essentially more corrupt than those that were more spiritual. In fact, all of nature could truly be corrected and transformed. Jesus Christ was King of the universe: not just certain parts of the universe, but the entirety of the cosmos, and, with it, the entirety of that microcosm that we call the individual human person. Membership in Jesus Christ, both God and man, gave to the individual steward of Creation the hope of an eternal union with the fullness of the Light—not just entry into the “suburbs” of an unreachable spiritual center. A “good story with a happy ending” divinizing the business as usual of the sacred Empire did not teach Christians these truths. It was the “word of the Word” that did so. And that “word of the Word” came through the agency of the evolving wisdom of the ancient Church Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, along with their later, pilgrim minded Greek representatives, working ever more consciously through the authoritative voice of the Roman Pontiffs.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

*D. The Good Imperial Story, Political Reality, & Pilgrim Change*

Already at the time of the Persian debacle, the Emperor Heraclius illustrated at least a practical recognition that Roman power was really not the eternally unalterable force that the “good story” promoted by men like Eusebius of Caesarea depicted it as being. Energetic in all spheres, the emperor began to make major changes in imperial administration and policy that would ultimately be very effective in maintaining and even turning the tide against the external enemy. This willingness to deal with a changed reality through political transformations that did not compromise Catholic truth was a sign of health in the Roman East. It came to involve three specific developments: a more acceptable cooperation of Church and State on doctrinal matters; a recognition of the contemporary necessity for a further militarization of political and social life; and, finally, the growth of a deep crusading spirit—long before the reign of Pope Urban II (1088-1099), the Council of Clermont (1095), and the recapture of Jerusalem (1099).<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, these pilgrim changes resulted from a profoundly serious “reality check” and therefore represented a long-term process. In the short term—that is to say, the whole of the horrible seventh and the eighth centuries—serious Christians could easily wonder whether the Roman Empire would honestly be able to cope with an altered reality without disturbing the substance of the Faith. As the crisis

---

<sup>52</sup> Herrin, pp. 181-206; Vasiliev, I, 199-229, 300-374; II, 403; Ostrogorsky, pp. 210-315; Mayeur, IV, 167-296.

with the Persians gave way to disaster at the hands of the Arab Moslems, and the Monothelite stage of the Monophysite battle to the Iconoclast Controversy, Roman Imperial Christendom could readily appear to them to be both politically doomed and spiritually incurable.

This foreboding was perhaps more palpable still in the West than in the East. St. Augustine had already posed the basic question in *The City of God* after the sack of Rome of 410. It could not help but be asked yet again as Justinian's gains crumbled swiftly under combined Germanic and Arabic pressure. Roman forces had made their initial victorious headway in Italy only at the cost of massive devastation of the peninsula, and they could barely hold onto a few coastal areas and roads in the north and the center against an unending Lombard onslaught. The Eternal City herself was regularly in danger of being taken by these much-feared and little-trusted barbarians. Spain fell rapidly into the hands of the Visigoths. North Africa held out longer, but only because of the absence of a foreign foe. When this foe appeared in the form of the Moslems, Africa was also severed from the Empire. Meanwhile, Roman Gaul and Britain, both of which had been dominated by Franks, Angles, and Saxons since the fifth century, had never at any moment been threatened with serious re-conquest by Roman armies dispatched from Constantinople.<sup>53</sup>

"Eternal" Rome was obviously falling apart. A concern for what to do in response to this changed political reality first produced a major practical transformation in the collapsed western imperial sphere. Domination of seventh

---

<sup>53</sup> On the general situation in the West, see Randers-Pherson; Hughes, II, 44-108; Herrin, pp. 19-53.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

and eighth century Rome by "foreigners" from the East must have fostered the process of Church willingness to adapt to undeniable change. It may not be at all fanciful to argue that the "multiculturalism" occasioned by the Greek pilgrimage westward contributed to Latin openness in other matters as well. And this included, in the final analysis, a readiness to switch temporal allegiance from sacred and apostolic Roman Emperors in Constantinople who were incapable of protecting western Christians to newly converted Germanic rulers in the West who could potentially do so. This switch of allegiance, sealed, symbolically, by the coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas Day, 800, was built upon a Triple Alliance conceived in the 490's in the former Roman province of Gaul.

Germanic allies of Rome had settled within the borders of Gaul during the fourth century. A number of German enemies invaded soon thereafter. All these various tribes began battling among themselves for supremacy as the imperial government collapsed. Their conflicts were watched with a certain pained indifference by the urban Gallo-Roman population, presided over by bishops from families of the old senatorial aristocracy, proud of their heritage of both culture and blood. The Gallo-Romans must have felt that they would lose in this tribal contest, regardless of the group of barbarians that triumphed. None of the Germans were Catholics at the time of the invasions. All of them were either pagans or Arian heretics. None had a real sense of the spirit of classical civilization or a grasp of the laws, art, and philosophy of the *imperium*. War was their occupation, just as war was their sport. Both Greco-Roman and Christian *paideia* together were the inevitable victims in this reign of the

gladiators, though there was one silver lining in the midst of disaster: both “teachings” also became more intimately bound in a sacred union as they awaited the common axe to fall.<sup>54</sup>

Clovis (c. 466-511), the King of the Franks—a tribe, many of whose members had first moved into Gaul as Roman allies—began to transform this picture radically. He may or may not have had religious sentiments; he may or may not have appreciated the fullness of Roman culture. Clovis definitely did want one thing, though. He wished to see the strength of his tribe increase. He may have felt that he had found a key to satisfaction of this desire in an acceptance of Catholicism. Catholic Baptism would signify association not simply with orthodoxy, but also—because of Christianity’s connection with the Empire, and the growing intimacy of the Faith and Greco-Roman *paideia*—union with prestigious imperial and classical ideals as well. The result might well be to galvanize an indifferent local population for the support of his particular German tribe as its friend and protector. Whatever the motivation, Clovis and the Franks did enter the Church; many Gallo-Romans did, thus, rally to their cause; a Triple Alliance capable of uniting things Greco-Roman, Christian, and German had indeed been conceived.<sup>55</sup>

Conception is not birth, however, and the Triple Alliance conceived by Clovis subjected Western Europe to a long and

---

<sup>54</sup> On the situation in Gaul, see: Randers-Pehrson, pp. 116-131, 251-275; Herrin, pp. 68-70, 105-115; E. James, *The Franks* (Blackwell, 1988), pp. 34-77; Van Dam, pp. 115-178; and Mathiesen in general.

<sup>55</sup> James, pp. 78-88, 121-129; Herrin, p. 105; C. Dawson, *The Making of Europe*, p. 94.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

difficult pregnancy. Rome was not built in a day; it also proved to be impossible to construct either Rome or a Catholic sense of things in Frankish Gaul overnight. Neither Clovis nor his descendants were able to create a legal, cultural, and religious order that might begin to please a serious student of Greco-Roman *paideia* or a practicing Catholic. Barbarous concepts swiftly began to corrupt Christian teachings and practices. The character and authoritative self-confidence of bishops plunged, their spirit seemingly maintained only for the vulgar purpose of constructing family-run dioceses whose resources served to augment clan prestige and wealth: in other words, for the “business as usual” concerns of those taking the “obvious” demands of “nature as is” as their definitive guide. There was no development of a state administration worthy of the Roman name. The Merovingian Dynasty, as Clovis’ line was known, could not even sustain itself, and became more inbred, more vicious, and more incompetent as time went on. Assistants to the king, called Mayors of the Palace, coming from the ranks of that Frankish family from the area around Metz that we call the Carolingians, soon found that they were hard at work performing the tasks their useless Merovingian sovereigns could not carry out.<sup>56</sup>

Before moving on, let us once again return to the theme of the pilgrimage spirit and its importance for fulfillment of the plan of God in history. The Franks had settled in the provinces of a deeply Romanized Gaul which had grown fascinated with personal pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the

---

<sup>56</sup> James, pp. 129-137, 144-145; P. Riché, *The Carolingians* (U. of Pennsylvania, 1993), pp. 1-33.

latter fourth century, when such undertakings were still physically possible. Two Gallic writings of the 300's, the *Peregrinatio ad loca sancta* and the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, described a well-trod pilgrimage circuit that involved not only sites in Palestine but visits to the pioneer monastic communities of Egypt and Syria, whose influences had penetrated westward at the time of St. Athanasius' exile to Trier earlier in that same century. These works provided valuable information on everything from church discipline, liturgy, devotional life, and architecture to the imperial transport system and the amenities available to the first pilgrims. In addition, they were yet another introduction to the concept we have already treated in depth: the need for each of us to recognize that we are all wanderers through a fleeting earthly existence, and that even a brief moment on pilgrimage enables us to treat this basic but easily neglected truth much more seriously.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately for the newly Catholic Franks of the late 400's, the shattering of the *Pax Romana* limited their own pilgrimage goals to local destinations. Nevertheless, pilgrimages to the shrines of men like St. Martin of Tours (c. 316-c. 397) and St. Julian of Brioude (300's) aided mightily in the development of popular understanding of Christian doctrine. Pilgrims often came to such sites to benefit from the miraculous powers derived from a touch of the bones of the saints. They could not help but see in the wondrous cures obtained in such humble locations and through such lowly means the broad consequences of the Word Incarnate transforming nature in Christ. All space and time appeared to

---

<sup>57</sup> On pilgrimages and the cult of relics, see Quasten, IV, 558-563; Van Dam, pp. 177-300.



## TURBULENT BATTLE

have been stirred by the fleshly entrance of the Almighty into history and His offer of supernatural grace. Pilgrim exaltation was so great on the feasts of the saints whose tombs were visited that these were days, as one Frankish source noted, when the whole of the holy Catholic Church rejoiced and "danced together".<sup>58</sup> It was the dance of life adapted to the Gallic environment; the good story told in a way that specifically touched the Gallo-Roman-Frankish soul.

A spirit of pilgrimage was kept alive even in the darkest of Merovingian times. Appropriately enough, given what we have seen happening in Rome, this strengthening came from the work of still other wandering foreign monks. Some of these heroic figures, such as St. Columbanus (540-615) and his fellow Irish ascetics, represented that vision of a pilgrimage for Christ demanding the kind of self-exile that had also been taught by St. Sophronius. They may have received this teaching directly from St. Patrick, who had felt himself driven by it as much as any eastern monk. On the other hand, due to the manifold contacts of Ireland with Visigothic Spain, and Visigothic Spain with the Mediterranean at large, there are clear grounds for believing that the Irish also imbibed it from the wandering followers of St. Sophronius themselves, some of whom may even have made it to the Emerald Isle.<sup>59</sup>

Whatever the origin of such a salutary influence, Irish exiles nurtured the ideal of abandonment of all things familiar amidst a population where Gallo-Romans and Franks were now hard to distinguish one from the other, both in blood as well as in semi-barbarous and semi-pagan

---

<sup>58</sup> Van Dam, p. 300.

<sup>59</sup> Fletcher, pp. 130-159; James, pp. 129-137; Dawson, pp. 171-181.

behavior. But they were not alone in doing so. Self-exiled Britons worked alongside them. These British wanderers were themselves the beneficiaries of Irish monastic influences, but bred together with another kind of pilgrim spirit, complementary but different, coming to them from Rome. I speak here, of course, of Benedictines like St. Boniface (c. 672-754), whose personal career as evangelist led the Roman pontiffs to give him the title of Apostle to the Germans.<sup>60</sup>

British Benedictines brought to Gaul not just that sense of individual Christian pilgrim mission so keenly cherished by the Irish but also a feel for a pilgrim mission organized as a social venture; one with a clear authoritative structure, provided for the sake of constructing a militant new polis, a branch of the universal Christian *agmen* on its boat-rocking march through history. This latter sentiment was imparted to them from that supreme representative of a union of things Christian and Roman, individual and social, natural and supernatural, St. Benedict of Norcia (c. 480-543). Every aspect of this Patron of Europe's famous *Rule*, with its emphasis upon a variegated life of work and study inside a monastic polis supporting that commitment to prayer that was the chief labor of his monks, reflected a considered application of Greco-Roman wisdom to the supreme Christian end of sanctification. Benedict's balanced and harmonious monastic regimen gave birth to Christian achievements of Greco-Roman flavor of crucial significance to the future in too many

---

<sup>60</sup> On Benedictine monasticism and its impact in Britain, see Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of England* (Harvard, 1930); Dawson, pp. 98, 174-186; Richards, *Consul of God*, pp. 228-256; Fletcher, pp. 107-121; Hughes, II, 68-108.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

realms, aesthetic and scientific, to be catalogued fully at the present juncture.

Benedictine Christian and Greco-Roman syncretism was promoted by a masterful pilgrim commander who pressed one of its Italian followers, St. Augustine of Canterbury (early 500's-604), unwillingly onto the path to Kent: Pope St. Gregory the Great. Gregory was pastor *par excellence*, and his courage in confronting new steps in the dance of life was as fruitful as his discomfort regarding theological sophistication was disruptive. He was destined not only to initiate this unpredictably vast Benedictine pilgrim enterprise but also to guide it with prudent and tolerant instructions for confronting its initial potential pagan converts. Interestingly enough, the mission to Britain that he stimulated was then significantly strengthened through the work of vigorous proponents of the classicism that he himself disparaged: the seventh century Greek-speaking immigrants to the Eternal City. In fact one of these Hellenists, St. Theodore of Tarsus (602-690), himself became the eighth Archbishop of Canterbury, contributing mightily both to putting the new English Church on an even keel as well as to encouraging its own indigenous commitment to fashioning a learned Christianity.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the inevitable tensions and temptations to excommunicate one another that emerged out of the meeting of these different pilgrim monastic enterprises, Irish and Benedictine, in Britain, the fusion of their visions and labors in the northern province of Northumbria proved to be

---

<sup>61</sup> Herrin, pp. 78, 270; Dawson, p. 182; Bede, Books IV and V; Hughes, II, 68-108; Mayeur, III, 941-958; IV, 607-642.

formative on both sides of the Channel. Our chief source regarding this second evangelization of Britain is St. Bede the Venerable (672/673-735), one of the greatest *racconteurs* of a "good story" in history. He describes in detail the manner in which the Benedictines and the Irish carried out their work, the organizational talents of the first, the scholarly and artistic merits of the second, how their union eventually was cemented, and the many obstacles placed in the path of both forces. These obstacles included the enmity of the remaining Romano-British Christians, whose parochial blindness left them uninterested in leading the hated barbarians to salvation under any circumstances whatsoever. Not all pilgrims for Christ have been so fortunate in having the history of their sacrifices so well documented. Thankfully, Bede's account of their tale was more than an historical project. It followed Gregory's example and provided guidance to anyone who might seek to imitate such missionary work in different lands in the future. And it well demonstrated, in doing so, how a good story about a true story might be supremely useful to the spreading of the Gospel in any age and under any circumstances.<sup>62</sup>

Grand visions of a special, pilgrim mission entrusted to the tribe of the Franks emerged with the rise to kingship of the Carolingian Family under Pippin the Short (751-768). It was he who was responsible for finally "delivering" the Triple Alliance nurtured in the early medieval European womb. By the 740's, Pippin, one of the Carolingian Mayors of the Palace, was eager to gain for himself the title of King of the Franks. He was, after all, doing the basic work that merited this honor anyway. Pippin knew that the prestige of

---

<sup>62</sup> Bede, Books IV and V; Dawson, pp. 181-184.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

his father, Charles the Hammer (717-741), who had thrown back a threatened Moslem invasion of Gaul in the 730's, had given his family great stature among the Frankish warriors. Still, something more than military prestige was needed to secure the title from an already reigning chieftain-king presumed to be descended from Clovis, the very man who had led the Franks to Baptism in the first place. That something else, he felt, was a still more serious and explicit tie with the Roman Church, the Eternal City, and their sacred and secular mission than even Clovis himself had assured.<sup>63</sup>

St. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) was another giant in the effort of harnessing Greek and Roman wisdom to the Christian chariot. A man whose encyclopedic knowledge was passed to the Franks both by means of refugees from the Moslem invasion of Spain in the early 700's as well as through the teaching of the Irish-English monks, St. Isidore was to be of enormous help in justifying a change of dynasty. He had already been of yeoman service to the Visigothic rulers of the Iberian Peninsula in the previous century in dealing with precisely this kind of problem: by providing them with the theoretical underpinnings for an exchange of authorities and by defending their claim to total independence from direct Roman control. In doing so, he also mounted a deadly assault on the concept of the one, single, sacred, imperial State as developed by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea.

St. Isidore went about this task by demonstrating that the word *rex*, or "ruler" came from just the kind of action it

---

<sup>63</sup> Riché, pp. 34-84; Dawson, pp. 187-201; Fletcher, pp. 193-213; Mayeur, IV, 648-682.

described—the ability to rule. A man called “ruler” who could not actually govern was a fraud. He was doubly dangerous due to the fact that his incapacity not only prevented him from performing his proper function but also because it hid the real possessor of daily authority from both sight and accountability. Moreover, a valid Christian ruler had to govern in union with Christ in this last age before the end of time, the age of the *Regnum Christi*. Visigothic kings palpably did so, he argued, while the Roman Emperors in Constantinople had repeatedly discredited themselves by giving succor to heretics. Indeed, they were active in St. Isidore’s own time in supporting erroneous Monophysite doctrines. In short, the sacred Roman imperial cover story was a bad one—not only erroneous but also dangerous in the masquerade of real power that it ensured, to the detriment of the common good of the Christian people.<sup>64</sup>

Followers of the Carolingians could readily claim that Pippin was in an analogous position. Was he not the real ruler of the Kingdom of the Franks, standing in for a Merovingian non-entity? And was this failure to clarify the true possessor of authority not responsible for aiding and abetting all manner of corruption and mayhem, Christian and pagan, in the life of both the State and the Church? Luckily for Pippin, the most vibrant elements in the Western Church were more than predisposed to hear such arguments at the moment that he and his supporters enunciated them.

St. Boniface, to take a prime example, had for some time been seeking protection from the tribe of the Saxons, which was placing serious obstacles in the path of his work of

---

<sup>64</sup> On St. Isidore, Visigoths, and Carolingians, see Herrin, pp. 220-249, 428, 438-440; Riché, p. 66; Mayeur, IV, 612-616, 670-682.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

conversion beyond the eastern borders of Gaul. He also was desperate for a chance for the Benedictines and the Benedictine spirit to reform the flaws of the Church of the Frankish Kingdom, giving it a truly substantive Catholic sense of things. Such a reform would inevitably strengthen Roman influence among the Franks, since St. Benedict's Rule was a model of classical concepts of education, law, and balance, and the Benedictines themselves a proven arm of the Papacy. It was clear to Boniface that it was only the Carolingians, with whom he had begun to work under Charles the Hammer, who had the real power to respond to both of his desires more fully. Anything that transformed their actual *power* into openly recognized and legitimate *authority* seemed profitable for the cause of the *Pax et Regnum Christi* in the West.

In addition, Rome, which was ever more under the direct political control of the popes as the seventh century moved into the eighth, was desperately in search of a new military shield and buckler. The Lombard King was threatening the independence of the Eternal City. Rome's former protectors, the Roman Emperors, were incompetent defenders, thus explaining why the pope himself had to take responsibility for her physical survival. St. Gregory the Great, with his keen sense of reality, had already recognized this at the beginning of the seventh century, and got into serious trouble with the State authorities in trying to undertake defensive and diplomatic measures on his own. The situation was now infinitely worse, troubled as the East was by almost constant Moslem incursions, requiring the bulk of its military strength for labors on its porous Asia Minor frontier.

Besides, the Roman Pontiffs were no longer certain that they even wanted the sacred emperors to perform this defensive function. Gregory the Great still professed a firm loyalty to Constantinople, but imperial mistreatment of St. Martin I and St. Maximus had begun to effect a serious change in attitude. Moreover, papal opposition to image smashing had brought down various imperial punishments, economic as well as spiritual, upon the Eternal City. Popes and their advisors wondered whether a German tribe like the Franks that seemed willing to bind itself openly and humbly to a Roman and Christian corrective and transforming ideal might not be much more trustworthy than an imperial government that had repeatedly joined battle with the Papacy over issues that were not properly part of its jurisdiction anyway.

Carolingians, St. Boniface, Frankish Romanophile bishops like Chrodegang of Metz (d. 766)—himself a member of the family of the Mayors of the Palace—and the Papacy seized their common opportunity. The Carolingians provided Boniface assistance outside the borders of the kingdom, while the Benedictine and Roman spirit were encouraged to work to reform the Frankish Church. Rome gave Pippin permission to replace his Merovingian predecessor on grounds established by St. Isidore. Pippin promised to deal with the King of the Lombards in filial gratitude to the relieved pontiff.

Amidst the greatest drama, Pope Stephen II (752-757) left Rome and made the long and perilous pilgrim journey to the court of Pippin to give ceremonial form to the deposition of the Merovingians and the Carolingian assumption of authority. The new King of the Franks was anointed in the manner of David, who had been marked out by Samuel as the



## TURBULENT BATTLE

suitable replacement for the older but unacceptable monarch, Saul. Pippin swore an oath to defend the Faith and, with it, therefore, also the Roman order that Christianity had accepted and sought to correct and transform through grace. Frankish warriors expressed their approval when the ceremony was concluded. The alliance conceived by Clovis, but left floundering in its womb by his descendants, had been brought into the light of day.<sup>65</sup>

Immensely self-confident, but highly conscious of at least a public need to submit to the teachings and practical demands of the True Faith, the character of the Carolingian Frankish spirit is passionately outlined in the *Prologue* (763 A.D.) to Pippin's revised version of the Salic Law. This was the basic "constitution" of the so-called "Salty" Franks—i.e., those who lived close to the North Sea—of which a relevant excerpt is given below:<sup>66</sup>

The illustrious people of the Franks was established by God himself; courageous in war, steadfast in peace, serious of intention, noble of stature, brilliant white of complexion and of exceptional beauty; daring, swift and brash. It was converted to the Catholic Faith; while it was still barbarian, it was free of all heresy. It sought the key of knowledge under divine guidance, desiring justice in its behaviour and

---

<sup>65</sup> For the emergence of this alliance, see Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, pp. 216-232; Riché, pp. 51-84; Herrin, pp. 355-360; pp. 370-381.

<sup>66</sup> Riché, p. 83.

cultivating piety. It was then that those who were the chiefs of this people long ago dictated the Salic law...

Long live Christ who loves the Franks! May he protect their reign; may he fill their leaders with the light of his grace; may he watch over their army; may he accord them the rampart of Faith; may he grant them the joys of peace and the happiness of those who rule over their age... After professing their Faith and receiving Baptism, these Franks enshrined in gold and silver the bodies of the saints and martyrs whom the Romans had burned with fire, mutilated with the sword, and delivered to the teeth of ferocious beasts.

Charlemagne (768-814) was Pippin's son. He took it upon himself to complete his father's labor. This he did with a fury, about which more—in the negative sense, along with other unfortunate features of the Carolingian order—below and in the next chapter. Charlemagne thoroughly subdued the still restive Lombards and made himself their king. He crushed the Saxons and presided over their baptism. Much of what had been the western part of the old Empire was gradually reunited under his aegis. Even Charles' failures, such as his inability to penetrate deeply into Moslem Spain, provided Western Christendom with some of its greatest chivalric legends—the best of its “good crusading stories”—for the future. It was thus only fitting that his work be rewarded by his coronation as Roman Emperor in the Eternal City at Christmastide, 800. And it was thus only fitting that that

## TURBULENT BATTLE

coronation be seen as the final confirmation of the Triple Alliance conceived by Clovis and delivered by Pippin.<sup>67</sup>

What was it that distinguished Charles the Great, Pippin, Clovis, and the Franks as a whole? What was it that set St. Boniface, the Benedictines, and the Irish apart? What was it that characterized the popes active in the work of the alliance they all had forged? What did they all symbolize? They symbolized courageous affirmation, commitment, and militant action; courage in the midst of brutal realities that would have led others to despair; the courage of pilgrims.

For courage in abundance was definitely needed. The conditions for creating a new civilization, for giving life to what would eventually become known as the Christian Roman Empire of the German Nation, were horrendous. The still half-barbaric Frankish soldiery had little idea of the real significance of the classical cultural outlook at the time of Charles' coronation. Greco-Roman conceptions of the State as an organized, administrative entity that provided for the common good and continued beyond the lifetime of a given conquering chieftain remained quite alien to most of them. A full sense of exactly what Christian love and Christian morality meant for the correction and transformation of their individual lives was in no way part of their primary Order of the Day.

St. Boniface, more than anyone, knew the crudity of this people and the arbitrariness of its leaders, and it is thus also extremely worthwhile to dwell for a moment on the informed courage of his actions as a guide to that of his fellow pilgrims.

---

<sup>67</sup> Herrin, pp. 382-476; Riché, pp. 85-140; Dawson, pp. 187-201; Mayeur, IV, 656-682; Hughes, II, 127-166.

The Apostle to the Germans shows that the cooperation of the powerful and the powerless does not inevitably have to produce religious slavishness. He understood that the Carolingians, like the Merovingians, were not to be treated indiscriminately as though they were knights in shining armor. Some of the members of this dynasty might be honestly committed to sponsoring the Catholic cause. Some were potential manipulators of religion for the benefit of their personal "business as usual", still interpreted according to the unrepentant terms of "nature as is". Pious and impious Carolingians alike were both subject to the temptation to make an exact equation between the continued spread of the Christian message on the one hand and the extension of Frankish borders, along with the satisfaction of the political and financial needs of the ruler and his noble supporters, on the other. Hence their combination of solid support for the Church with the confiscation or misdirection of ecclesiastical property for military purposes, their appointment of unworthy but politically influential men to key bishoprics, their campaigns of forced baptism among conquered peoples, and their imposition of tithes upon those forcibly converted before they even were taught what their new Faith was making them pay to achieve.

What should a Catholic do under these circumstances? The extensive correspondence of St. Boniface gives us a pretty sound indication of the proper response. The Apostle to the Germans was well aware, as his close friend and confidant, Bishop Daniel of Winchester, had taught him, that pagan man was truly impressed by power and riches, and that mobilizing both to aid the cause of the Truth could initially open barbarian minds and hearts to a Faith that would require serious long-term catechesis to confirm. His

## TURBULENT BATTLE

realization of the dependence of the weak Christian missions upon the aid of the Frankish State was clearly outlined in his letter to Grifo, a son and possible successor to Charles Martel, in 741, wherein he begged "that in the event of your coming to power you will help the clerics, priests, monks, nuns and all the servants of God in Thuringia, and that you will protect the Christians from the hostility of the heathens, so that they may not be destroyed by them."<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, knowing as he did the worldly temptations indulged at the Frankish court, the venality of its bishops, and the rapacity of its nobles, the Apostle to the Germans was disgusted by the corruption that his prudent, realistic working with the system could easily seem to condone. He burned with a passionate desire to end this cause for scandal. In consequence, St. Boniface exploited every opportunity he could find to change the "structures of sin" of the Frankish Kingdom and the mentality of his frightening and often perverse guardians. Hence his fight to enlist the two sons who did actually take up Martel's legacy – Carloman (Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia, the eastern section of the Frankish realm) and Pippin (the Mayor in Neustria, the western area) – to push through drastic Church and social reforms. These were decreed at the First Germanic Council of 742 (site unknown), and at follow up synods at Leptine and Soissons in the following year.

St. Boniface's crusading spirit earned him the undying hatred of many degenerate prelates and laymen. Courageous Catholic that he was, he could care less. What else could he

---

<sup>68</sup> Fletcher, p. 236; on Boniface's work, see Hughes, II, 127-131; Mayeur, IV, 630-691.

possibly do? He took the risks in incurring their wrath that a Catholic dedicated to corrective and transforming action must always take. And he did so just as he accepted that danger of potentially being viewed an accomplice to Frankish crimes, which was an inevitable occupational hazard for a realist of sound pilgrim spirit.<sup>69</sup>

Contemporary popes were all too aware of the dangers that might result from Frankish domination and barbarization as well. They might have done nothing, the risks being what they were, and given the opposition to change on the part of a strong, pro-Constantinople party within the city of Rome itself. Men often have preferred to go down to destruction rather than alter even one aspect of a familiar picture rendered sacred by custom. Germanic stupidities could easily have been taken as an excuse to avoid contact with the Franks entirely and to yearn for some future, corrected, eastern Roman aid. Romans might have gathered in St. Peter's during a Lombard invasion and waited for an angel to save them, as the population of Constantinople huddled in Hagia Sophia during the Turkish sack centuries later. Frankish opponents of the Triple Alliance could then readily have used a display of such Roman traditionalism and the reality of the general weakness of the Christian position to justify rejection of co-operation with both these potential partners. After all, strong men have frequently crushed what was indecisive, fragile, or simply difficult for them to understand. But Charles and Leo, Pippin, Boniface, and Stephen were men of courage, of affirmation and of action. They did not deny the magnitude of their problems;

---

<sup>69</sup> Fletcher, pp. 204-213, 242-244; Herrin, pp. 352-359; Riché, pp. 39-66.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

they simply chose to confront them rather than to run from them.

Frankish vision and courage can be seen, among many other things, in the willingness of its warrior kings to move beyond mere conquest and promote the spread of education in general. Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard, notes that the King-Emperor could never master the alphabet, much less grasp the full import of the wisdom of the ages. His Frankish subjects were overwhelmingly still more limited. Few places could have offered a more dismal prospect for intellectual development than the Kingdom of the Franks, and few rulers might have seemed less likely to risk their warrior prestige in demanding it than those of the Carolingian Dynasty.

And yet Pippin, Charles, and their descendants placed their warriors' "bet" on learning—encouraging the merging of the disparate elements emerging from the Greek East, Rome, Visigothic Spain, Ireland, Britain, and even Lombard Italy into a fresh, brilliant, and long-lasting Catholic imperial culture of great potential: a Christendom that was apparently cognizant of the changing steps in the dance of life but remained firmly loyal to the unalterable demands of the Eternal Word who was its primary choreographer. Their assistance allowed Benedictine-inspired monasteries to be founded throughout their domains. They encouraged attempts to provide serious education for the clergy and to raise the moral and cultural level of the active population as a whole. In fact, Charles called the most famous scholar of his day, the English Benedictine Alcuin (735-804), to head a school at Aix-la-Chapelle, the Frankish capital. Alcuin responded to the invitation of the warrior King-Emperor by

presenting a breathtaking vision of what might thereby be achieved:<sup>70</sup>

If your intentions are carried out, it may be that a new Athens will arise in France, and an Athens fairer than of old, for our Athens, ennobled by the teaching of Christ, will surpass the wisdom of the Academy. The old Athens had only the teachings of Plato to instruct it, yet even so it flourished by the seven liberal arts. But our Athens will be enriched by the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit, and will, therefore, surpass all the dignity of earthly wisdom.

In other words, Alcuin envisaged an expanding intellectual universe in the center of what was, at the moment, nothing more than a kingdom of gladiators – and at the invitation of its warrior chieftain to boot. The present realities of this world of “blood and iron” would have made other wise men tremble rather than act. But the “realists” were to prove to be correct only in the short run; the future would show who was actually right. And even in the short run, the literary and artistic glories of what we call the Carolingian Renaissance were real enough to inspire lasting pride and a solid base from which to make that new ascent of Mount Tabor that was to follow.

Spirits ran high. Support for centers of learning--such as those at Fulda, Reichenau, and Saint Gall – demonstrated the King-Emperors’ expansion of their commitment to the

---

<sup>70</sup> C. Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (Image, 1991), p. 65; Mayeur, IV, 683-765; Hughes, II, 149-151; P. Riché, *L’empire carolingien* (Hachette, 1973).



## TURBULENT BATTLE

training of ever more educated clerical leaders. Patronage of magnificent works of art illustrated their desire to tell a good story to the faithful, by presenting the orthodox vision to the eyes of the ordinary inhabitants of Christendom in vivid and beautiful painted form. This fresh batch of sacred monarchs also took their daily administrative tasks to heart, seeking to create Christian order out of chaos through their laws, their admonitions to their subjects, and the work of their emissaries in the form of their counts and trouble-shooting inspectors called *missi dominici*—"messengers of the lord". Creation of the zoo at Aix-la-Chapelle symbolized the fact that the world that the Carolingians were making was one in which they intended the lion to lie down with the lamb. And the area to which the Peace of Christ was to be applied was extended through active support of missionary work among the Slavs and the Scandinavians. Outsiders—that is to say the Franks themselves—had been called into the pilgrimage to God through the courageous leap of faith of Roman Christians; other outsiders were now to be welcomed into it by their own native Frankish labors.

Prelates like Archbishop Agobard of Lyons (c.799-840), during the reign of Charlemagne (768-814) and the early years of his son and successor, Louis the Pious (814-840), expressed the hope of the educated elite that the imperial structure, reinvigorated by the alliance of the Romans with the Germans and strengthened by the legal and administrative translation of Christian principles into practical guidance of all aspects of daily life, would provide a stable future for the Empire of the Romans in the West.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Riché, *Carolingians*, pp. 145-149; Fichtenau, p. 163.

They thought that the message of the Word was being recounted in too many fine ways not to have some impact in changing the world around them for the better. Would that they had been rewarded more immediately for their noble hopes! But the true story ended by being more complicated than the good story actually indicated it was.

Before concluding this chapter, let us turn back eastward, to the long-term developments mentioned in conjunction with the courageous realism displayed in military affairs by the Emperor Heraclius. The first of these developments was a more acceptable relationship of Church and State, at least with respect to dogmatic issues. Greater harmony was signaled on March 11, 843 by what is called the "Triumph of Orthodoxy". With the ceremonies and the procession from the Blachernai Palace to Haghia Sophia taking place that day under the aegis of Emperor Michael III (842-867) and Patriarch Methodius (843-847), the Empire recommitted itself to the value of icons, the acceptance of the iconographic understanding of the universe, and the Kingship of Christ over the whole of the cosmos.<sup>72</sup>

It was clear to many contemporary churchmen that, with this Triumph, Eusebius of Caesarea's good story regarding the role of the Emperor in shaping the *Pax Christi* had undergone something of a revision. Too many tyrannical false steps involving too many heresies promoted with the aid of too many arrogant bureaucrats and pusillanimous or corrupt court bishops had harmed the State's reputation in the dogmatic realm, and that of its clerical allies along with it. The sacrifices of innumerable monks, along with some of

---

<sup>72</sup> For all of the following, see Mayeur, IV, 93-165; Vasiliev, I, 271-374; Ostrogorsky, p. 210-315; Geanakoplos, p. 158.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

those very Patriarchs of Constantinople who were supposed to have been the chief agents of a political domination of religion, gave the Church a new vigor in asserting herself. This limited the imperial role in defining the action of the Word in history, forcing it back onto a more legitimate rung in the hierarchy of values. With a solid internal *symphonia* of Church and State over basic Christian doctrine seemingly restored, Civil and Canon Law were then reformed to ensure still greater harmony of the secular and religious spheres concerning other aspects of daily life as well.

Historians can point to many positive developments accompanying this eastern doctrinal peace in the years to come. Episcopal confidence grew. Monastic religious life flourished, with the Stoudite monks and the budding Athos community both playing a crucial role in the progress of eastern spirituality. A massive cultural renaissance, a glimpse of which we catch already at the time of the intellectual battles characterizing the second stage of the Iconoclast Controversy, came to full fruition, with great impact on both secular and sacred learning. Classical and encyclopedic in character, this renaissance produced such erudite figures as Patriarch Photius (d. 891), the learned circle around the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913-959), and the so-called "universities" of Constantinople and Thessalonica. The laity was not to be outdone in such a period of general revival, and it complemented its liturgical and iconodule devotion with a generous funding of all manner of pious and charitable organizations.

A second development emerging from the work begun by Heraclius and perfected in the years after the Triumph of Orthodoxy was a reform of the Empire emphasizing the need

for a much more militant defense of its borders. This reform created the administrative units known as Themes. Themes were basically military districts. But the soldiers who fought within them to protect the Empire's security when foreign incursions threatened also lived and worked there with their families. Professional soldiers they were, but military men with an added stake in the survival and prosperity of what were in effect their homelands.

Through the firmer backbone that the thematic structure gave to the Empire, its frontiers were indeed more effectively protected than they had been for a long time, and this effectiveness was destined to continue for several centuries to come. Despite recurring problems with the Bulgars and other northern neighbors, the Empire could count numerous and sometimes resounding victories against them. Remaining imperial provinces in southern Italy were also solidified. Much more importantly, Roman administrative and military revival led to stunning successes against the Moslems in the east. The weakness of this enemy, ever more badly divided since the days of the Sunnite-Shiite and Ummayad-Abbasid caliphate disputes, was exploited to win back territories long lost to Rome. Many people even entertained hopes for the reincorporation of all of the Christian regions lost to Islam since the 630's. Moslems were anxious for the safety of the holy city of Mecca itself.

Finally, the military victories of the Emperors Nicephoras II Phocas (963-969) and John I Tzimiskes (969-976), along with the literary celebration of the achievements of frontier soldiers like the legendary Digenes Akrites, made Byzantium in the 900's appear to be the prototype not just of a militant Roman society but of a militant *crusading* Christian society as well. In other words, popular misconceptions

## TURBULENT BATTLE

notwithstanding, Eastern Christianity developed the image of the crusader long before it became a central one in the life of Western Christendom. A martial Christian spirit was its spiritual and artistic brainchild from the moment that Heraclius put icons onto the banners of the Eastern Roman armies. Whatever the story of the origins of medieval crusading may be, the renewed, reformed imperial order of the ninth, tenth, and early eleventh centuries seemed to be alive, thriving, and much more rooted in Catholic Truth than ever before. And this Christian imperial order demonstrated an ability to tell an effective tale about its activities, through the use of everything from the intellect to the image, as it moved from one impressive victory—and conversion of powerful neighboring peoples like the Kievan Rus—to another.

*E. Either the Unexamined Words of the GCSQ  
Or the Word as King of a Christian Imperial Order*

It is now time for us to take final stock of all of the developments concerning the imperial era noted in both the current chapter as well as the previous one, but with specific respect to the central theme addressed by this book. The framework for our discussion should not be a surprise to the reader, since it emerges from the “either-or” option already outlined in the first chapter in dealing with the confrontation of the Sophists with the Platonists. For the problems, failings, and yet ultimate growth of the imperial era merely reflect a more charged variation on the same choice: in this case, *either* the necessity for “closure” in life and “moving on” in obedience to the unexamined words of the many members of

the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, *or* the need to probe the full meaning of existence, learned through the complete message of the Word of God made flesh, and then to correct and transform Christians and the imperial order in which they lived in union with the commands of Christ the King.

We have seen that part of the critique of Christianity offered by the differing components of the GCSQ before its legalization and rise to official State religion was based either on ignorance of what it actually taught or anger over Christian failure to participate in the system. This more substantive assault, while understandable, was, however, tainted by a spirit that constituted the essence of the anti-Christian argument. That spirit was based on two underlying principles: 1) the obvious, “common sense” need to accept the foundation vision of whichever member of the GCSQ was rejecting the new Faith; and, 2) the refusal to confront the fact that the interpretation of that foundation vision was based on the willful choices made by the most powerful elements active in its camp.

Hence, to take but a single example of this type of critique, one can point to the Roman judge who, when faced with Christian prisoners attempting to explain the moral demands placed by their Faith upon them, stopped up his ears and announced: “I cannot bring myself so much as to listen to people who speak ill of the Roman way of religion” — meaning, of course, a “faith” intertwined with the idea of an eternal and unchangeable political and social order closed to the corrective and transforming message of the Word Incarnate.<sup>73</sup> Such a Tradition, which, for the Christian, was a natural *datum* like any other, filled with both Seeds of

---

<sup>73</sup> Brown, *Late Antiquity*, p. 17.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

the Logos to nurture and transform as well as human error and evil to repudiate, was for the judge a fetish object. And treating that Tradition as a fetish object had its undeniable benefits. For one thing, it saved him the painful spectacle of investigating just how much the practical meaning of the Roman Tradition changed if a Cato the Younger or a Caesar or a Diocletian were using his pen or paying his word merchants for an appropriate explanation of its particular blessings.

After the rise of Christianity to the position of State Religion, and the beginnings of the interpretation of the Tradition in line with the will of Constantine, Theodosius, and the latter's descendants, the critiques of Greco-Roman members of the GCSQ had to settle on a different tone. Now their authors had to make believe that they themselves were Christians and find, if St. Justin Martyr will forgive us the twist on his argument, "Seeds of the *words* of the Word" that *they* could turn into tools useful for the maintenance of "business as usual" according to the demands of "nature as is".

For them, the real answers to the problems of life still came solely from inside their foundation vision, with its natural, "common sense" passions and desires. Nothing substantive was to be gained from this strange, outside, and truly supernatural Christian interloper. Instead of trying to understand, correct, and transform what might be learned from the Christians, their approach—as the case of the Gnostics so clearly illustrates—was that of deconstructing, subverting, and ultimately stripping away any significant meaning from the Faith in Christ that now formed a central—and loathed—part of their political and social environment.

A religion that was new, distinctive, and yet willing and able to find common grounds of cooperation with Seeds of the Logos had to be incorporated into the Establishment. Seeds of the Logos had to be retrieved from their Christian captors and hurled back into the darkness of the cave, while unique teachings based on Revelation were to be ridiculed or ignored. The well-chosen words of rhetoricians could disguise the fact that “faith” in the message of the Incarnate Word was to be nothing other than a more effective religious cover for natural “business as usual”. Many Christians themselves could be counted upon to join in this labor, either because the overwhelming power of custom made a serious consideration of a teaching that was truly different intellectually impossible and materially uncomfortable for them, or because they were quite understandably terrified by the thought of exile, imprisonment, or death.

Critiques of true Christianity, of the full, real message of the Word, now had to take a quite different form from those offered beforehand, when opposition to its teachings could be more open and honest. Christianity now had to be attacked as itself actually being anti-Christian, and this due to the fact that important aspects of the Faith and its practice “rocked the boat” of religion and its daily consequences as the “Sacred Christian Empire” “willed” and “chose” them to be. Business as usual required the dismantling of Christianity...in the name of “real” Christianity. We shall see by the time this work is finished that the proverb, *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*, is deeply appropriate to the history of the war between “words” and “the Word”. For the imperial rhetoricians would find their skills highly useful in our own time, perhaps more inside the United States of America, with



## TURBULENT BATTLE

the cooperation of conservative and even traditionalist Catholics, than anywhere else on Earth.

Certainly, an ample stock of black legends, seemingly noble in conception and popular in form, designed for the delectation of the upper and lower classes of the imperial *ecumene* alike, already began to be stored in the armory of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo in the days before Constantine. The Christians were “atheists”, destroying appreciation for the god that was the cosmos in and of itself, along with the manifold other local pagans divinities through whom his glory was popularly expressed. None of these objects of worship would ever rock the boat of nature since, one or many, they were all just part of the crew that kept that hermetically sealed ship called “here and now” on its pointless voyage. The Christians were also “enemies of mankind”, dangerous to public order and private happiness, but not because the State believed that they were actually guilty of the Bacchic crimes their “superstition” presumed them capable of perpetrating. They were condemned as misanthropes simply because they would not allow the government to do precisely what it wished, and since they placed obstacles between the ordinary man and the satisfaction of his customary passions—all of them *truly* destructive to both the well-being of the community and the individual. Proclaimed to be ignorant and illiterate in the extreme, Christians were deemed guilty of blocking implementation of the wise decisions of emperors and a conservative aristocracy ready to accomplish the work of reason in rather dubious form: with the information given to them from consultation of sheep guts and magical spells on the one hand; and with the inspiration provided by

## 202 BLACK LEGENDS

pornography and pompous, pedantic epic poems celebrating the transfer of wealthy senatorial families from Rome to the Bay of Naples for a fortnight of summer amusement on the other.

Post-Constantinian black legends often continued to emphasize the same themes---though now from a “Christian” imperial standpoint, together with the good religious story that it related concerning its apostolic labors. Here, the insult to God and man supposedly came from that which Sacred Tradition has identified as essential aspects of Orthodox and Catholic belief and practice. The Empire’s borders, public order, and individual human well being were said to be threatened by anti-imperial and *ipso facto* anti-Christian evils perpetrated in various ways: through the political machinations of the Bishops of Alexandria or Antioch or Rome and their lazy and unproductive monkish allies; by the “inconvenient” adoption of the word *homoousion* on the part of the Council of Nicaea and the *Tome* of St. Leo through the decision of the Council of Chalcedon; by hostility to the rhetorical game playing represented by the *Henoticon*, the *Ecthesis*, and the *Typos*; by the veneration offered to icons. True love of God and man was apparently to be found in believers who could accept *both* the *Henoticon* and its subsequent condemnation; *both* an imperial exaltation of the role of a non-Scriptural Pentarchy and its later abandonment as a means of preserving “Primitive Christianity”; the embrace of “up as up” and “up as down”, once the apostolic voice of the imperial court was raised on behalf of both these “common sense” positions, adopted primarily on the basis of immediate, superficial, natural political and material considerations, the one in blatant contradiction to the other.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

It is interesting to note that the later black legends popularized by Enlightenment historians like Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) got almost everything substantive that took place in the imperial era concerning Christianity dead wrong. The problems involving the relationship of the new State Religion to the imperial order that they catalogued were indeed real ones, but their interpreters completely misconstrued their true nature and origin. It was the continuing influence of the naturalist Roman foundation vision, linked together with the combined sinfulness of pagans and Christians alike, that caused the religious crises of that era – not the Catholic Faith as such, which merely sought to defend its teachings in the midst of efforts to politicize what were essentially spiritual disputes.

Yes, there were bad mixtures of political policies and belief that regularly characterized the period in question, but these were the product of the machinations of government ministers and court bishops eager to maintain the control of all matters civil and religious in the hands of the infallible polis conducting “business as usual” according to customary standard operating procedures. There was not the slightest possibility that a “Church” and a “State” would ever become separate entities with different spheres of primary concern until there was such a phenomenon as the *agmen* we call the Mystical Body of Christ. Only this could create the reality of a truly unique spiritual authority possessing the full means to act upon the world at large through its own laws, its own administration, and its own, supernatural *esprit de corps*.

Yes, there were ignorant Christians, as well as believers whose ideas on certain important matters such as marriage were not those that many modern thinkers—orthodox

Catholics included – appreciate. But the ignorant were either men who loathed the idea of working together with the Seeds of the Logos, and were thus looked upon by the developing Magisterium as being out of tune with the message of the Incarnation, or they were writers who were illogical in following through on their own clearly stated theological precepts. “Hidebound” Christians of the imperial era were “backward” only in so far as they allowed ancient customary practices and prejudices to guide them, in contrast to the logic of the Catholic Faith, the teachings of its Scriptures, its growing sacramental theology, and the clear lessons offered through its liturgy.

It seems to me to be especially important to emphasize the misconstruction of the great Trinitarian and Christological battles one finds in later Enlightenment arguments. Men like Gibbon claimed to see the hand of the insanely zealous truth-seeker in all of the twists and turns of doctrinal conflicts, with their undeniably torturous consequences for imperial social peace. But these complex developments did not have their political and social impact because of an exaggerated concern for theological Truth. They had the effect that they did because of that game playing with profound questions and phraseology, mocking and distorting the Truth, typical of the sophist word merchant on the hunt for a gimmick to support the “business as usual” concerns of the powerful.

Truth-seeking Fathers at the Council of Nicaea arrived at words defining the relationship of the Father and the Son with surprising ease and lack of rancor. Their opponents, men like Eusebius of Nicomedia, used their own words not in order to appreciate the strengths or weaknesses of the Nicaean doctrine but rather as tools to build up powerful political alliances, bully their opponents, and push through

## TURBULENT BATTLE

drastic revisions of the dogmatic affirmations that offended them. In typical word merchant fashion, rhetoricians and the politicians they served then prohibited believers from properly examining the full meaning and consequences of these revised dicta. In effect, the faithful were told that it was time for “closure” and “moving on”, because, for heaven’s sake, the hunt for the obvious goods of power, fame, and riches would be neglected if they did not accept this truth!

Clear and substantive discussions regarding the nature of the “words” in question—a debate that a sophist like Edward Gibbon would naturally consider to be intellectually meaningless—were thus authoritatively silenced. After all, they reflected a spirit of disobedience to an unquestioned traditional imperial authority now declared *ipso facto* Christian and apostolic in character as well. “What could I do if the Emperor thought otherwise?” the Patriarch of Constantinople asked an orthodox critic during one of these periods of triumphant word merchandising.<sup>74</sup> In posing this query, he illustrated both the effectiveness of such efforts to divinize imperial power as well as the frequently pathetic, obsequious response of otherwise often conscientious prelates to it. Once again, Gibbon would have been accurate if he had attributed the disruptions caused by doctrinal dispute to a *failure* of Christians to live up to their duty rather than to some innate danger lying at the heart of Christianity’s concern for truth in and of itself. It was this *failure* to live up to that duty that contributed mightily to allowing the discussion of sublime matters of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

---

<sup>74</sup> *Catholic Encyclopedia*, X, 80; Hughes, I, 298; Mayeur, V, 40-53, 198-208, 642-644.

to become so much humbug serving nothing other than the cause of "nature as is"---as the strongest imperial wills and their rhetorical spokesmen defined it.

In fact, any serious study of Church History demonstrates just how much the zealous truth-seekers engaged in the formulation of orthodox doctrinal teaching loathed and dismissed superfluous word games. The Fathers lamented the presence of wordmongers of all sorts on the streets of Constantinople in the late fourth century, describing for us a contemporary religious version of a very modern public indulgence in pointless babbling on the latest "inside" subject.<sup>75</sup>

No less an authority than St. Gregory Nazianzen has described how, if you went into a shop in Constantinople to buy a loaf, 'the baker, instead of telling you the price, will argue that the Father is greater than the Son. The money-changer will talk about the Begotten and the Unbegotten, instead of giving you your money, and if you want a bath the bath-keeper assures you that the Son surely proceeds from nothing'.

Great warriors of the above-mentioned battles, men like St. Athanasius and St. Basil the Great, repeatedly reviewed the arguments of their moderate, so-called Semi-Arian opponents in order to determine whether or not they were battling over substance or mere packaging backed by personal whims and ambitions. Through such painstaking

---

<sup>75</sup> Gregory of Nazianzen, in Dawson, *The Making of Europe*, p. 109.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

endeavors, they were able to disassociate themselves from “friends” whose insufficiently developed words hid terrible disagreements and build bridges with “enemies” whose complex language disguised real substantive agreement.

One saw something similar when the Catholic mind, living a life of Catholic charity, set out to understand the battle between the early theologians of “grace” and “free will”. Here, as Quasten notes in his study of Patrology, a pastoral spirit, ready to grasp the spiritual warfare of different personalities, went a long way toward overcoming what at first seemed to be deadly divergences.

A Church Father like St. Augustine had to engage in long and painful struggle with himself before he accepted the Faith. He brought this experience of the pain of Redemption to his work as a theologian, emphasizing the horror of the sin that had made Christ’s sacrifice necessary. The author of the *Confessions* tended, in consequence, to underline the need to escape from an otherwise impossible perplexity and seemingly unforgiveable original flaw through gratitude for the free gift of grace from God.<sup>76</sup>

Belief came much more easily to a Church Father such as St. John Cassian (c. 360-435). His conviction that progress in the Faith could steadily be made through personal effort was confirmed by his direct contact with the lives of prayer and sacrifice of the Desert Fathers. He tended, in consequence, to emphasize the value of individual labor in the dance to sanctity and to presume that a methodology of growth in union with God could be taught to others. This he did, in the

---

<sup>76</sup> Quasten, IV, 342-462, 512-523.

renowned and highly influential conferences on monastic spiritual life that he offered in both Rome and Gaul.<sup>77</sup>

Not even that much time, charity, and openness were required to bring to center stage yet other Christian teachers eager to put both approaches together for the benefit of the Church at large. Hence, one can look to the work of Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390-c. 455), a theologian who was prominent in the promotion and acceptance of St. Augustine's doctrine in southern Gaul. Here was a man devoted to the permanent things in an age of collapse; a time when a Gibbon-like pagan elite chastised real, substantive learning as the obsession of frivolous minds and confused true intellectual pursuits with entertaining word games. Prosper did yeoman service for the cause of transformation in Christ by demonstrating how free will and grace labored closely in mysterious union with one another. Yes, this great thinker argued, our freely offered works are indeed highly profitable to gaining our salvation. But he insisted that they are only able to have this efficacious redemptive effect because their service to that end was purchased at the heavy price of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. And the fruits of that divine sacrifice were then offered to us, as St. Augustine taught, as a pure gift of God.<sup>78</sup>

Again, one cannot stress this basic fact enough: it was the hidden members of the GCSQ, court bishops condemned by Christian heroes, and the sophist talents of both these groups that were primarily to blame for the evils deplored by Gibbon—not the zealous truth seekers we call the Fathers of the Church and their activist fellow travelers. Whenever

---

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 512-523.

<sup>78</sup> Mathisen, pp. 69-140, 235-272; Mayeur, III, 237-246; Quasten, IV, 494-558.



## TURBULENT BATTLE

Christians primarily took their cue as to how to defend Christianity and promote evangelization from the accepted wisdom of the world around them, they merely offered themselves as cannon fodder for the proponents of “nature as is”. It was playing their game that made cementing the privileges of the clergy as one of the upper “social orders” within the Empire the chief project of many prelates. It was following this path that created religious bulwarks that may have appeared strong to the servants of the foundation vision of the Greco-Roman *ecumene* but which amounted to nothing other than so many Maginot Lines that the true enemy of God and man could easily outflank.

Despite their many failings, the turbulent centuries of the growing Christian Imperial Order were replete with innumerable achievements, incalculably enhancing knowledge of the Incarnate Word and its consequences in history. Developments of the fifth through the ninth centuries drew on earlier accomplishments, stimulating a deeper spirit of independence on the part of Church leaders and encouraging them to offer a stiffer resistance to the tyranny of mere custom over the true Christian Tradition and the clever words used to subordinate the Word of God to the passions of willful men. They thus prepared the ground for that qualitative leap forward in loyalty to the fullness of the message of the Incarnation taken from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries; that extraordinary moment in time, as one author has noted, “when values descended to the earth”;<sup>79</sup> that age when a new ascent of Mount Tabor was mounted.

---

<sup>79</sup> Mayeur, V, 876.

Let us conclude this chapter by underlining two special points regarding the achievements of the imperial era. The first of these is the fact that the ancient Seeds of the Logos were very valuable indeed. Fetish though the foundation vision and tradition in which they were planted might be, the Mystical Body of Christ nevertheless was obliged to accept and then correct and transform these natural springboards to Truth. They were, after all, planted in God's own Creation, and lovable in and of themselves. And aside from the specific Seeds of the Logos to be found in rhetoric, philosophy, the State, civil law, and the classical aesthetic outlook, it seems to me essential to mention one other crucially important example of the same useful natural tool: the general Greco-Roman sense of the holistic and cosmopolitan character of the entire human enterprise. This overarching Seed is especially important to mention given the dangers to the Faith destined to arise in later ages from a narrow, nationalist, and reductionist vision of life; a vision that continues in our own, much more parochial – though *painfully* imperial – era.

Christianity is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, free nor slave: it is supranational and aims at the conquest of the entire globe. It needs an *international* natural environment for its work to thrive, and needed it perhaps all the more at the beginning of its seemingly impossible missionary enterprise. It got that environment through the help of an Empire whose vision was also universal in scope. Christianity requires the transformation of all aspects of life; it began its labors with the aid of a political entity that itself needed guidance regarding how religion, politics, and society were to be intertwined, but nevertheless wholeheartedly recognized the absolute necessity for a *Pax deorum* that could potentially be elevated to a *Pax Christi*. Would that the modern,

## TURBULENT BATTLE

parochial—though equally imperial—vision of life, with its division of existence into compartmentalized spheres, was *as* open to proper correction and transformation of its errors as its flawed Roman counterpart.

Secondly, the imperial era was one when the pilgrim spirit required to deal with the changeable earthly realm reappeared regularly to the benefit of Church and society. The danger of a fetish-like traditionalism was real enough, even in a cosmopolitan Empire, and yet custom-bound, naturalist, Greco-Roman culture had sufficient pilgrim spirit, as St. Ambrose and Prudentius exulted, humbly to abandon its false gods and embrace Christ. A similar pilgrim spirit emerged, when needed, to send St. Patrick, St. Sophronius' progeny, the Irish monks, St. Augustine of Canterbury, and St. Boniface, the Apostle to the Germans, on their various journeys. An analogous pilgrim spirit allowed for the Eastern Empire to make some required changes in its "immutable" structure when changes were clearly mandated. Finally, a comparable pilgrim spirit brought the Triple Alliance of Christians, Romans, and Franks into being in the West, as confirmed by the coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas Day, 800 at the Basilica of St. Peter.

Christmastide was a symbolically appropriate season for that western, early medieval confirmation of the pilgrim spirit. Why? Because the "good story" of Christmastide demonstrates that courageous affirmation, commitment, and action in the midst of changing and sometimes brutal realities are built into the character of the dance of life as a whole. There are innumerable fearless "leaps" indicated in the events surrounding Christ's birth and earliest days themselves. One example of courageous affirmation and commitment that

forms part of the Christmas story stands out as most germane to my present argument. This is the fearless dedication to the Christ child of the Three Wise Men of the Orient, who represented both regal authority and learning.

It is one of the great ironies of existence that those most ambitious for power often refuse to take the steps that can make their strength endure for generations. The military man and the statesman often reject contemptuously the serious wisdom that would root their work in a truly substantive great mission and give it staying power, turning for support, instead, to "appropriate explanations of strongly felt desires" that turn out to be nothing other than "creatures of a day". Christians believed that the Three Wise Men were in some way kings. As kings, they could be seen to have risen above the temptation to rely on brute force and sophistry alone. They allied their strength with a desire to be taught the truth, and it was this that led them to the Eternal Word made flesh.

Another of life's great ironies is the fact that those most interested in the search for truth are often the least willing to commit their lives to wisdom when it is discovered. The life of learning is all too often accompanied by a paralysis of the will. This is partly due to the scholar's knowledge of the complexities of reaching definite conclusions, and it is partly owed to a fear that his own importance as a hunter would diminish should truth be actually attained. Paralysis frequently ends in bringing ridicule upon the whole concept of truth seeking, especially if the teachings that have been entertained by the truth seeker are shown to have arisen from humble and non-academic sources. We have already seen this in the reaction to Christianity of some of the educated ancient members of the GCSQ, horrified that men of their own class could be waylaid by the Faith of insignificant fishermen.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

Such considerations make the actions of the Three Wise Men all the more brilliant. Arriving from the cradle of civilization, they carried with them the esoteric wisdom of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Persia. Given that the East had been partially Hellenized after the conquests of Alexander the Great, they might be taken as symbols of ancient Greek wisdom, with all its promise and problems, as well. These men could have been expected to stay at home, continue their research, and await workshop reports after noticing the Star of Bethlehem. In the meantime, they would certainly have enjoyed the power that they possessed and the support of rhetorical sophists eager to justify and give it a noble pedigree in exchange for three square meals a day.

A pilgrim spirit triumphed instead. The Three Wise Men took to the road. They may have had endless discussions over the meaning of it all on the way to Bethlehem. But when they arrived at their destination, these representatives of the often quite paralytic and elitist academic enterprise bent their knees. These emissaries of the cradle of civilization eagerly paid homage before the cradle of a new, higher, and decisive civilizing force. The Wise Men, violating all of the best principles of academic objectivity, abandoning all the arrogance of political, social, and military might, placed their wisdom and strength at the service of a helpless child; a helpless child cared for by poor, dishonored parents, who were away from home at the bidding of a distant emperor. Not even the son of a scholar. Not even the son of a conqueror. What of the ridicule of fellow kings and fellow wise men before their action? What of the possible conflicts of human knowledge and faith? What of the potential quarrels of State and Church? "Later", the Wise Men, in a sense,

answered. "We will work them out later. The Truth is there before us in human form, and He has promised not to reject what we have to offer, so long as we accept Him. Our future difficulties must not prevent our present abandonment to the Truth." Here lay a major defeat for the budding Grand Coalition of the Status Quo; a trouncing that can and must serve as a continuing inspiration for Christians still today.

Sometimes one sees paintings in which the Three Wise Men are depicted as being joined by others in their homage to the Christ child. I should like to think that their entourage consisted of men and women who had been tempted by life's risks and horrors to run, to hide, and to despair. I should also like to think that these men and women were encouraged by the courageous commitment of the representatives of power and learning to embrace life's risks in the Truth. After all, three kings stood before them who had not been deterred from combining knowledge and power, despite the obvious problems involved. These same kings were now ready to unite such explosive forces with courageous affirmation of the helpless Christ child. If they were not afraid, either of the world or of God, why should anyone else be? Why flee from love, because of the dangers of loving properly, or marriage, because divorce and cynicism are everywhere to be feared? Why hide from song and dance, from art and beauty, from the table and the vineyard, simply due to the risk of their misuse? Bring them courageously into the sight of the living God, who will not reject them, so long as *He* and his corrective, transforming teaching are accepted. Embrace the world in Christ, and begin the adventure of life. The future difficulties will be worked out along the road. It was this that Plato had longed for. It was this that the Wise Men had found.

## TURBULENT BATTLE

I would paint an extremely crowded canvas of the visit of the Wise Men to Bethlehem. I would draw behind the Magi the awakened faces of representatives of all aspects and walks of life; the joyous faces of all those who had realized that courageous commitment to the Son of God gave them the chance—their only real chance—to embrace life, despite life's brutal realities. In the distance, I would draw the coronation of Charlemagne, the Triumph of Orthodoxy, and, behind these scenes, the fruits of the brave affirmation of life that they symbolized, and Christian civilization in all its glory. Finally, far away from the rest, I would sketch in the Heavenly Jerusalem. I would do so, because God's reward for courageous affirmation of life in the Truth here and now is possession of life in the Truth for all eternity.

The Christmas story need not have taken place at all. The Wise Men might have been frightened by the risks entailed for their reputation and power and never set out on their journey. No crowd would have gathered to follow them. Joseph might have abandoned Mary: too much trouble and little happiness with that woman. Mary could have asked for some type of insurance policy from God. The Father might, with full justification, have admitted that His Creation was a cynic's delight and left it on its own. There would have been no painting, no coronation, no Christian civilization, no Heavenly Jerusalem. For the prize for failure to affirm life in the Truth in the here and now, with all its risks and hardships, is eternal death.

One final "word of the Word" is essential to the conclusion of this chapter. Christ's affirmation of the value of Creation in its entirety is also an affirmation of the value of history *in its entirety*. Everything that "was" must remain

eternally present to us as a heritage to consult. In ignoring it, we treat everything that "is" today as only passing, and, thus, quite frankly, ultimately pointless for the future. This means that an ever-living appreciation of all that happened in the era of imperial Christendom is incumbent upon anyone who would take Christ's message seriously and put it to fruitful use in his own time.

Rigorous study of the Fathers and intense investigation of the history of the Church in the first millennium as a whole offers us many lessons of absolutely essential contemporary importance. We neglect that study in literal peril of our spiritual lives. For we have seen that the growth of Christian self-consciousness is not something that has happened or necessarily will continue to happen logically; that one does not always grasp the consequences flowing from attempts to deal with immediate questions of great importance; that the hold of custom and the lure of the bag of tricks manipulated by the GCSQ with its budding black legends and seductive, alternative good stories tempts all people, believers included, to put on blinders and ignore weapons lying right there before their eyes capable of curing their most pressing woes.

Thus, reading theological treatises of a later age, however brilliant, however logically-structured, and however more pure in the sense of being free from the earlier errors of the pioneering Fathers, cannot and must not entirely replace the testimony of on-the-spot witnesses to this or any given period of Church History. Attempts to do just that can cause some of the most gross and early heresies of the Christian experience to reappear unexpectedly, with the support of people who imprudently thought they were better armed than anyone else for avoiding their impact. We will have all too many examples of exactly what this means for war between



## TURBULENT BATTLE

“words” and “the Word” in the remaining chapters of this book. Thankfully, for the moment, despite the troubles intertwined therewith, we still have a bit more of a “good story about a true story” that lies before us to recount.

## The New Ascent of Mount Tabor

### *A. A Reality Check, East and West*

Exciting developments in understanding the Word Incarnate and the meaning of Christ's message for individual and social life continued to unfold within the context of the Roman imperial system from the time of Constantine down through the establishment of the Papal-Carolingian alliance, the Triumph of Orthodoxy, and the years following thereafter. The vision of a Sacred Christian Empire protecting the *Pax Christi* had remained basically intact through all of these centuries, though altered sufficiently to accommodate Catholic doctrine and changed realities in the dance of life, both in the East and in the West.

But was the "good story" regarding a Christian imperial order really true enough to allow the mission of correction and transformation in Christ to proceed freely? Could that

## MOUNT TABOR

“good story” be used to confront new problems effectively as they arose? Or did it continue to allow forces promoting nature “as is” to survive and prosper, and by so doing aid and succor the momentarily “hidden” Grand Coalition of the Status Quo? Examination of the situation in both Eastern and Western Christendom from the mid-ninth through the eleventh centuries yields a worrisome response to both queries.

Again, as noted briefly in the previous chapter, the history of the Eastern Empire under the Macedonian Dynasty (867-1056) in the two centuries after the Triumph of Orthodoxy seems in many respects to be a brilliant one. Great patriarchs, emperors, theologians, monks, scholars, missionaries, saints, and skilled storytellers loyal to the Faith accomplished numerous deeds of permanent value in those two hundred years, many of which were also marked by triumphs for the crusading armies of Eastern Christendom. Looking back at these accomplishments continues to inspire those eager to learn of the full consequences of the Word operative in time. Once more, however, dark sides to this splendid picture of a triumphant Christian Byzantium were not only present but all too easy to identify as well.<sup>1</sup>

For one thing, the *symphonia* emerging out of the Triumph of Orthodoxy with respect to *dogmatic* issues was still often very seriously troubled when dealing with *practical* moral and jurisdictional matters. A new ecclesiastical feistiness in

---

<sup>1</sup> For the following, see A. Kazhdan and A. W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (U. of California, 1990); Ostrogorsky, pp. 272-276, 286-288, 305, 320; Vasiliev, I, 330-374; Mayeur, IV, 167-348; V, 7-56.

resisting unacceptable governmental behavior, born of Church outrage over incursions into her proper sphere of action in the previous centuries of intense battle, may in part account for this. Interestingly enough, it was not just memories of iconoclast synods like the Council of Hieria that still rankled. Even the elevation to the patriarchal throne of iconodules like Tarasios and Nikephoros through the non-canonical *fiat* of an image-friendly imperial court also gave grave offense. The monastic communities of St. Theodore the Stoudite remained highly vigilant in maintaining a close watch on such illicit maneuvers on the part of State authorities. They also kept their eyes open for dubious acts of *economia*—dispensations from proper Christian behavior when a *fait accompli* made their acceptance appear to be politically and religiously prudent—granted by prelates whom they viewed as being more interested in serving the cause of “nature as is” than in pursuing the pastoral correction and transformation in Christ of fallen men.

Stoudites frequently criticized patriarchal decisions as well. But it must be admitted that Patriarchs of Constantinople were themselves often equally alert in defending the Church as a whole and insistent upon due recognition of their own particular prerogatives in doing so. Their position in the Eastern imperial order was now much more exalted than in past centuries. The revised code of laws called the *Eisagoge* referred to the Patriarch as the living image of Christ in a society ruled by an emperor stripped of at least some of his previous sacred aura. Aided by the decline of other urban episcopal centers, the presence in the “Queen City” of large numbers of bishops united in what was called the Permanent Synod, and often by their own personal reputation for scholarship as well, patriarchs such as Photius

## MOUNT TABOR

(858-867, 877-886) Nicholas Mysticos (901-906, 912-925), Polyeuctes (956-970), and Michael Cerularios (1043-1058) were keenly conscious of their power and perfectly willing to use it. In consequence, both Stoudite monks and patriarchs together offered opposition to the emperors in many conflicts regarding moral issues: skirmishes involving questions ranging from political murders and scandalous marital affairs to an imperial desire to secularize martyrdom through the canonization of all those soldiers falling in often purely secular battles against the "Moslem" enemy.<sup>2</sup>

Still, as the divided dates of certain patriarchal reigns suggest, imperial efforts to defeat such opposition—which the court generally regarded as more political than religious in character—were not insignificant. State hostility was not expressed in attacks on the patriarchal office or the extent of Church powers as such. There was no Marsilius of Padua advising the Macedonian emperors. Rather, opposition took the form of jockeying to place close associates or immediate family members on the patriarchal throne in order to provide emperors with comrades and not competitors in leadership. Caesaro-Papism thus continued to flourish, even if different both from its earlier and rather more brutal Eusebian form as well as from the legalist and naturalist version that triumphed in the West in later centuries.

Cultural achievements also brought new problems—religious, political, and social—in their wake, badly shaking the traditional pillars of Eastern Roman life. The ancient learning championed by the fathers of the Byzantine cultural renaissance gave to its sons a deeper knowledge of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Mayeur, IV, 48n, 167-348; Hussey, pp. 102-110.

meaning and diversity of classical learning than they had possessed beforehand. Much of this learning could thus seem quite new and exotic to its admirers, old and venerable though it actually was. It therefore understandably engendered mighty challenges to existing perceptions of the past and the customs that were firmly tied to them.

The avalanche of imperial military victories in the East also stimulated similar challenges to established beliefs and traditions. Conquest brought non-Greek ethnic groups as well as Moslems and Christian heretics in sizeable number back into the Empire. Moreover, the successes of imperial arms strongly affected the Byzantine concept of nobility. The military virtues responsible for eastern successes overtook civilian—and religious—justifications for aristocratic pedigree. Meanwhile, both external victory and greater internal security aided the growth of a new urban and rural wealth. In practice this meant four things, none of which, in the long run, was compatible with a healthy Catholic political and social order obedient to the full corrective and transforming message of the Incarnate Word.

First of all, an intensified antiquarianism was one not particularly surprising reaction to intellectual tumult and multiculturalism. It is always wise to keep a clear idea of just how unchangeable all of the foundations of the Byzantine system were in the minds of many an imperial thinker. Even though *realistic* political reforms saved its life, Byzantium at the beginning of the Macedonian period was still guided by the *theoretical* vision of an unchangeable Rome. Despite the historical facts of life, maps of the Empire continued to include provinces that were only under its control at its greatest height in the second century. Political antiquarianism of this sort was bad enough, but it was also accompanied by

## MOUNT TABOR

the effort of many scholars to ossify the Hellenist learning championed by the authors of the cultural renaissance in an encyclopedic strait jacket.

Ossification extended into the realm of Church thought and practice. The strait jacket thus fashioned was then utilized to try to nip all speculation in the bud, even such as might actually solidify imperial power or enrich a proper understanding of orthodox teaching. Most importantly, antiquarianism and ossification together worked to chastise all non-Greek national cultures as both barbaric as well as innately anti-traditional and anti-Christian. Heresies, for men subject to such a mania, were not ideas; they were simply non-Greek, national, ethnic vices. This parochial mentality, so hostile to the full, pilgrim-spirited, Christian embrace of the true diversity of the world, was highly troublesome in dealing with the Armenians in the East. But it was especially deadly with respect to relations with the Latin West and the Holy See.

It must be noted that anti-Latin sentiment had already begun to intensify in the immediate wake of the defeat of Monothelite Monophysitism. Despite their crucial significance to the victory of Chalcedon, no mention was made of the contribution and sufferings of Pope St. Martin or his chief advisor, St. Maximus Confessor, when the orthodox teaching was officially “restored” in the late seventh century. The eastern Council in Trullo, held in 692 under the Emperor Justinian II (685-695, 704-711), made it painfully clear just how much the Byzantine world now considered Greek liturgical custom and the concept of *economia* in matters such as the loosening of the bonds of clerical celibacy as normative for the Church at large. Latin practices that differed from

those of the Greeks were correspondingly ridiculed, either as being too rigorous, too boorish, or simply manifestations of obvious inbred western heretical tendencies.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, even though Greek-speaking monks had been central to the elaboration of the role of the Roman Pontiffs in the life of the Universal Church, and Greek-speaking popes had themselves dominated the Eternal City in much of the seventh and eighth centuries, the anti-Latin reaction turned into an attack on the powers of the Papacy as such. The eighth century papal alliance with the Franks was viewed in Constantinople as an act of outright treason. The involvement of Popes Nicholas I (858-867) and John VIII (878-882) in the dispute between Photius and Ignatius over possession of the patriarchal throne also rankled. Their role in the work of the conversion and ecclesiastical organization of the nearby Bulgars was viewed as similarly invasive and arrogantly overreaching. Although there were long moments of calm in patriarchal-papal relations in the 900's and 1000's, these were not in any sense due to a proper appreciation of their respective roles in the life of the Universal Church. Such tranquility was chiefly owed to the growing political strength of the Eastern Empire and the disasters befalling the Carolingians and Rome by the time of the tragic death of John VIII, the last of the great early medieval pontiffs.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, an *opposite* and equally problematic reaction to cultural and military developments in the East involved an embrace of novelty for novelty's sake. Supporters of this

---

<sup>3</sup> See R. Cholij, *Clerical Celibacy in East and West* (Fowler Wright, 1989); Mayeur, IV, 60-91; Hughes, I, 303-305; II, 166-181.

<sup>4</sup> See Mayeur, IV, 715-718, 781-787; Hughes, II, 181-200; Hussey, pp. 69-101.



## MOUNT TABOR

approach “dived into” the “new” with uncritical enthusiasm—most especially when what was “new” happened to possess the more ancient pedigree noted above. An uncritical dive into the “freshly ancient” thus eventually gave to the Byzantium of the eleventh century influential scholars and statesmen who were *really* Hellenes of the old school; i.e., full-fledged pagans, with a special loathing for monks and monasticism, and an admiration for ideas that could never be reconciled with Christian teachings. This uncritical approach also helped to rekindle in “progressive” religious circles a marked sympathy for a variety of heresies, including both the ancient Gnostic beliefs promoted by the contemporary sects of the Paulicians and the Bogomils as well as early Christian ideas concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the mystic, such as those found among the so-called Messalians.

Next, as in all periods when an apparently irresistible flood of changes is met with a strong tendency towards an immovable ossification, many confused or frustrated spirits took refuge from spiritual, intellectual, and social turmoil in an internal “exile”. Everywhere in Byzantium, one notices a growing flight from the public to the private sphere. This took place in ways that range from burial customs to the search for individual sanctity. In the secular sphere, personal family concerns began more and more to take precedence over State matters. In the religious realm, private devotions and paths to perfection began to be cultivated over public liturgy and reception of the sacraments. Perhaps most importantly for long-term ecclesiastical developments, the Stoudite emphasis on a social-minded, cenobitic monasticism began to give way to the more personal approach to union

with God championed by St. Simeon the New Theologian (949-1022), the potential dangers of which will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, all pretensions to Christian economic and social health were abandoned through the revival and strengthening of the battle of the Powerful versus the Powerless, a conflict that regularly alarmed far-sighted Byzantines. The availability of new wealth, both urban as well as rural, fed a seemingly mad passion on the part of all of the more potent forces in Eastern society, from dioceses and monasteries to aristocrats and merchants, to increase their riches at the expense of those unable effectively to defend themselves. The personalizing of life in the East meant that the battle for wealth was fought as much among the more powerful groups as against the poor. In both cases, it was fought with serious lack of concern for the well being of the State as a whole. Church authorities used marital legislation to prevent combinations of private families detrimental to her financial interests; civilian aristocrats tried to choke military competitors by cutting off funding for the army; noblemen from the military sought to circumvent the civilian administration and build still more securely the property and wealth of their individual clans.

Grasping and ambition also had their nefarious impact at the highest level of eastern life. Political machinations surrounding the rise of a given candidate to the imperial throne and attempts to strengthen or thwart a man's ability actually to exercise State power gave new meaning to the word "Byzantine" even in these seemingly "happy"

---

<sup>5</sup> Kazhdan and Epstein, 14, 31, 90-92, 157, 206-207, 236-237; Mayeur, V, 451-459.

## MOUNT TABOR

centuries. Despite the yeoman efforts of some of the greatest of the emperors to stem personal lusts in all social strata, the victory of private powerful interests at court was certain by the middle of the eleventh century. The resulting damage to the common good was enormous, as the failure of the Empire to resist dangerous foreign incursions so well demonstrated. Hence, the disastrous Roman defeat at the hands of the Seljuk Turks at Manzikert in 1071 and the subsequent occupation of Asia Minor by their Moslem families. Hence, also, the successes simultaneously obtained by vigorous steppe peoples penetrating the Empire from the north and the sustained and powerful Norman advances in southern Italy.<sup>6</sup>

All these developments were destructive to the implementation of the full corrective and transforming message of the Word Incarnate. That message could never be reduced to a parochial, ethnic possession. It could not accept the presumption that everything that might be said about God had already been catalogued on library shelves. Neither could it remain uncritical of either ancient or non-classical wisdom, nor tolerate indifference to the destruction of the State's ability to work for the common good of everyone—including and especially the poor and the powerless. Every one of these developments was a godsend to the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, providing new recruits for its underground army in the very centuries when the sacred Christian imperial order seemed in some respects more secure than ever before.

---

<sup>6</sup> Vasiliev, I, 351-361; Ostrogorsky, pp. 316-350; Geanakoplos, pp. 229-248.

At this point we must turn to Carolingian Christendom and its representation of the Roman imperial ideal. The Western Empire also nurtured a deep theoretical confidence in the solidity of its own sacred religious and political mission. A great influence shaping its sense of special purpose within a fixed, unchangeable cosmos came through the writings of the man known to us today as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. These Neo-Platonic works, including *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, *The Divine Names*, and *The Mystical Theology*, apparently emerged out of fifth century Syria. Two errors accompanied them on their journey to prominence in the western imperial sphere of influence.

First of all, as in the East, they were falsely attributed to that Dionysius the Areopagite whom the Acts of the Apostles indicates as having hearkened to the message of St. Paul on his missionary visit to Athens. Such a scriptural pedigree gave them a greater significance in the traditionalist mind than they otherwise might have had. Secondly, this "Pauline" author was then associated in the West with St. Denis (Dionysius, d. c. 250), the proto-martyr of Paris, a man who was deeply honored by the Christian Kingdom of the Franks in general and by its Carolingian rulers in particular. The corpus of Pseudo-Dionysian writings was presented by Emperor Michael II (820-829) to Emperor Louis the Pious in 827 and kept at the Abbey of Saint Denis near Paris. Abbot Hilduin (d. 840) translated it into a Latin whose accuracy was improved slightly later by John Scotus Eriugena (815-877).

Westerners gained a twofold lesson from the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. On the one hand, they learned from them of the majesty of a hierarchically structured order of existence that was operative throughout God's supernatural Creation,

## MOUNT TABOR

from the life of the angelic hosts on down. They drew from this omnipresent supernatural order the necessity of its logical extension to the temporal, historical realm as well. What this meant was that life in a Christian world that was engaged in a pilgrim journey to God had to be organized as a hierarchically ordered procession paralleling the highly structured eternal act of divine adoration in the heavens.

On the other hand, western interpreters of Pseudo-Dionysius argued that God in His Providence had entrusted the task of hierarchical ordering of the pilgrim procession to a Church specifically protected by the Franks and their Carolingian king-emperors. The Carolingian ruler was said to play a central role in guiding mankind's earthly journey to its supernatural destination. He himself had been "ordained" for this task through the ceremony of anointment. His whole being was changed through unction, and his intellect along with it, making him a teacher—or, to use the old rhetorical term for his function, an *orator*. Guarantor of the *Pax Christi*, like Constantine before him, he was thus called upon to work vigorously to shape the "wholeness" of existence, aided by his fellow *orators*, the bishops. Once the Carolingian king-emperors and their bishops took their responsibilities as hierarchical organizers of the dance of life through nature seriously, all that could humanly be accomplished to ensure the successful completion of the pilgrimage of Christians to the Father of Lights was finished, unchangeably and for

good. God could ask no more spiritual engagement from mankind.<sup>7</sup>

Here, certainly, were all the elements necessary for a "good story". But accounts of this sacred, Roman, Frankish Carolingian task took on more and more of the characteristics of an "appropriate justification" of personal power and riches rather than a description both of an historical reality as well as the substantive and flexible application of the corrective and transforming message of the Word to political, social, and individual life. Manifestations of the dangers flowing from such a flawed and ossifying *western* imperial "truth" were apparent even as the "ink" signing the Franco-Papal alliance had not yet fully dried.

For one thing, the Emperors in Constantinople, who stubbornly considered Byzantium alone to be the legitimate heir of Roman power, could always contest any assertion of an eternal Carolingian role in the sacred imperial mission of guidance of the procession to God. The East was outraged by Pippin's alliance with the Papacy, although that anger was more focused on the traitorous Roman Pontiffs, whose position the imperial government consistently sought to undermine, than on their boorish, upstart Frankish friends. Eastern irritation with the Carolingians increased, however, with the adoption by Charlemagne of the imperial title. Byzantium's annoyance also grew as westerners highlighted the Greek as opposed to Roman character of the regime in Constantinople. The Empire's Hellenic flavor had indeed become more pronounced from the days of Heraclius

---

<sup>7</sup> Riché, *The Carolingians*, pp. 285-359, 333-334; Dawson, *Making of Christendom*, pp. 108, 124, 197; G. Duby, *The Three Orders* (U. of Chicago, 1982), 34, 49, 66, 111, 130.

## MOUNT TABOR

onwards, when Greek officially replaced Latin as the political and legal language of the State. Frankish leaders called attention to this fact and taunted exasperated eastern rulers as Roman emperors who did not even know the tongue of the city on which they based their legitimacy.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the *modus vivendi* that generally maintained civility between Constantinople and the Franks, tension between East and West remained constant. This made it clear that the supposedly unified earthly procession of the Christian people to God actually involved two imperial Roman lines of march that might, in theory, come to blows with one another. Ingrained hostility and fear of potential conflict worked mightily to politicize all religious questions, with missionary campaigns at the top of the list of affected matters. This made pagan peoples' final decision to convert to Christianity often less of a religious than a secular one: an issue of whether the Slavic peoples of Central Europe, the Bulgars, or the Kievan Rus wished to accept a "Roman and Christian" influence that was either more Frankish or more Greek in character. Missionaries whose desire to evangelize was motivated by a proper pilgrimage spirit were thereby troubled in their immediate endeavors, while new nations entered Christendom with political and cultural "doctrinal" baggage that might not be crucial or even acceptable for a properly prepared journey to God.<sup>9</sup>

A second problem emerged in the West due to Carolingian manifestations of an all too familiar Caesaro-Papist mentality. Already under Charles the Hammer, the

---

<sup>8</sup> Ostrogorsky, pp. 183-186.

<sup>9</sup> Fletcher, 213-227, 327-368.

closer Carolingian embrace of things Roman had proven to be a bear hug, accompanied, as it was, by a conviction that ecclesiastical temporal possessions were there to serve the secular order, justifying an open robbery of Church property. Besides this, Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, and the Roman Pontiffs had differing opinions regarding what the protective role vouchsafed the new Frankish guides of the western dance of life actually meant in practice with respect to the internal affairs of the Papacy, the Eternal City, and the surrounding areas of central Italy. Worse still, Charlemagne horrified Rome by expressing painfully iconoclast sympathies. These were emphasized in a parochial-minded royal synod rejecting the canons of the Second Council of Nicaea and intimating Frankish independence in other serious doctrinal and liturgical matters as well. After all, if "Frank" and "Catholic" were synonymous, a papal Rome and a patriarchal Constantinople in disagreement with the Carolingians had *ipso facto* nothing to teach this true People of God.<sup>10</sup>

Yet another western problem was the Carolingian approach to the work of conversion, which clearly emphasized military, financial, and ethnic submission more than it did achieving a substantive religious change of heart. Alcuin bitterly lamented the forcible measures used against the Saxons by Charlemagne.<sup>11</sup> Such tactics may, perhaps, have become somewhat subtler over time, but they nevertheless continued to illustrate the same basic inversion of religious and secular values. Papal support for missionaries like St. Cyril (827-869) and St. Methodius (815-

---

<sup>10</sup> Riché, *The Carolingians*, pp. 38-39; Herrin, pp. 432-480.

<sup>11</sup> Fletcher, pp. 220-221.



## MOUNT TABOR

882), the Apostles to the Slavs, and that of Pope St. Nicholas I (858-867) for the conversion of the Bulgars, remained as sensitive to the nuances required in dealing with different peoples' paths to Christianity as that of St. Gregory the Great in suggesting how to approach the evangelization of the Angles and Saxons in past centuries.<sup>12</sup> But such nuances were lost amidst the immediate dynastic and ethnic politics of the western powers-that-be. And this lack of flexibility in spiritual matters, as usual, tended to work to the detriment of the long-term progress even of Carolingian military goals as well.

Finally, there remained the much more broad and troublesome question of the actual commitment of the Frankish people, high and low, to realization of the grand worldview asserted by their political and religious leaders. It was quite understandable that the tribe as a whole would need a great deal of time to digest the heady concepts of ordered, hierarchical, governmental, and spiritual mission taught to them by Charlemagne, Alcuin, and the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. Unfortunately, divisions within the very Carolingian Family itself did not permit this luxury. Already under Louis the Pious, filial disputes regarding the treatment of the Empire as a shared family property rather than an indivisible Greco-Roman polis had led to civil war. Upon his death, and after further conflict among his progeny, imperial Carolingian Christianity found itself with three anointed kings rather than one. They were presided over by Lothair (840-855), the eldest of the lot, who also kept the title of Emperor but lacked the substantive powers thereof. Still

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 364-368.

further warfare, along with predictably unexpected births and deaths, provided sometimes more, sometimes fewer in the way of ordained leaders of the “single” earthly procession to eternity. The Emperor Charles the Fat (d. 888) proved to be the last of the Carolingians to unite—quite ingloriously, we might add, given his inability and even apparent unwillingness effectively to confront external Viking threats—the entirety of the realm under an illusory and ineffective control.

Frankish counts, as well as the soldiers who served them, expected personal rewards for their efforts. A divided realm, with a variety of kings competing for their labors, allowed warriors to play one Carolingian ruler against another for increasingly higher stakes. Even worse, it permitted some to usurp illegitimate powers on their own behalf. Persistent, new, and often unforeseen Viking, Saracen, and Magyar onslaughts wreaked much further havoc with the established, “eternally-fixed” hierarchical order. These, in turn, encouraged parochial responses to complex local dilemmas, increasing the need for hasty, haphazard, on-the-spot military recruitment. Such recruitment encouraged the rise to power of self-interested castle keepers and often quite brutal soldiers of fortune with no theological or philosophical bonds tying them either to the earthly imitation of celestial hierarchies or to the building of a New Athens in the forests of Gaul and Germany.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, the grand Christian-Roman mission of the Franks under Carolingian rule lay in ruins. The organized Pseudo-

---

<sup>13</sup> Riché, *The Carolingians*, pp. 144-280; H. Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 381-439, on social disorder; Hughes, II, 181-208.

## MOUNT TABOR

Dionysian pilgrimage to the Father of Lights disintegrated, its participants shading their eyes from the glare of all too complicated truths and running for cover to the simple, obscurantist verities scratched onto the back wall of Plato's cave. All seemed lost. The late 800's, 900's, and, in many places the 1000's as well, presented the picture of an almost totally disordered, violent, purposeless jungle that only a libertarian or neo-conservative warmonger could find appealing.

In fact, western imperial Christendom had dissolved into a classic example of Thomas Aquinas' definition of a chaotic state of existence: namely, a situation where there was complexity without order.<sup>14</sup> As Bishop Adalbero of Laon (died c. 1030) remarked in the beginning decades of the eleventh century: "The laws are dissolving, all peace is evaporating, the customs of men are changing, and the order {of things} is changing as well".<sup>15</sup> "Laws are silent in the presence of arms", Gerbert of Aurillac (c. 955-1003), the future Pope Sylvester II (999-1003), noted.<sup>16</sup> Willful, illegitimate force had overruled proper, organized, God-given authority. Sin-driven villains rode roughshod astride the virtuous and the representatives of legitimate rule. "Divine and human law are confused because of the enormous greed of excessively evil men", Gerbert lamented; "and only what passion and force can extort in the manner of brutes is considered as one's right."<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Fichtenau, p. 382.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

What had happened, more specifically, was that half-barbaric, half-pagan, familial, personal, and customary concerns for the satisfaction of the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" had triumphed over Christian and classical understandings of how the Word and the natural "logos of things" were to be understood and made manifest. Tenth century documents and literature give us a good idea as to just what this meant in individual and social life. Much of what they tell us may appear to be indifferent or even childishly amusing in character, such as the exaggerated pride exhibited by contemporary strong men in their possession of appealing carpets and large numbers of horses and dogs, as well as their success at maintaining a spirit of jollity while drinking among their subordinates. Most of it is definitely not innocent or comical, with the bulk of the problem flowing from the unending and violent hunt of soldiers high and low for the earthly wherewithal to continue and augment their military careers.

In the environment of economic collapse accompanying the external invasions and the internal free-for-all of the age, what this signified, in practice, was an obsessive and aggressive hunt for land for one's family and for oneself. Religious and secular clerics were by no means free of this "obvious" demand of Mother Nature to place the search for private control over the means of production above all other considerations. Monks, such as those at the great abbey of Farfa, north of Rome, actually began to think of dividing up the communal patrimony for the benefit of their illicit, individual families. They would have been lucky to do so, however, for lay soldiers regularly robbed church lands if the abbots and bishops nominally in charge of them could not themselves be lured away from their proper tasks to serve the

## MOUNT TABOR

work of blood and iron directly. The result was that many monasteries, parishes, and whole dioceses ended up by as private, military-minded, proprietary holdings. Bishops and priests were named, and monastic livelihoods endowed, chiefly in order to serve family military ambitions. Clerics were sometimes even enslaved if this proved suitable to the designs of any particular clan.<sup>18</sup>

One important victim of the rampage was the ideal of clerical celibacy, which weakened along with the entire Benedictine concern for a life of poverty, prayer, study, and work. Men already convinced of the supreme and unquestioned value of family and personal affairs could not be bothered with the counsel of chastity. Bishops Rather of Verona (890-974) and Adalbert of Bremen (c. 1000-1072) were by no means alone in dealing with the consequences of the abandonment of celibacy by appeals to prudence rather than obedience to Canon Law. Abandoning principle in face of the "common sense" realities of the times, such bishops begged clerics who could not abstain from the commerce with women forbidden by Church law at least to have the decency to marry their concubines.

In fact, *everything* that Canon Law had prescribed was ignored. Bishop Rather bitterly lamented that "no one in Christendom... from the lowest to the highest, from the most ignorant to those who fancied themselves the wisest, from laymen to the pope himself, bothered himself about the canons."<sup>19</sup> "The entire population", Dr. Fichtenau, the great German historian of this era observes, "lived in a state of

---

<sup>18</sup> Fichtenau, pp. 81-245.

<sup>19</sup> Fichtenau, 388-389.

dichotomy,” rhetorically praising Christ and His Mystical Body and yet regularly violating in practice all of the holiest and most ancient dictates of God and the Church.<sup>20</sup> In short, the rules and the “common sense” of a fallen nature had pushed aside the superior claims of the message of the Word in history. Contemporaries might tell a good tale about their Christian character, but practicing followers of Christ they certainly were not.

Even the Roman Pontiffs were eventually dragged into this chaotic and effectively naturalist black hole, although not, at least early on, without admirably kicking and screaming in protest against their own humiliation. At first, throughout much of the ninth century, they had worked energetically to keep the Carolingians moving along the respectable pilgrimage route these Frankish leaders were themselves supposed to be guiding. A string of impressive popes, including the aforementioned Nicholas I and John VIII, regularly exhorted Charlemagne’s descendants to attend to their proper duties as armed defenders of the *Pax et Regnum Christi*. Better still, they encouraged a strong but legitimate exercise of imperial authority while at the same time openly opposing Caesaro-Papist dogmatic and political distortions of the Church’s spiritual mission.

Unfortunately, the Papacy could not resist engaging in unacceptable rhetorical games of its own in support of its labors on behalf of the Word. In doing so, it joined in an activity that became a western European parlor sport during this age of growing chaos. For what the popes did, on the one hand, was simply to appropriate the work of bishops in the Kingdom of the Franks who had sought to protect their own

---

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

## MOUNT TABOR

local powers with reference to a set of Church canons emphasizing episcopal prerogatives. Known today as the Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals, these canons were actually written in the ninth century under the name of Isidore Mercator but claimed an elegant pedigree rooted as far back in time as the first six hundred years of Church History. But since they founded French bishops' rights on grants from the still greater authority of popes ranging from St. Clement I to St. Gregory the Great, they proved not only useful for emphasizing episcopal authority but also for what would soon be described as the "plenitude of papal power". The implications of that doctrine, which insisted upon the papacy's practical as well as theoretical control over the affairs of the Universal Church, was to be at the center of much of the history and many of the struggles of the whole of the remaining medieval era.

Another flimsy rhetorical weapon in the contemporary armory of the physically ever more helpless Papacy was the so-called Donation of Constantine. Forged by Roman officials of that same prolific ninth century, this document transformed Constantine's real gift of various properties to the Holy See into a fictitious grant of extensive powers that supported papal claims to independence in Italy and supremacy over all other authorities in the western part of the empire. "Any port in a storm" rather than "back to the message of the Word Incarnate" seems to have been the Church of Rome's marred and all too human response to the dilemmas of the moment. She was to pay an embarrassing price for her abandonment of good judgment in exchange for a good story. This payment eventually came when Renaissance humanists uncovered the mischief underlying

the "donation" and passed their findings into the hands of the anti-Roman Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.<sup>21</sup>

Whether through the memory of past deeds or the momentary success of present forgeries, papal prestige did remain high among western Christians in the midst of the current crisis, especially outside Italy. Its "good press" was to prove immensely valuable, since those believers who lived on the spot, in the midst of the Roman Pontiffs reigning in the era of chaos, knew just how badly their structural situation as well as their own personal integrity had deteriorated by the turn of the tenth century. Papal independence and ability to perform the exalted spiritual role that St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Martin I had died to delineate were by that point continually under threat from a host of enemies. Some troublemakers were foreign, like the Saracens. Others were closer to home, such as the local Carolingian Kings of Italy and their successors: the Dukes of Spoleto, Roman families of dubious "nobility", and the manifold, unseemly forces that all of these could mobilize to in aid of their mundane "common sense" projects.<sup>22</sup>

Failures of appeals for imperial help in maintaining the *Pax et Regnum Christi*, the last under Pope Formosus (891-896), led to the domination of Rome by the Theophylact Family: first of all under Theophylact the *Vestarius* and *Magister militum* and then through his daughter Marozia (890-937), who eventually ruled together with her son, Pope John

---

<sup>21</sup> Riché, *Carolingians*, pp. 174, 185; Hughes, II, 161-163; G. Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe From the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 23, 34, 69, 118, 202, 331; Mayeur, IV, 753-754.

<sup>22</sup> Tellenbach, pp. 1-74; Hughes, II, 181-208; Mayeur, IV, 767-852.



## MOUNT TABOR

XI (931-935). A second offspring, Alberic the Younger (923-954), overturned Marozia's regrettable dominion. The happily rebellious Alberic, referred to as Glorious Prince and Senator, passed his power down to his own child, who then united both secular and ecclesiastical authority in one set of hands as Pope John XII (955-964). Alberic left behind him a credible record of decent civil and religious actions, especially impressive given the nature of the times. John, however, despite the possible exaggerations of his opponents, has never been defended by anyone as a badly misunderstood model of commitment to exalted communal and spiritual ideals.

Perhaps the greatest evil of the age was a widespread confusion over who was actually legitimately entitled to the power that he possessed; a power from which the ability to effect corrective change for the better might someday arise. Ancestry meant much less under these strange new circumstances, and success due to military prowess and cunning—something that the Germans referred to as *Heil*—correspondingly much more. Marks of honor, ranging from who sat where at a meeting of warlords to who might be handed his sword first when that gathering was concluded, were scrutinized carefully to determine the levels of presumed entitlement of given troublemakers. As always, monks, priests, and bishops were also seduced into participation in this pathetic carnival. The hunt for marks of honor amidst the confusion of authority led to the invention and intense cultivation of highly fanciful, Isocrates-like foundation stories stretching back to ancient Roman times “proving” why a particular diocese, parish, or monastery was more important than another. Even prayer life—the daily

performance of the *Opus Dei*—was marred by the humiliation of less powerful clerics by more noble colleagues who demanded various forms of deferment from the lowly while offering a common worship to Almighty God.<sup>23</sup>

Confusion regarding who was warranted exactly what level of authority made substantive treatment of real problems concerning the common good of both Church and State seemingly impossible. It was this that led Gerbert of Aurillac to comment that “to take part in public life is madness today”.<sup>24</sup> If a man tried to be loyal to a given set of proscriptions he would certainly violate another, or, barring that, become subject to the even more pressing whims of the strongest local warmonger—for however long his particular willful writ would run. “Laws are silent in the presence of arms”, the long-suffering Gerbert sighed; “if someone deviates a bit from the holy canons, it is not out of wickedness but out of necessity.”<sup>25</sup> At the Synod of Trosly in 909 “the assembled bishops complained that people were fearlessly swearing by God and all the saints, by the relics of the saints, by their own souls or those of their parents and friends”, all of this, obviously, in order to find a way to save their constantly threatened skins.<sup>26</sup> One consequence of such madness was a comical succession of mutual excommunications. “There was hardly anyone in the Kingdom who was not excommunicated for having been in contact with another excommunicate”, the Abbo of Fleury (c.

---

<sup>23</sup> Fichtenau, pp. 3-82, 181-245.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

## MOUNT TABOR

945-1004) bemoaned.<sup>27</sup> Still, the more that everyone began to excommunicate everyone else, and with ever more virulent accusations, calumnies, and curses, the less such actions seemed to have any practical effect.

Calls to end the chaos were regularly made through arbitrary insistence upon the need for universal obedience to what really amounted to one batch of potentially appropriate rules as opposed to another. Well-meaning efforts to overcome disorder merely led to new bewilderment. Abbo of Fleury, pointing to the variety of competing "authorities" engaged in such activities, complained that "what is prescribed by one ecclesiastical synod is proscribed by another."<sup>28</sup> Hence the irritation of the monks of Monte Cassino as to why "some in rough arrogance and in proud contempt presume without reflection to substitute an admittedly good custom for another which is perhaps just as good if not better."<sup>29</sup>

Disarray at the heart of Christendom helps to explain the less than pious response of a number of pagan peoples on its borders to the missionary efforts directed at their conversion. Potential Danish converts seem to have treated catechetical sessions merely as occasions for milking profitable gifts from competing Christians pursuing their obvious parochial political agendas. Notker the Stammerer (c. 840-912) relates

---

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>28</sup> Fichtenau, p. 388.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 255-261.

the following incident illustrating the “rules of the game” as Danish candidates for baptism were concerned:<sup>30</sup>

Each received a white robe from the Emperor’s wardrobe, and from his sponsors a full set of Frankish garments, with arms, costly robes and other adornments. This was done repeatedly and more and more {Danes} came each year, not for the sake of Christ but for mundane advantages. They used to hurry over on Easter Eve to pay homage to the Emperor, more like faithful vassals than foreign envoys. On one occasion as many as fifty arrived. The Emperor asked them if they wished to be baptized. When they had confessed their sins, he ordered them to be sprinkled with holy water. As there were not enough linen garments to go round on that occasion, Louis ordered some old shirts to be cut up and tacked together to make tunics or to be run up as overalls. When one of these without more ado was put on a certain elderly envoy, he regarded it suspiciously for some time. Then he lost control of himself completely and said to the Emperor: ‘Look here! I’ve gone through this ablutions business about twenty times already, and I’ve always been rigged out before with a splendid white suit; but this old sack makes me feel more like a pig-farmer than a soldier! If it weren’t for the fact that you’ve pinched my own clothes and not given me any new ones, with the result that I’d feel a

---

<sup>30</sup> Fletcher, pp. 224-225; on missionary work, see Mayeur, IV, 869-939.

## MOUNT TABOR

right fool if I walked out of here naked, you could keep your Christ and your reach-me-downs, too!"

Chieftains did, of course, still actually become "believers", though this, as elsewhere previously, essentially meant merely that they fit one more divinity into their generous array of gods and goddesses. And how could more ancient believers effectively criticize them for their religious syncretism anyway? For the entire western Christian world itself seemed to be slipping back into idolatrous and magical practices that it most likely had never been effectively weaned from in the first place. Such weaning would have required the honest labor of truly practical Christian men – not participants in the fun and word merchandising that passed for natural and supernatural wisdom in this awful mid-medieval time and cave.

From what we know, the truly believing part of the Christian population was deeply troubled by the deck games on their ship of fools and desperately wished to break them up. If the faithful were still on pilgrimage, they seemed to sensible Catholics to be assembled along a line of march that was as lost in the woods as Dante was to find himself at the opening of *The Divine Comedy*. At best, their average fellow Christians appeared to view God as the supernatural equivalent of a secular patron who permitted basic survival in exchange for unreflective obeisance to the demands of a ritualistic "business as usual". At worst, they displayed signs of panic, paralysis, anger, disbelief, and desire for vengeance against their oppressors, all as earthbound and ultimately mindless in its character as their tormentors' ambitions and unmerited successes. Blind chance – *tyche* – looked as though

it ruled a universe that perhaps only manipulative magical spells might bend slightly to one's favor. A hopeless and basically naturalist cynicism had grown so widespread that real reformers of truly exalted spirit often found themselves accused of hypocrisy, their call to sanctity treated as a sanctimonious, rhetorically appropriate explanation of their own hunt for satisfaction of secret passions and perversions.<sup>31</sup>

Only one serious path to correction of all the ills described above lay open, and that was definitely not the path of beating the enemy at his own "common sense", "business as usual", "nature as is" game. A *Catholic* common sense required a totally different mentality; one formed by a solid reliance on the corrective and transforming Word in history, backed by an authoritative whip scattering the currently powerful, warmongering, and perhaps unconscious members of the all too familiar Grand Coalition of the Status Quo. Individual and social health could only be found on the road that led back to the acceptance of the fullness of nature's truly God-given gifts, along with their purification and regeneration in Christ.

Would regaining that highway also effect a return to the original intent of the founders of the sacred imperial Carolingian order and a strengthening of unquestioning faith in the ability of its structures eternally to set things straight? Would it reaffirm the fundamental principles of the founders of the Byzantine concept of a *symphonia* of Church and State under the authority of the emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople? Or would the changed conditions of the dance of life teach men who were enlivened by the proper pilgrim spirit new steps to be executed in a somewhat

---

<sup>31</sup> Fletcher, pp. 228-284, 369-416; Fichtenau, pp. 245-262, 303-333.

## MOUNT TABOR

differently appointed ballroom than was customary; a ballroom wherein the full message of the Word might actually be better understood and the path to eternity more suitably paved than beforehand? The history of the High Middle Ages gives us the intriguing answer to these crucial questions.

*B. Rooting the Good Story in the True Story*

Tenth century Frankish adherents of the vision of an ordered, historical pilgrimage to God could not give up devotion to their worldview without admitting permanent cosmic consequences too dreadful for them even to begin to contemplate. Nevertheless, they were divided in their understanding of what needed to be done to recall the believing community and individual pilgrims back onto the line of march that led heavenwards. Two distinct approaches to this difficult pilgrim enterprise and what it might or might not entail gradually came to debate the basic shape of the project in question.

One of these approaches accepted and addressed the reality of the changed conditions of western life head on. While in no way opposed to "tradition" as such, its pragmatic spirit ultimately came to recognize the inadequacies of the "good story" regarding the Carolingian system. It began to understand that the "tradition" that this embraced and exalted was not fully the Christian Tradition with a capital "T" at all, but one adjusted to fit a set of long established "customs". In fact, it saw that the arguments used to defend those customs disguised as the Tradition actually prevented an accurate understanding of the full meaning of the Eternal

Word Incarnate and His impact on history, both in theory as well as in changing practical reality. Seeking to root the message of the Word more profoundly in daily life, this pilgrim-spirited approach, ready to contemplate new steps in the dance of life, unleashed a spiritual revival creating that moment, from the 1000's through the 1200's, when, to quote once more the vivid and useful phrase mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, "values descended to the earth". And that revival would spur a pilgrimage that amounted to a new ascent of Mount Tabor.

Many of the supporters of this only superficially "non-traditional" approach were energetic bishops who came from the more disturbed southern Frankish lands where the authority of the two most important successors of the Carolingians—the German and French Kings—was either unknown or meaningless. Raoul Glaber (before 1000-c. 1050), the renowned contemporary chronicler, tells us of men like the Bishop of Narbonne, who had to deal with local renegade counts whose already illegitimately usurped power itself then disappeared easily into the hands of castle keepers and other aggressive riffraff. Instead of looking to the "good story" of a fixed hierarchical order guided by impotent emperors and kings to re-launch the proper procession to God, such pastors turned to an immediate and total mobilization of the entirety of their various flocks against the numerous disturbers of the peace around them. Gathering the faithful outside of their old Roman towns in fields that were large enough to host their number, they pressed the Catholic population at large to take public oaths to work for tranquility in their region.

Although fasts and other penitential practices aimed at personal spiritual development were part of such bishops' *modus operandi*, one does sniff more than a touch of liberation



## MOUNT TABOR

theology at the heart of their strategy; a sense that a “diocese in arms”, marshaled behind the relics of its favorite saints and then hurled into battle against the forces of evil, would necessarily ensure the movement of men back towards God; a conviction that the Silent Majority would somehow be less subject to temptation and sin, were this truly noble force to replace the wicked strong men currently brutalizing their territory. “Good stories” of their own were enlisted to back the call to populist social activism, with a Holy Letter fallen from Heaven in 1024 cited before the tribunal of the Christian People as one of the many supernatural proofs that God was on its side.<sup>32</sup>

A variation on the same approach came from out of a number of different Frankish monastic communities with influence in England and Italy as well as at home. St. Gerald of Brogne (d.959) and John of Gorze (900-974) were two figures central to this development. But most celebrated in its rise were men working out of the Burgundian abbey of Cluny, founded in 910 with the backing of William the Pious, Count of Auvergne and Duke of Aquitaine (875-918). A succession of powerful Clunaic abbots, from Odo (927-942) through Aymard (942-948) and Mayeul (948-994), to Odilo (994-1048) and Hugh the Great (1049-1109), rapidly extended that monastery’s vision and influence. They took advantage of William’s initial grant of independence to construct a network of reformed Benedictine houses. These monasteries were then supported by an equally extensive and eclectic grid of friendly political authorities, from pacific castle keepers to

---

<sup>32</sup> G. Duby, *France in the Middle Ages* (Blackwell, 1991), pp. 84-105; *The Three Orders*, pp. 128-146; Tellenbach, pp. 127-141.

counts to the new king-emperors who emerged from out of Germany in the course of the tenth century.<sup>33</sup>

Cluny had no essential quarrel with the Dionysian concept of the need for a hierarchically-organized public guidance of the pilgrimage to God. Nevertheless, what counted most in its eyes was not *who* the hierarchs were but whether they wanted to carry out their tasks properly and had real power to do so. For Cluny, the transformation in Christ of *whoever* constituted the effective leadership of a given land was the primary key to success in setting a population on the path to eternal union with the Father of Lights. This, ironically, was the same theme that the first Carolingians had themselves happily taken over from St. Isidore of Seville to justify their replacement of their incompetent Merovingian predecessors. The Clunaics and their allies were to adopt that fruitful principle anew and deepen its significance and impact considerably.

Central to the Clunaic plan for re-launching the pilgrimage to God was the awakening of all men, *individually*, to their need to work actively for its success. Each and every human person in the line of march, the Christian *agmen*, was called upon by it to pray, to fast, and to do penance if the entire enterprise were to prosper. Such tasks were not the province of anointed king *orators* and their consecrated episcopal advisors alone. Everyman was called to holiness as

---

<sup>33</sup> On monasticism, reform, and the peace movement, see Tellenbach, pp. 101-184; C. Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, pp. 120-139; B. Rosenwein, *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* (U. of Pennsylvania, 1982); Mayeur, IV, 852-866; V, 57-175, 367-450; Hughes, II, 206-208.

## MOUNT TABOR

well. This general invitation to dance the dance to sanctity was symbolized by the Feast of All Saints, which quickly became a Clunaic favorite, demonstrating as it did that Heaven's population included more than the highest princes and prelates. The success or failure of any one individual who accepted such an invitation to enter the Christian ballroom was therefore seen to impact mightily upon the viability of the whole communal pilgrimage of the People of God. Although they did not say so openly, the Clunaics obviously implied that Carolingian inspired efforts to guide that procession failed precisely due to their blindness to this need for a general participation in the dance of life. Renewed calls to pilgrimage would fail again miserably if the unchanging procession were resuscitated without making this needed change.

Nevertheless, inchoate mobilizations of "dioceses-in-arms" were also equally doomed. All men were sinful, and failure to recognize that fact would make any attempt to correct one's own flaws correspondingly more difficult. The recruitment of the silent majority under the banner of their local saints for the violent overthrow of bad authorities would prove to be utterly useless if unaccompanied by a painstaking, life-long dedication to attainment of the personal sanctification in and through Christ of each and every member of the Christian community without exception.

In order to achieve the cherished goal of a proper reordering of the pilgrimage to God, spiritual militants had first and foremost to be formed. Where else could one do so but in monasteries, the traditional school for saints in the Christian world? Forming such men required the creation of other monastic polis like Cluny that possessed the same

freedom to treat the attainment of personal sanctity as their primary task. But the formation of militants was not an end in itself. Men are not isolated atoms but communal beings, and this meant that spiritual militants would also have the social responsibility to reform others; to go back into the darkness of Plato's cave to lead those chained within it away from their contentment with "nature as is" and towards the fullness of the correcting and transforming supernatural light of Christ.

Social responsibility involved the true conversion, in practice and not in name only, of everyone, from monks in houses that were still subject to corruption all the way up to kings and emperors and their courtiers. Still, for immediate prudential reasons, Cluny placed a premium upon the need, first and foremost, to arouse the wretched mass of renegade counts, castle keepers, and soldiers of fortune that had usurped authority in much of Western Europe to some spiritual sense of the responsibilities their illegitimate but *de facto* political power demanded of them. If they, the worst of the troublemakers, could be made to take up their Dionysian task of "pilgrimage ordering" in the full and proper Clunaic understanding of what this entailed, the peace necessary for the rest of the population to make its own commitment to spiritual progress would be provided.

Cluny did not attempt to obtain influence over what people referred to as the *malitia* (the evil force) instead of the *militia* (the soldiery) by giving an "appropriate explanation and justification" of their hideously disordered, passion-filled lives. The bands of soldiers in question were tragically dedicated to the pointless "business as usual" demands of "nature as is". Cluny went about its work by seeking to control and redirect the malefactors' passions and wills; by taming these wild beasts; by, as the saying then went,

## MOUNT TABOR

“binding the rhinoceros”.<sup>34</sup> Two tools for achieving the goal of putting such *unnatural* naturalist upstarts in their proper place were employed; two weapons for ordering or “ordaining” them to their truly natural and supernatural Christian roles; two modes of correcting and ultimately transforming them in Christ.

The first, a *via negativa*, involved pressuring them to take a public oath to work for the Truce and the Peace of God—the tactic that activist bishops had already used in creating their “dioceses-in-arms”. Monks of Cluny appealed to the threat that *could* indeed come from a united and mobilized silent majority if someone *were* revolutionary enough actually to evoke it. Abbots of the Burgundian monastery traveled widely. Wherever they went, they celebrated solemn masses attended by the whole population of a given region. Odo of Cluny, filled with the wisdom of serpents, milked such occasions to deliver fire and brimstone sermons regarding the sins of warmongering and the social injustices flowing from them.<sup>35</sup>

How then are these robbers Christians, or what do they deserve who slay their brothers for whom they are commanded to lay down their lives?

You have only to study the books of antiquity to see that the most powerful are always the worst. Worldly nobility is due not to nature but to pride and ambition. If we judged by realities we should give

---

<sup>34</sup> Odo of Cluny, *De Vita Geraldi*, i. 8, in Rosenwein, front page.

<sup>35</sup> Dawson, *Religion*, p. 123.

honour not to the rich for the fine clothes they wear but to the poor who are the makers of such things — *nam sudoribus pauperum praeparatur unde potentiores saginantur* (for the banquets of the powerful are cooked in the sweat of the poor).

Odo and his fellow monks adopted this tone in order to arouse the mass of peace loving men to a fever pitch and aim their impassioned ire at the troublemakers present. Some of the latter were sincerely moved to repentance by the preaching; most were alarmed by the violence that could potentially be unleashed against them or the long-term stigma of being branded contumacious public sinners. The result, in both cases, was often the agreement to take the solemn public oaths to support that Peace and Truce of God that the bishops had already sought to promote. Such oaths, in effect, defined combatants and non-combatants, separating them out from one another, and giving some hope for a limitation of the consequences of previously uncontrolled and totally self-serving warfare.<sup>36</sup>

Cluny's *via positiva* centered round a correction of the disordered existence that seemed so "natural" to these actually *unnatural* human beasts; round a growth in Christ that led them to a life conformed to virtue. Here, liberation theology gave way to transformation theology. This entailed placing soldiers in an "order" based upon a real recognition of the primacy of the spiritual in shaping their peculiar group activity that would be as thoroughgoing for them as it was for the monks. Living a liturgical, prayerful, and penitential routine modeled on the "customs" of Cluny, the reformers

---

<sup>36</sup> Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 120-139

## MOUNT TABOR

were convinced, would be exceedingly helpful in achieving this goal. Still, it had to be a model appropriate to—“ordained” to—their own particular natural vocation, which was obviously one that was dedicated to arms. Thus, it had to be a model open to the modifications that the idiosyncratic character of that life demanded.

The traditional theme of the pilgrimage provided an innovative means of shaping a general need for growth in holiness to fit their particular earthly vocation. In this case, the pilgrimage in question was the increasingly popular procession to the tomb of St. James the Greater at Compostella in western Spain. What better way of guiding unruly warriors in love with physical coercion to a correct fulfillment of the function of authority than by giving them a soldiering mission that was truly justifiable—that of defending unarmed pilgrims against marauding bandits and Moors? What better context for “binding the rhinoceros”, for transforming their “profession”, for teaching them to pray, to fast, to do penance, and to see all of life as a meaningful wandering towards God than the rather lengthy “time out of time” that the pilgrimage to Compostella offered? Such warmongers were trapped in a rut from which they might only escape by means of this startling and quite exotic break with their daily low-level routine.

Lessons taught through the two Clunaic approaches ultimately had their effect. Renegade counts, castle keepers, and their soldiers were shown the path to a Christian knighthood that Abbot Odo’s biography of Gerald of Aurillac (c. 855-909) well describes. Families of re-ordered soldiers, focusing spiritually on Cluny and its offshoots, praying for the souls of their dead ancestors, and using their example as a

beacon light for their children, developed a sense of nobility – of Christian nobility. And this would be expanded upon and infinitely more seriously refined on those “armed pilgrimages” called the Crusades, which we will discuss later in this chapter.<sup>37</sup>

Two final points must be made about the value of this activist, episcopal and Clunaic approach to dealing with chaotic western Christendom. First of all, its lack of concern for the traditional legal status of the men it targeted made it especially appealing to “outsiders” of all sorts. Transformation theology gave everyone from downright criminals to Danish invaders of the British Isles to recent Slavic and Hungarian converts the means to fit both theoretically and practically into the otherwise seemingly eternally closed sacred, imperial, Roman Catholic order of things. And, secondly, as historical precedents had already well demonstrated, “outsiders” could themselves help revive and deepen an incarnational sense among “insiders” who had tragically lost it. That is to say, “outsiders” could help “insiders” trapped in the rut of a “natural order” ruled by long-standing but inadequate or corrupt customs disguised as “traditions” and actually divinizing mere “business as usual”. This had happened with the Greek wanderers into Rome in the seventh century. Something similar had taken place through the aid of Frankish and English enthusiasts for Christ, Rome, and Roman culture a bit later in Merovingian Gaul. And it would now happen again with the “outsider” influence of Cluny and its supporters on the “insiders” in the corrupt tenth and eleventh century city of Rome.

---

<sup>37</sup> Rosenwein, pp. 57-100; See, also, Duby, *The Three Orders*, 19, 54, 97, 139-146, 175-177, 192-206; Mayeur, V, 57-175, 367-450.



## MOUNT TABOR

Clunais and fellow reformers ready to accept new steps in the dance of life designed to deal with a changed historical reality were harshly criticized by supporters of the second approach to overcoming chaos. These critics accused them of being dangerous innovators engaged in a monstrous overturning of true Tradition. Most prominent among the detractors were Bishop Adalbero of Laon (d. 1030/1031), who outlined his critique in his 434-line poem, *Carmen for King Robert* (1025), and his fellow prelate, Gerard of Cambrai (c. 975-1051).<sup>38</sup>

Very conservative in outlook, such men saw the pilgrimage to God as indeed being fixed in the mode indicated by the earlier Carolingian interpreters of Pseudo-Dionysius. The task of reconstruction for them was, in consequence, one of simply getting the traditional political hierarchy firmly back into the saddle. It was for the consecrated bishops and the anointed kings of Germany and France who worked in union with them—the *oratores*—to do the job of leading that pilgrimage. It was also up to them to undertake the prayer, fasting, and penance that were its spiritual sustenance. The task of the *bellatores*—the anointed rulers who were the link with the spiritual leadership, along with counts whom they designated and the soldiery that they and they alone recruited—was to maintain the order of the pilgrim line of march. Everyone else’s job—that of the *agricultores* and the *laboradores* who made up the vast bulk of the Christian pilgrim population—was limited to physical labor and reproduction. Certainly, they were not meant to rule, to guide, or to fight. Their spiritual purification was to

---

<sup>38</sup> Duby, *The Three Orders*, pp. 21-125.

be achieved indirectly and inertly, in that it required no particular extra penitential effort on their part. Sanctification, for them, came through the sanctification of their political and spiritual superiors, defined as such by their family heritage and noble pedigree. In short, God did not intend the average man to dance the dance of life openly and with all the energy that lay within him. Only his social betters were meant to do so.

Given this vision, men like the activist *orator* Bishop of Narbonne were turning the world upside down, taking over the *bellatores'* role, and, in effect, that of the king in particular. Moreover, by transforming *agricultores* and *laboradores* into *bellatores* in requiring them to take the oath to insure the Peace and Truce of God, and then by pressing them to pray and fast as well, they were also inspiring invasion of the proper realm of the *oratores*. This did not permit the "form" required by the recognized hierarchy of the pilgrimage to do the work demanded of it. Those going down such a pathway were thus at war with the heavenly defined order as much as the earthly structure of things.

Monks were even worse offenders in such a twisted enterprise. Not only were they, like "liberation theology" bishops, not anointed for the work of achieving peace; most of them were not ordained clergymen at all. Even those who were ordained insisted upon being recognized as going about their task *qua* monk, not priest. This made lay monks into *oratores* who then had the audacity to associate illegitimate warriors into their topsy-turvy *oratores-bellatores* scheme of things. And, most alarming of all, these revolutionaries had proven so charismatic as to seduce and gain the approval of men at the highest levels of society, from consecrated bishops such as Fulbert of Chartres (952/970-1028), to Roman

## MOUNT TABOR

Pontiffs, to the very anointed kings of France and Germany themselves.

Mention of the latter authorities brings us to an examination of the situation as it was developing in the Kingdom of Germany. This provides a unique and interesting example both of the continuing nobility of the Christian imperial vision and its own openness to the pilgrimage spirit as well as its tragic inability to deal with certain undeniably changed historical realities. While failure seems to have the edge over success in the following story, aspects of it are so moving as to remind us that it, too, like the events recounted in the previous chapter, offers us a message of permanent value to consider even today. The truth of that permanent value is something that will not fully emerge until the last, nationalism-plagued chapters of this book.<sup>39</sup>

Openness in Germany to a pilgrimage spirit cognizant of changing historical circumstances is perhaps not all that surprising. The Romanization promoted by Pippin and Charlemagne had never proceeded as far in this, their eastern realm, as it had in Gaul. Instead of many counts active in as many counties, the direct subordinates of the King were a smaller number of more powerful leaders, closely tied to their specific tribes, whom we refer to by the more militarily-

---

<sup>39</sup> For the imperial revival, see J. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany* (Cambridge, 1993); K. Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe* (Hambledon, 1994); F. Rapp, *Le Saint Empire Romain Germanique* (Tallandier, 2000); P. Riché, *Les Grandeurs de l'an mille* (Bartillat, 1999); Tellenbach, pp. 50-74; Mayeur, IV, 767-866; Hughes, II, 191-224.

charged Roman title of *dux*, or duke. German dukes were already independent-minded enough not to feel compelled to invite Charles the Simple (898-922), the legitimate Carolingian heir from the Kingdom of France, to take his seemingly appropriate place as their ruler upon the death of the last direct descendant of Charlemagne's grandson, Louis the German (840-876), in 911. They chose Duke Conrad of Franconia (911-918) instead.

Conrad, however, did not feel that he possessed the proper charism—again, the proper *Heil*—to assume the title of King of Germany. On his deathbed, he urged that his power be passed on to a man who seemed to merit it: the Duke of Saxony, Henry I (919-936). Henry indeed proved capable of rebuilding royal power and prestige in Germany, transmitting it to his still more illustrious son, Otto I (936-974), who gave his name to the whole of this extraordinary line of rulers: the Ottonian Dynasty. His descendants continued to rule Germany under Otto II (973-983), Otto III (983-1002), and Henry II (1002-1024). The Ottonians and their early Salian Dynasty successors, Conrad II (1024-1039) and Henry III (1039-1056), built a system that “worked”, at least for a while, which is certainly all that one can hope for from any political order in the ever-changing earthly pilgrim realm. They did so by invoking the help of *both* the approaches discussed above: the conservative vision of Adalbero as well as the innovative outlook of the bishops and monasteries like Cluny. These they then modified to fit the specific Germanic circumstances of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

On the one hand, the German kings of the Ottonian system exploited their anointed character and sacral role to the fullest. With military successes indicating that they

## MOUNT TABOR

definitely possessed *Heil*, their spiritual aura demonstrated to their subjects that they were additionally endowed with *Heiligkeit*. As anointed rulers, they were living images of Christ, and, as such, defenders of the *Pax et Regnum Christi*. This sacred role compelled them to make the most of opportunities to rebuild the collapsed Western Empire, leading them to intervene in the affairs of Italy and Burgundy and, as a logical consequence of their labors, to obtain the imperial crown as well. That crown, and the accompanying Holy Lance that was presumed to contain a nail from the Cross of Christ and date from the time of Constantine the Great, symbolically emphasized sacred imperial responsibilities of all kinds. Not the least of these were the defense of the Papacy, the general encouragement of Greco-Roman culture—the Seeds of the Logos—and assistance to missionaries working to build a family of new Christian nations united with and subordinated to the universal Emperor.

Here, innovative ties with episcopal and monastic reformers entered into the German dynastic enterprise. Yes, it is true that in one sense the Imperial Church, the *Reichskirche*, with clerics trained in the Royal Chapel to become bishops closely linked with the work of the king-emperor, seems to reflect nothing other than Adalbero's idea of how the *oratores* should cooperate with the legitimate ruler. Such cooperation was appreciated by both the Ottonians and the early Salians, and not only for theoretical reasons. A primary reliance on the help of celibate prelates with a broader vision than that nourished by purely family and tribal oriented dukes offered more practical hope for loyalty and flexibility in a governing elite with Christendom-wide responsibilities to fulfill.

Nevertheless, in order to obtain committed, celibate prelates with the requisite broader vision, from the Roman Pontiff down to the local bishop, the assistance of reformers who wanted priests to break with their enslavement to “business as usual” to serve the correcting and transforming message of the Word was required. This entailed soliciting the advice of men who, in Adalbero’s eyes, were not *oratores*; men like the monks of St. Odilo, Abbot of Cluny from 994-1048, and, even worse, individual hermits alongside them. In fact, the work of politically and socially shaping Christian order was regularly given over to abbots of important monasteries as well as to bishops. Moreover, both abbots and bishops were expected to perform functions that went beyond advice and prayer. The *Servitium regis* often involved exercising judicial authority – what was called the ban – and even raising troops for the army. If need be, it also entailed going on military expedition in aid of the imperial image of Christ, whenever he needed to fight on behalf of His community as a living, political reality on the march towards eternity.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the best way of grasping the full character of the Ottonian and early Salian approach to restoring Christian order is by examining the story of Otto III, whose half German and half Byzantine blood gave added substance to the imperial vision from his very birth. King of Germany by the age of three, his premature death at twenty-two cut off his plans for a marriage which might have helped him fend off his constant temptation to sins of the flesh. It left him heirless as well. Personal problems aside, he possessed both an undeniable piety and an excellent classical education, both of

---

<sup>40</sup> Bernhardt, pp. 45-135; Mayeur, IV, 793-815.

## MOUNT TABOR

which gave him the chance to put his superior military training to work on behalf of a broad, meaningful understanding of the full message of the Word, the nature of Christendom, and how the latter ought to be guided.<sup>41</sup>

It was his visit to Rome in 996, at the age of 16, in answer to the call of Pope John XV (985-996) for help against the local familial pest—at that time, the Crescentii brood—which turned out to be the single most formative experience of Otto's life. Accompanied by many of the great Church leaders of the day, most importantly, Gerbert of Aurillac—master scholar, Abbot of Bobbio, and sometime Archbishop of Rheims—the king's march looked more like a religious procession than a regal train. At its head was the Holy Lance. In Italy, the young king met a number of charismatic figures who further confirmed his already strong sense of political-religious mission: men like St. Romualdo (950-1027), the founder of Camaldoli, and St. Adalbert of Prague (956-997). The former was a hermit who understood how to translate zeal for sanctity into an effective tool for quieting the social disorder unleashed by the restless counts, vassals, and other assorted "common sense" hoodlums of the day. The latter, adored by Otto as a model of both humility and love for the Church, and certainly a quite unique personality from any man's standpoint, was destined to end his life a martyr while on mission among pagans still pointlessly worshipping "nature as is" in the north of Europe.

Finding Pope John XV dead on his arrival and the Papacy indeed the slave of local factionalism, the King installed his young cousin Bruno on the papal throne as Gregory V (996-

---

<sup>41</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, pp. 241-311; Hughes, II, 196-197.

999). Gregory then presided over Otto's imperial coronation at St. Peter's on May 21, 996. Here, the emotionally overwhelmed king-emperor was cloaked with a robe and a crown portraying the magnificence of the cosmos, evoking the Old and New Testament, and clearly focusing the meaning of his reign within the context of the divine plan, at the service of the greater glory of God. Otto now understood still more fully the mission that his passion and education had shaped him to fulfill: the need to secure the order of an all too fragile Western Christendom, and to do so by exalting Christ's Church, with her visible center in Rome. According to the document through which he would later appoint his chaplain and enthusiastic supporter Leo (d. 1026) as Bishop of Vercelli, the Emperor's task was one of making certain "that the Church of God remain free and safe; that she prosper throughout our Empire...that the power of the Roman People be extended and the State re-established, so that We might merit from living in this world honorably and thus fly more honorably from the prison of this life..."<sup>42</sup>

Returning to Germany, our emperor-on-mission was soon to learn that the swamp of Roman politics was deeper and much more murky than he may originally have guessed. The Crescentii, aided and abetted by an eastern imperial authority in Constantinople irritated by this youthful competitor for Roman glory, quickly exploited Otto's absence from town. They tossed Gregory V out of Rome and placed the young man's former Greek tutor and disloyal friend, John Philagathos, on the throne of St. Peter as the Antipope John XVI (997-998). The emperor's first stab at correction and

---

<sup>42</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, p. 289.



## MOUNT TABOR

transformation in Christ of the popes and the Patrimony of St. Peter had proven to be an all too fragile endeavor.

Otto and his many scholarly, reformer friends now saw that their work of revival required a lot more muscle behind it to make it stick. A new and fully armed procession set forth to Italy at the end of 997, with men like Gerbert of Aurillac, the above-mentioned Leo of Vercelli, the great Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (960-1022), and St. Odilo of Cluny on hand to emphasize the ultimately spiritual aim of this temporarily clenched, German fist. Rome was reached in 998 and the head of the Crescentii Clan, who held out for three months at the Castel Sant'Angelo, finally captured and decapitated. Antipope John was disgraced, rather brutally punished, and imprisoned. Gregory V regained his throne. The re-entry of pope and emperor into St. Peter's, and their joint responsibility for rule, reform, and the growth of the Roman State and Church were celebrated in a prayer-hymn written by Bishop Leo:<sup>43</sup>

*Refrain:* Christ hear our prayers; cast your glance upon your city of Rome; in your goodness renew the Romans, awaken the forces of Rome, permit Rome to revive under the Empire of Otto III.

VI. Otto, rule yourself; be attentive and vigilant, you who according to the Apostle have charge of the bodies of men; it is for the punishment of sinners that you bear an invincible sword.

---

<sup>43</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, pp. 257-258.

X. Rejoice, Pope, rejoice Caesar; let the Church exult with happiness, let the joy be great in Rome, let the imperial palace rejoice. Under the power of Caesar, the Pope reforms the age.

XI. O, you two luminaries throughout the lands, illuminate the churches, put darkness to flight. May the one {the Emperor} prosper by the sword, may the other {the Pope} give resonance to his word.

Our young missionary, the better to fulfill his responsibilities, both natural and supernatural, decided to take up permanent residence on the Palatine Hill, the home of the old Roman Emperors. There, he began to adopt Byzantine imperial customs, to seek for himself a bride from his eastern imperial colleague, and to preside, together with the pope and the bishops, as a thirteenth apostle at reforming Synods throughout Italy. When another temporary absence from the city led to a revival of the old, parochial, Roman shenanigans and perhaps even the poisoning of Pope Gregory V, the emperor's determination to renew and transform his era grew but greater still.

Otto named his impressive scholar friend and fellow visionary, Gerbert, as his cousin's successor. Gerbert took the name of Sylvester II, apparently to emphasize his desire to cooperate loyally with the new Constantine---just as the first Sylvester had worked in tandem with Constantine the Great. An Ottonian document of January, 1001, probably prepared by Leo of Vercelli, once again clearly spelled out the imperial commitment to extricating the Papacy from the sewer of Roman politics, while, interestingly enough, also denouncing the exaggerated papal political ambitions outlined in the

## MOUNT TABOR

“good story” recounted by the fraudulent Pseudo-Donation of Constantine discussed above. This latter document, readers will remember, was a bit of ill-advised word merchandising seeking to prop up papal authority in the years after the Caesaro-Papism latent in Carolingian imperialism became obvious:<sup>44</sup>

Otto, slave of the Apostles and according to the will of the Saviour God, august Emperor of the Romans. We proclaim Rome capital of the world. We recognize that the Roman Church is the mother of all the churches, but also that the carelessness and incompetence of her pontiffs have for a long time now tarnished the titles of her brightness. In fact, these pontiffs have not only sold and alienated through certain dishonest practices the possessions of St. Peter outside of the city, but—and We do not affirm this without sorrow—the goods that they possessed from our own imperial city. With still greater license, they allowed these goods to pass into common use at the price of gold; they despoiled St. Peter, they despoiled St. Paul and their altars themselves. Instead of restoration they have always sowed confusion. In disdain of pontifical precepts and disdaining the Roman Church herself, certain popes so pushed their arrogance as to confuse the greater part of our Empire with their own apostolic power. Without caring for what they lost through their fault, without preoccupying themselves with that which their

---

<sup>44</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, pp. 272-273.

personal vanity caused them to waste, they replaced their own squandered goods...by turning towards (exploitation) of foreign ones – that is to say, ours and those of our Empire. {Hence} the lies forged by them, by means of which the Cardinal-Deacon John (surnamed Mutilated Fingers) drafted in gilded letters a privilege which he fallaciously rooted very deep in the past and placed under the name of the great Constantine.

Otto appears to have been the primary captain of the revived ship of Church and State, a man who took his role as thirteenth apostle quite literally. However, lest one think that his position was questioned by the great spiritual leaders of the day, St. Odilo's testimony is there as a corrective. So enamored of Otto and his work was the reform abbot that he penned an enthusiastic poem exulting in the extent of the emperor's glory, giving no hint of any fear concerning where such exaggerated adulation might possibly lead.<sup>45</sup>

Magnificent as the work of the Ottonians was, historical realities, as some of the incidents described above already readily indicate, did not quite fit together with the Romano-German imperial vision. Liutprand of Cremona's (c. 922-972) account of an embassy of Otto the Great to Constantinople shows that relations with the Eastern Empire were neither particularly fraternal nor even respectful. Involvement in Italy left room for problems to develop in Germany and among newly converted Slavic peoples. Outbursts of violence in the north regularly required a return to the homeland stimulating a recrudescence of difficulties further south.

---

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

## MOUNT TABOR

And, indeed, by 1002, the grand vision of *renovatio* was finished. In the year 1000, while Otto was away on a truly exhilarating political-religious missionary expedition which took him as far away as present day Poland, and through which he also tightened the bonds linking Hungary with the family of western Christian nations, revolt brewed back in the peninsula. The emperor returned, only to find the malaise spreading to Rome by the beginning of 1001. Even though soon quelled, the experience of being so easily trapped on the Palatine Hill made it clear that the Eternal City was unsafe for Otto and his imperial-reformer entourage. The poignancy of his disappointment is captured by the speech to his rebellious subjects that Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim puts in Otto's mouth on the third day of the siege: <sup>46</sup>

Listen to the words of your father, pay attention to them, meditate upon them carefully in your hearts. You are no longer my Romans. Because of you I left my fatherland, my family; through love for you I neglected my Saxons, all the Germans, those of my own blood. I have led you into the farthest regions of our Empire, into places where your ancestors, when they submitted the world to their power, never placed their feet. And why have I done this, if not to extend your glory to the ends of the world? I have adopted you as my children. I have preferred you to all others. Because I have raised you up from your fate, because of you, I say, I have aroused jealousy and hatred against myself. And you, in exchange for all this, you

---

<sup>46</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, pp. 304-305.

have rejected your father; you have caused many of my intimate friends to perish by a cruel death; you have rejected me. But you *cannot* reject me since I would never allow anyone to remove from my heart those whom I paternally embrace.

Emperor and pope nevertheless fled to Ravenna. There they consulted some of their closest supporters, Odilo of Cluny and St. Romualdo among them. The latter warned against any attempt to return to Rome as tantamount to an act of suicide. Otto ignored the great founder of Camaldoli, moved back southwards, and reached the very outskirts of the Eternal City, only to die from what was perhaps a recurrence of malarial fever. St. Bruno of Querfurt (970-1009), Apostle to the Prussians and beneficiary of Otto's missionary vision, described his death on 24 January, 1002 as that of a true Christian monarch. "Cry world, cry Rome, and let the Church lament", Leo of Vercelli sang in a poem capturing the misery of all of Otto's friends. "Let the chants in Rome fall quiet. Let sorrow scream out to the palace, since, through the absence of Caesar, trouble extends across the world".<sup>47</sup>

The men of that first decade of the new millennium would have known that this announcement of great trouble was no exaggeration. Sylvester II experienced it without delay. Returning to the Eternal City, he saw the Crescentii fortunes immediately rise. The pope had the good luck to die just one year later, 63 years old, still a noble figure, but broken by the Waiting Game—the wait for a revival of the Papacy, of Rome, of the Empire, of Christendom, of the whole correcting and transforming message of the Word Incarnate

---

<sup>47</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, p. 308.

## MOUNT TABOR

in history. His second and Crescentii-tormented successor, Sergius IV (1009-1012), who knew him well, wrote an epitaph for him and for the work of Otto III on his tomb at the Lateran, praising their cooperative vision and lamenting that, with their passing, "the world was chilled with horror".<sup>48</sup>

These years were indeed not happy ones for Rome, the Papacy, and their friends. It is true to say that many details are lacking to our knowledge of the whole of that decade, and that several of those that survive are even thinly positive. Nevertheless, in general, the first decade of the new millennium was part of a less than optimum slice of time wracked with plague, renewed Saracen activity, and contest over the kingship of Italy between St. Henry II of Germany (1002-1024) and an ambitious nobleman named Arduin of Ivrea (955-1015). Much more importantly still, at least from our standpoint, it was a decade of intense Church humiliation. This was due to papal subservience to the strong-arm tactics wielded with depressing effectiveness through the continued influence of the local Crescentii gang. And that band of hooligans was inspired by a self-serving and intensely parochial vision of the role of the Papacy in the life of a Christendom wretchedly enslaved to the demands of "nature as is".<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>49</sup> Tellenbach, pp. 47-50; C. Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy* (U. of Michigan, 1992), pp.168-193; W. Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (Methuen, 1982), pp. 116-141; P. Partner, *The Lands of St. Peter* (U. of California, 1972), pp. 77-109; Mayeur, IV, 767-866; Hughes, II, 181-208.

Sad to say, worse was yet to come. The Crescentii managed to bully one more decent Pope, the same Sergius IV mentioned above, into basic helplessness. Yes, the Crescentii finally lost their grip after 1012 due to several untimely family deaths, an all too brazen attempt to bulldoze their own candidate onto the papal throne without even the semblance of an election, and the loss of prestige coming from their backing of several unsuccessful antipopes. But their place as masters of the Seven Hills was then taken over by a branch of the Theophylact Family, the Counts of nearby Tusculum.

These Tusculani, as they are generally styled, had enjoyed such a domineering position once before, and had sometimes even exercised it with more respectability than their debased predecessor. Unfortunately, they were soon to provide one of the worst of the possessors of the papal dignity, Benedict IX. Probably only twenty years old at his accession, Benedict sat three distinct times on the throne of St. Peter (1032-1044, 1045, and 1047-1048). This was due not only to political pressures but also to a corruption so great as to permit him literally to sell his own position and then try to steal it back after pocketing the dough. Vividly attacked as a demon from hell in the disguise of a priest by St. Peter Damian (1007-1072) in his aptly named *Liber Gomorrhianus*, Benedict was dismissed much more off-handedly by a future successor, Blessed Victor III (1086-1087), as being simply utterly unspeakable. Rome might still retain her prestige to good purpose in far-off Christian lands, but her closer inspection by pilgrim crowds could not help but make them realize that in many respects she *stank zum Himmel*.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Tellenbach, pp. 141-145; Hughes, II, 181-208; Mayeur, IV, 767-866.



## MOUNT TABOR

Thankfully, help was on the way. Some of the disappointed believers in the papal and Roman mission who had waited so many years for a revival they had hoped to witness as a result of the reigns of Otto III, Gregory V, and Sylvester II, survived long enough to experience practical earthly proof that broad hopes can eventually overcome enormous obstacles and become realities. In fact, they survived to see the beginnings of a longer-lasting reform of “head and members” destined to mount a hugely important attack upon the supporters of “business as usual” that would retain its impact down to our own day.

Renewed reformation continued to involve the work of the sacred emperor. Otto’s immediate successor, St. Henry II (1002-1024), understood the realities of imperial strengths and weakness and focused his attentions on improving the situation in the north of Europe. But by the time of Henry III (1039-1056), under the stimulus of another generation of innovative reformers and with reference to his traditional legal role in Rome, the king-emperor, the living image of Christ, was ready to intervene anew in Italian affairs. That involvement led to the Synod of Sutri in 1046, the deposition of three simoniac popes, and their replacement by German pontiffs: Clement II (1046-1047), Damasus II (1048), and, most importantly, St. Leo IX (1049-1054). “Outsiders” filled with the pilgrim spirit had once again found their pilgrimage leading them to save Rome. When they arrived in the Eternal City, they were to add a new step to the Christian dance of life. And this was destined to veer the *agmen* we call the Church onto a different and in many respects quite unexpected highway on her pilgrim journey to her same unchanging goal.

*C. The Second Wave of Reform & the Plenitude of Papal Power*

After a century and more of generally embarrassing, uninspiring, or impotent figures on the throne of St. Peter, Leo IX was a radically new kind of pope. He and his successors, Victor II (1055-1057), Stephen X (1057-1058), Nicholas II (1059-1061), and Alexander II (1061-1073), now took charge of the movement of innovative Christian restoration. The local Roman nobility began to be unseated with the help of a collective cosmopolitan leadership including Hugh the White of Remiremont (c. 1020-c. 1099), Humbert of Moyenmoutier (d. 1061), Frederick of Liège (d. 1058), St. Peter Damian of Fonte Avellana, Desiderius (c. 1026-1087), the Abbot of Monte Cassino, and the subdeacon Hildebrand, the future Gregory VII (1073-1085).<sup>51</sup>

These impressive men built the remnants of the crumbling papal administrative machinery into that more serious apparatus that by the end of the eleventh century finally deserved the title of "Roman curia" as we understand it today. Most importantly, Rome's continued prestige was exploited in order to enhance the power of the Papacy. Leo IX practiced a form of itinerant kingship, traveling outside the Eternal City to effect reform at synods in Salerno, Pavia, Vercelli, Mantua, Rheims, and Mainz. He thus enhanced papal esteem by bringing the person of the pope directly before the eyes of the European Catholic population. Priestly

---

<sup>51</sup> Tellenbach, pp. 141-205; Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 120-139; Ullmann, pp. 129-141; Partner, pp. 110-117; Mayeur, V, 57-100; Hughes, II, 208-224.

## MOUNT TABOR

and monastic simony, the abandonment of celibacy, and the general failure of the clergy to understand the primacy of their spiritual mission were chastised severely at the hand of the highest authority in the Church---personally, in a way that masses of people could witness. The consequences were nothing less than electrifying.

In effect, what had happened was that the Papacy had shown that it, too, was ready to take up its staff and go on pilgrimage throughout Christendom for the cause of the Word. It thus began vigorously to extract itself from its parochial rut and its own depressing enslavement to the demands of "business as usual". But it proved to be a different kind of reform movement that took shape around it, one that was more conscious of current feudal political realities than its predecessor had been. Hence, it was skeptical of both the viability as well as the suitability of an imperial revival of the kind envisaged by Otto III. This was a reform movement that, while grateful for the aid given to it by the Empire, decided that the Church needed more independence than the customary sacred imperial concept had ever proven willing to allow her, at least up until the present moment.

Always committed to the crucial importance of joint Church-State labors for the construction of Christendom, this second wave of the reform movement placed its most profound hopes for the success of the corrective and transforming message of the Word in the struggle for personal sanctity and sense of responsibility not just of emperor, pope, and bishops but also of every Christian without exception. For it, too, like the monks of Cluny before it, insisted that only the liberation of all of us from the tunnel vision of materialism and sin; only the willingness of all of us

to see the world from the perspective of the Creator and Redeemer God could build the society of which holy tenth and eleventh century victims of "complexity without order" had so long dreamed.

This second wave built up steam rather swiftly. With the death of Henry III and the regency of his wife Agnes over their infant son, the Papacy declared its independence from direct control by the emperor. Stephen X (1057-1058), one of the reforming members of the Curia noted above, was elected without reference to the wishes of the imperial government. The Lateran Synod of 1059 transformed the cosmopolitan leadership of the budding Roman curia into the College of Cardinals, entrusting this body with the election of future pontiffs. Emperors, now viewed as simple laymen and no longer the extraordinary living images of Christ, were rather unceremoniously shunted off to the religious sidelines. As though this were not enough, outspoken figures like Humbert of Moyenmoutier began to insist that the entire *Reichskirche*, with her bishops and abbots chosen by and in aid of the throne, was actually herself part of the problem that the Church as a whole faced; that she herself was guilty of massive encouragement of what he called the "heresy" of simony. The implication was that the sacred Empire, rather than being a God-given secular aid to the work of the Word, actually stood in the way of the corrective and transforming mission of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Although the actions of St. Leo IX already clearly emphasized the Papacy's readiness to utilize what was to be referred to as the "plenitude of papal power", there has never been any doubt that Pope St. Gregory VII most vigorously expressed both the specific theme of the fullness of Roman authority as well as the entire spirit of the second wave of the

## MOUNT TABOR

reform movement in general. Elected by popular acclaim, Gregory was the darling of both reformers and the city when he began his reign. Insistence on the plenitude of papal power in the life of Christendom and the political independence sufficient to be able to utilize it, was, for him, the absolute, scripturally-grounded precondition for further reform. Papal authority and its religious justification were the real keys, practically, to serious work for individual and social improvement. For the pope was Peter, *qui nunc in carne vivit*, and Peter was what later Roman Pontiffs would call the Vicar of Christ.

In Lenten Synods between 1075 and 1078, as well as in the famous *Dictatus Papae*, practically every aspect of the theme of the plenitude of papal power—from the ultimately subordinate position of local bishops, who simply “shared” in his responsibilities, to the need, for the sake of the victory of spiritual truths, for secular powers to bend to higher, supernatural authority—was enunciated. Questions involving heresy, simony, celibacy, and marriage problems, according to this doctrine, were now to be resolved under the ultimate supervision of Rome. More than that, all of life was to be touched by her decisions. For if God gave the Apostolic See the power to judge spiritual matters, then, given man’s existence as a social creature of flesh and blood, her rulings must also impact upon worldly matters.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> On the second wave of reform and the “Gregorian Revolution”, see Tellenbach, pp. 184-252; Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 120-139; Partner, pp. 106-158; Ullmann, pp. 142-172; Mayeur, *V*, 57-100; Hughes, II, 224-233.

Legates were sent to proclaim the message of the plentitude of papal power throughout the whole of the Christian world. Outsiders of all kinds—whether the activist, reform minded, lay group called the *pataria* of Milan, the Normans, or the representatives of distant and quite recently converted Catholic peoples—were called to the Papacy's support in its struggle to protect its ability to perform its Christ-given duty. The assistance that they gave to it, as Leo IX indicated and St. Anselm of Lucca (1036-1086) explained later in greater detail, could even justifiably involve a help that was armed and warlike in intent. For if anyone needed knights to defend him in his work to secure a successful pilgrimage of the People of God to Heaven, who more so than the successor to St. Peter?

The result of all of this was a short-term disaster. A renewed sense of papal primacy and plentitude of power ran head on against a Greek world filled with that intense sense of ethnic self-importance and patriarchal power discussed at the beginning of this chapter. How could Patriarch Cerularius (1043-1058) not be expected to react violently against an embassy of Pope Leo IX filled with outspoken papalists like Humbert and Frederick? After all, let us remember that eastern imperial law referred to *him* as the "living image of Christ". Cerularius was the representative of a Greek national spirit that by this point saw in the liturgical customs of other peoples, such as the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist in the Latin world, heresy plain and simple. How was a man who as patriarch was closing Latin churches and confiscating Latin monasteries to accept commands from a barbarous upstart in the German dominated world? The very concept was unthinkable---on religious and unchangeable, classical Roman grounds. Schism ensued; a schism that has

## MOUNT TABOR

proven to be almost impossible to eradicate, despite the numerous attempts to resolve it that we shall address in the pages to follow.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, not all reformers appreciated the hardening of tone that was represented most clearly by Humbert in his famous work *Against the Simoniacs*. St. Peter Damien and St. Hugh of Cluny were convinced that cooperation of Mother Church and Sacred Empire could continue to be as fruitful in the future as in the past. The validity of their criticisms of the second wave of the reform movement will be confronted in detail in the next chapter. For the moment, it is enough for us to indicate that the chief shock of this change in tone involved the fact that it brutally contradicted traditional language accepted by large numbers of contemporaries regarding a Christian order that was thought to be both God-given as well as eternal in character. For many good and decent contemporaries, including a significant number of the most fervent believers, it represented a horrifying innovation that was also a recipe for a divisive rocking of the ship of both Church and State. How could it therefore be anything other than highly anti-Catholic and perhaps even diabolical in inspiration? Hence the complaints of the author of *De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda*:<sup>54</sup>

Peace, says the Lord, I leave to you, My peace I give unto you. Wherefore, whenever the sons of the Church are compelled to make war, they do this not

---

<sup>53</sup> Hussey, pp. 111-183; Mayeur, V, 27-56, 349-363; Hughes, II, 239-248.

<sup>54</sup> Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 135-136; Hughes, II, 217.

by the teaching of Christ and the tradition of the Church, but from necessity, and by a certain contagion of Babylon, the earthly city, through which the sons of Jerusalem journey during their earthly life.

What a mystery of iniquity is now being worked by those who call themselves monks and, confounding the Church and the state in their perverse doctrine, oppose and set themselves up against the royal power...{so that} for seventeen years and more, everywhere in the Roman Empire there are wars and seditions, the burning of churches and monasteries, bishop is set against bishop, clergy against clergy, people against people, and father against son, and brother against brother.

But for St. Gregory VII, it was the defenders of the imperial order who were the real innovators, their novelties disguised by the fact that their vision of the relationship of Church and State had, in one form or another, been the dominant one since the days of Constantine. Having become a "custom" and been treated as a given for the constitution of a Christian order, this vision's centuries-old existence was then cited as proof positive of its unquestionable holiness. Unfortunately, cooperation on this basis was a fraudulent abuse, no matter how ancient the pedigree of the error involved. When "the Lord says 'I am the Truth and the Life'", Gregory noted, citing Tertullian, "he did not say 'I am custom' but 'I am Truth' (*non dixit sum consuetudo, sed Veritas*)".<sup>55</sup> The Eternal Word trumped words, no matter how

---

<sup>55</sup> Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 134-135.



## MOUNT TABOR

many times these were solemnly reiterated. His triumph now required a determined break with the familiar, whatever the human pain involved.

Had Gregory known of it, he might also have made reference to the battle of Plato and Isocrates and the hunt for a full understanding of the Logos as opposed to an "appropriate explanation" of a "foundation vision" rooted in the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" in support of his argument. Still, even though the essence of the contemporary struggle was indeed *similar* to the earlier conflict on the intellectual level, it was not precisely the same on the practical plane. For the imperialists were not necessarily the die-hard supporters of the natural status quo that the second wave of reformers generally made them appear to be. And, unfortunately, it was to prove to be through the exaggeration of otherwise solid principles and in their elaboration by means of a "good story" arguing for the resolution of all problems by excessive appeal to papal authority that future tragedy would lie.

*D. The New Ascent of Mount Tabor*

Conflict between the supporters of Gregorian reform ideals and their opponents was thus inevitable. It began immediately. Nevertheless, a discussion of that conflict must wait if we are to keep the main themes of this set of reflections on Church History marshaled properly in line. Contemporary struggles forming part of that broad and long-lasting counterattack leading to the emergence of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo from the early medieval shadows and the modern-day dominance of the appropriate

explanations of reality its talented rhetoricians were to produce are more suitably addressed in the next chapter. It is of greater importance first to complete our reforming pilgrimage in what was to prove to be a new, Christendom-wide ascent of Mt. Tabor. What needs to be done now is to bring the medieval reform movement, with its profound concern for the unfolding of the meaning of the Incarnate Word in history and its desire to see all things through the eyes of Christ, to its full fruition.

Rather than attempting to discuss this growth chronologically, it seems best to summarize it as a unit from the standpoint of two pontificates: that of Innocent III (1198-1216) primarily and, to a lesser degree, that of Blessed Gregory X (1271-1276). This is because Innocent most firmly dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's" on the character and goals of the reform movement, both as man and as pontiff. It is also because Gregory repeated this labor, having set himself the task at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274 of reaffirming all that Innocent had sought to accomplish—and at a moment when the obstacles to achieving reform goals that his predecessor had already identified had become much more ominous. Innocent was aided in this dramatic enterprise by a century and more of predecessors in reform; Gregory by men like St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), who were themselves brilliant beneficiaries of Innocent's manifold labors. The work of these two popes, therefore, fixes our attention on the authoritative, accepting, correcting, transforming, compassionate, and pilgrimage-minded character of the Incarnate Word unfolding His meaning in history in all its ineffable complexity. Meanwhile it simultaneously introduces us to the very forces that have worked to arrest the new ascent of Mt.

## MOUNT TABOR

Tabor and create the tragically limited world that we see around us today: a world that is trapped in a naturalist journey to nowhere and yet uses certain high minded themes from its Christian past, deconstructed to serve the cause of "business as usual", to celebrate its fall into meaninglessness.<sup>56</sup>

Lothair dei Segni (1160-1216), the future Innocent III, was born at Gavignano, near Segni, south of Rome. We know of him through many sources, including his own *Gesta* and letters, along with numerous other official and private documents of the age. Educated both in Rome as well as at those new centers of higher learning in Bologna and in Paris that he would do so much to promote, he also traveled, while a student on the Left Bank, to England. Here, as he himself tells us, a visit to the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket (1118-1170) left an especially powerful impression upon him, important to the regenerative work he would later undertake as Roman Pontiff with regard to the relationship of Church and State.

Varied is the word one must use to describe the intellectual and cultural interests of Lothair. He had a taste for music, literature, and poetry. His own rhetorical skills were so appealing that his sermons and books were collected and much used by believers throughout Europe for centuries after his death. As pope, he developed a reputation as a major legal thinker, even though there is some uncertainty regarding the exact character of his studies at the faculty of

---

<sup>56</sup> On Innocent, see J. Powell, ed., *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?* (Catholic U, 1994), pp. 1-33, 178-184; Ullmann, pp. 201-150; Partner, pp. 229-265; Hughes, II, 331-382; Mayeur, V, 519-876; on Gregory, Hughes, III, 1-22; Mayeur, VI, 13-23.

law in Bologna. But he himself looked upon an interest in theology, pursued still further while working in Paris, as the most significant concern of his life.

Subdeacon in 1187, and both deacon and cardinal by 1190, Lothair was elected and installed as pope on the very day of the death of his predecessor, Celestine III (1191-1198). He was then swiftly ordained a priest and consecrated as bishop. His rapid advancement to the highest position in the Mystical Body of Christ at the age of only thirty eight seems to reflect a feeling on the part of the College of Cardinals that a younger man was needed after a number of pontificates that were either too short or led by octogenarians. In addition, it demonstrates a clear conviction that Lothair was the most obvious available candidate for the post. So extraordinary was the character of his election that the new pontiff felt obliged to explain it in his first missive to the Christian world. He then set about the work that so brilliantly summarized the spirit and goals of the entirety of the medieval ascent of Mt. Tabor and its effort to see all things in the transforming light of God.

Every act of Innocent's pontificate exudes that spirit of confident and yet humble authority marking it off as supremely Catholic. The confidence came from an absolute conviction that the sole ground for the validity and use of papal prerogatives arose from the firm union of the Papacy with the life and teaching of the God-Man. In fact, Innocent was the first pope to popularize the claim that the pontiff was the Vicar not of St. Peter but of Christ. The humility came from his personal intelligence and piety, his sense of political and historical reality, and his never-failing prudential spirit – in short, from the fact that he was in no way the man that later black legends would make him out to be. And he was

## MOUNT TABOR

authoritative because he possessed the unfailingly militant crusading mentality that was the most visible characteristic of the whole of the contemporary reform movement.

At this point, it is incumbent upon us to emphasize the significance of that crusading mentality. Yes, the movement for reform was firmly rooted in the recognition of the primacy of the hunt for spiritual perfection in each and every individual's life. Still, that sense of the primacy of things spiritual emerged as a practical force for change in the precise historical way that it did through the specific stimuli provided by the need to form zealous crusaders and then define the nature of the armed Crusades they were called upon to undertake.<sup>57</sup>

As we have already noted, this development flowed from the recognition by reform-minded monks that to follow the Rule of St. Benedict freely they must first find a way to tame the lawless soldiers ravaging much of contemporary western Christendom. Hence, the restraining of the soldiery reflected in their promotion of the oath to the Peace and Truce of God. Hence, also, the training of the representatives of this "bound rhinoceros" as monks-in-arms, concerned, simultaneously, for prayerful growth in Christ and various defensive services in aid of just causes: as guards for pilgrims on the road to Compostella; as Knights of St. Peter at the command of St. Leo IX, guided by the advice of St. Anselm, Bishop of Lucca; and, most famously, as noble warriors fighting, from the

---

<sup>57</sup> On crusading and the crusading ideal, see J. Riley-Smith, *A Short History of the Crusades* (Yale, 1987); Mayeur, V, 277-308; Hughes, II, 248-258, 298-303, 318-322, 369-373; M. Barber, *The Two Cities* (Routledge, 1992), pp. 119-140.

eleventh century onwards, for the re-conquest of Spain and the Holy Land from a long-lasting but illicit Moslem control.

We all know the enthusiasm that this "Way of God" – as the Crusade in the East was called – unleashed, most potently, to begin with, among the noble families of the Franks and the "outsider" Normans. With the seemingly miraculous fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1099 and the need to succor the Crusading States established in the Levant, such enthusiasm eventually spread to the soldiery of western Christendom as a whole. Emperors and kings joined in crusading enterprises, with the French Capetian Family in particular gaining for itself a reputation for commitment to the movement. More intense associations dedicated to prayer and soldiering took shape in the process – communities of the sort that Werner Jaeger argues Plato himself longed to see. Knights of the Temple and the Hospital, Teutonic Knights, and numerous other innovative "military orders" were created for work in the Holy Land, Spain, and the pagan Baltic regions, all of them judged proper spheres of crusading activity.

Crusading in the Holy Land brought manifold spiritual consequences in its train. Jesus Christ as an active historical figure became much more real to those who walked the same roads and passed through the same villages that He had done. Christ, Mary, and the Holy Family seemed more human and approachable, and the Divine work of the God-Man more achievable and therefore all the more pressing. Through Crusading on Christ's own home territory, the immediacy of the Kingdom of God was made palpable in a way that even the finest of sermons in churches north of the Alps could never match.

## MOUNT TABOR

Moreover, discussion of the nature of the sacrifice shouldered by those who went on Crusade promoted a deeper understanding both of penitential practice as well as the ineffable solidarity achieved through membership in a Mystical Body of Christ quickened by God's gracious love. For it was out of the Crusading Movement that the doctrine of indulgences was clarified. This doctrine, far from reducing spiritual concerns to the mechanical calculations satirized by later generations, was utterly sublime in its central vision. It taught that any sacrificial act on the part of a repentant sinner would be met by a still greater outpouring of love from a God who sacrificed His only begotten Son for mankind; and that an integral aspect of this overwhelming love was that it allowed the merits of those heroes of charity whom we call the saints in heaven to spill over in aid of those in need. Just as a mother's superabundant love and self-sacrifice could overflow to the benefit of an errant child through the mediation of the Redeemer, that of the saints could overflow to the help and perfection of the lesser works of their weaker brethren in the Body of Christ.<sup>58</sup>

Friends of the Crusading Movement soon came to see that "taking up one's cross" and going on armed pilgrimage ennobled more aspects of an individual soldier's life than his military vocation alone might indicate. This was true even on a purely natural level. After all, a man exchanging shoddy footwear for the finest shoes cannot ignore dealing with the rest of his shabby wardrobe without appearing ridiculous. On the spiritual plane the consequences were still more

---

<sup>58</sup> Riley-Smith, pp. 91-98, 106-107, 142-145; Duby, *The Age of the Cathedrals*, pp. 105-106.

significant. In order to avoid becoming “a house divided”, a penitential soldier could not focus on fighting morally acceptable wars while sinning against truth, beauty, and goodness in non-military matters. Hence, the recognition on the part of heroes, poets, and theologians of the Crusading Movement that the dedicated crusader had to be a unified whole: a just soldier and a fighter for culture in general, all under the aegis of that Incarnate Word who alone could harmonize every aspect of life in the proper hierarchy of values.

In short, a true crusading soldier had to be “an officer and a gentleman”, constantly striving for sainthood even as he sought for military victory. King warriors like St. Louis IX (1215-1270) of France enthusiastically taught such a message. In varying degrees, it was also instilled in the hearts of medieval man by the composers of the many so-called *Chansons de geste* – “Songs of the Deed” – ranging from that of Roland to the Arthurian Cycle and the tales of the Cid, all of them celebrating the accomplishments of “armed pilgrims”. Its most important theological standard bearer was St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), mystic, preacher, and propagandist for the work of the knight-monks of the bright, new, Christian and “Platonic” crusading orders. This message entered into the education of all future crusaders. As a result, a real change indeed did take place in the vision of the mission of soldiering as a whole; one similar to that regarding the mission of Rome in ancient times.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Riley-Smith, pp. 56-60; Also, A. Forey, *The Military Orders* (U. of Toronto, 1992), pp. 6-17; Mayeur, V, 302-308; Hughes, II, 298-300; Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 140-160; G. Duby, *The Chivalrous Society* (U. of California, 1980).



## MOUNT TABOR

It is useful for us to glance backwards to that ancient change to underline, through yet another Seed of the Logos, what now happened once again in medieval times, after the Word Incarnate had arrived on the earth. Ancient Rome had conquered the Mediterranean world for a wide variety of less than elevated motives. The logic of its self-interested actions can be demonstrated through the confusion of events, just as the logic of the coronation of Charles the Great can be traced back to the many different decisions of Clovis and Pippin. How did the *literal* motives responsible for Rome's conquests actually influence the general movement of history? They affected it little at all. But one cannot say the same for the *symbolic* meaning of its victories.

This was outlined by Greek historians like Polybius (200-118 B.C.), who emphasized Rome's character as a place of law, order, and justice, along with her task of bringing the blessings of peace to an unruly world. An *ecumene* pacified by Rome, Polybius argued, would then benefit from the fruits of Hellenic culture. Rome's mission would be accomplished. The works written by such historians were used to educate the children of Roman notables. Subsequent generations thus publicly spoke as though this law-and-order-giving duty, which rendered worldwide cultural growth possible, were indeed the real cause for the growth of the Empire. Rome became a concrete model for international organization and justice by no means warranted by her original intentions and activity. And it is in this form that Rome continues to have meaning for us today--an eternally valuable, correcting, and transforming meaning.

Similarly, soldiers brought up on the vision presented by the preaching of St. Bernard, the example of St. Louis IX, and

the message of at least certain aspects of the Songs of the Deed, would feel ashamed publicly to admit motivation by other, contrary goals—even if they actually *did* see soldiering merely as an opportunity for unrestrained cruelty and pillaging. It required but a fraction of a behavioral change on the part of even a small number of influential military commanders and their men to set in motion a long-term substantive transformation for the better. For it is through such small changes on the part of even the tiniest minority that most progress combating the “business as usual” mentality of the vast majority of mankind accepting “nature as is” has taken place in the past and will continue to take place in the future. Anyone comparing the transgressions of the developed crusading soldiery with the evils perpetrated by their forefathers of the 900’s—or their wayward heirs in the twentieth century—can note that a change of the sort did, at least for a time, *begin* to take root. And even if end results are not what we wish, beginnings are often enough, in the mind of God, to gain the men engaged in them an entry into His eternal kingdom.

Once again, I am now only discussing the *positive* aspects of the new, medieval ascent of Mount Tabor. Enormous problems plagued the actual military Crusading Movement, just as they did every other fruit of the crusading mentality. It is sufficient for us at this point merely to indicate that the practical military failures of crusading by the time of Pope Innocent III were symbolized by the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1189 and the inability of the Third Crusade under the combined leadership of the emperor and the kings of France and England to recapture it. These disasters formed the background landscape of Innocent’s reign and made a basic impact upon the whole program of his unique

## MOUNT TABOR

pontificate. Again, responding to the needs of the failing crusading movement was not the ultimate *ground and explanation* of the pope's actions in all of the many fields of transformation in Christ in which he labored. But it was most certainly the strongest *stimulus* pressing him into motion.

Ultimate grounds for Innocent's actions can be found in his books. His most famous work, *On the Misery of the Human Condition* (1194-1195), is not sufficient to this task because he intended to complete it with another "positive" volume that he never had a chance to finish: *On the Dignity of Human Nature*. A much more complete guide to the spirit of Innocent's thought is his *Fourfold Character of Marriage*. For Innocent, all of life is symbolized by marriage. In this book, he shows that the marriage of man and wife is one of the glorious, sacramental tools raising the individual to eternal life with a God who is married to the soul because of the marriage of the Logos with human nature and of Christ with His Church. Through these marriages, the fruitful, sublime, corrective, transforming union of nature and the supernatural can take place and have its effect upon the world. Unfortunately, however, because of the misery of the human condition after the sin of Adam, rendering them fruitful requires a great deal of difficult and humbling effort on our part.<sup>60</sup>

It was here, Innocent thought, that one could identify the problem with the contemporary Crusading Movement. If it were not succeeding, it must be because Christians were not correcting those sins in their daily lives that prevented marriage of the soul with God. This left them in a wretched,

---

<sup>60</sup> Powell, pp. 19-33, 105-113; Mayeur, V, 524-531.

uncorrected natural condition rendering them unworthy of success in any of their endeavors. Victory in the external crusade for the defense of the Holy Land was therefore intimately connected with victory in an internal European crusade against the individual sins preventing this transforming marriage from taking place. If sham Christians—both among the fighting men abroad and that vast majority of believers who remained at home—could honestly be turned into true Catholics, then the success of the external Crusade would perhaps be guaranteed. Victory in such an internal conflict could only be achieved by intensifying an awareness of the primacy of the spirit in every vocation in life, not just that of soldiering.

This intensification brought with it two further consequences, the first of which was the universal application of the militant crusading spirit. Medieval Christian culture might have taken on a different flavor if bakers had been the initial problem for Clunaic monks rather than the *malitia*. As it was, however, once the redirection of the soldier's vocation to proper Christian goals became the first object of the reformers' attention, it was inevitable that a certain military "feel" would serve as a model for similar endeavors in other spheres of life, working smoothly together with the basic human sense of being engaged in a battle for daily survival. Hence the adoption by St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) of the language of a crusading knight committed to deeds of derring-do on behalf of his Lady, Apostolic Poverty. Hence, the soldierly and chivalric character of his mission to Egypt to convert the Sultan, and that of his fellow Franciscans crossing the Silk Road alongside Mongol warriors in the hope of evangelizing the Great Khan. Hence, also, the militant

## MOUNT TABOR

crusade against heresy undertaken by St. Dominic (1170-1221) and his followers.

A second consequence, also already obvious in the work of reformers in the generations before Innocent's appearance on the scene, flowed from the acceptance of the need to bring spiritual correction to so many varied natural spheres. This underscored the importance of developing pastoral strategies appropriately proportioned to the different character of each specific human activity. In the same way that the essence of soldiering had to be identified, corrected, and transformed, the "logos" of every other activity shaping the daily lives of men and women had to be pinpointed and raised more militantly to God. A pastoral theology highly conscious of the value of making distinctions depending upon "who" was targeted doing "what" was of particular concern to Peter Cantor (d. 1197), who was an influential teacher in Paris at the time of Innocent's studies there. The young Lothair seems to have been powerfully affected by its precepts.<sup>61</sup>

Innocent's spiritual, militant, and pastorally variegated summary of the medieval ascent of Mount Tabor is most fruitfully discussed by dividing his own labors into two distinct parts. One of these concerns measures that were aimed primarily at strengthening the backbone of the Church, the State, and Christian individuals in general in their crusading battle against the obvious sinfulness preventing true marriage of souls with God. The second illustrates his fervent embrace of that pilgrim spirit open to the unexpected twists and turns of the dance of life, and therefore ready to experiment to attain the same unchanging goal of

---

<sup>61</sup> Powell, pp. 19-33, 55-78; Mayeur, V, 524-531, 737-876.

transformation in Christ dictated by the fact that the Kingdom of God was now at hand. Both types of labor were visible in the decrees of that magnificent “summary of the summary” of the path leading to a new ascent of Mount Tabor—the Fourth Lateran Council, called by Innocent to meet in 1215.

In strengthening the backbone of the Church, Innocent did nothing other than build on what St. Leo IX had begun with the tightening and internationalization of a Curia designed to make the plenitude of papal authority felt throughout the Christian world. This, by the late twelfth century, had involved the construction of a large, sophisticated, administrative apparatus in Rome, with representatives traveling the length and breadth of Christendom. Curial machinery was both difficult to pay for and to supervise, two problems at the root of manifold evils destined to prosper in the centuries to come and to serve as the meat for much of the sad tale to be recounted in the following chapters.

Innocent added immeasurably to the standard operating procedure, strength, and efficiency of the Roman administrative machine, especially with respect to tax collection on behalf of new crusades and other papal undertakings. But he did this while ruthlessly removing rapacious officials hungry for fees for expediting papal business. Both competent and scrupulous in his own Roman diocese, he wanted to insure the same high standards in the episcopacy that “shared his cares” as a whole. As he wrote in a letter to the Bishop of Liège: <sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Powell, p. 59; also, pp. 55-78; Mayeur, V, 575-638.

## MOUNT TABOR

It is proper that the pope should be irreproachable, and that he to whom the care of souls falls should shine like a torch in the eyes of all by reason of his learning in doctrine and his example. Thus, every time someone informs us that one of our brothers in the episcopate does not exude the perfume of pastoral modesty and ruins or tarnishes his good reputation in some way, we experience deep sorrow and trouble; in order to track down such faults minutely, and to correct them with the requisite severity, we force ourselves to apply the remedy of apostolic solicitude.

Oversight of the episcopacy involved a great deal of papal watchfulness. First of all, Innocent sought to supervise the choice of individual bishops. He expected that, once approved by him, these bishops had to be gently but firmly pressed to hold national and provincial councils and regularly visit their dioceses, all for the purpose of knowing and correcting the priestly and pastoral activities as well as the personal behavior of their own lower clergy. Periodic trips to Rome to report on successes and failures were also demanded of them. The sense of solidarity from the top to the bottom of the *agmen* that this papal guidance helped to intensify would then hopefully prove useful in fending off continued efforts to steal Church property or redirect its use to the primarily secular and even totally anti-spiritual purposes of the lovers of "nature as is".

Innocent had a profound sense of the value of the State in the transformation of all things in Christ, and thus sought the strengthening of its activity to serve this noblest of purposes as well. It was the responsibility of the State to use its

authority to insure the proper peace of the Church, especially by preventing contemporary heretics who denied the goodness of nature from insinuating their way into positions of influence over the political and social environment. It was the duty of the State to stand guard over economic justice as well. And this, Innocent realized, was a particularly urgent matter given the impressive twelfth century expansion in merchant enterprise, the increasing influence of money, the growth of usurious debt, and the discernable sense of uncontrollable and negative change beginning to be felt by large segments of the European population, both urban and rural. We will also address these matters at greater length in the dramatic chapters to come.

One of the reasons Innocent was so keen on building order in the States of the Church was that he wanted to provide an example for the rest of Christendom of just what a responsible government, guided by both Faith and Reason, was called upon to do. For Innocent, this clearly did not mean “anything that it *could* do”. For the pope was also acutely aware of just how easily even a State under papal control could be led astray from its proper tasks to serving those of a “business as usual” mentality. It was because of this awareness that he disliked hearing his own officials indulge in flights of rhetorical humbug, attempting to concoct “appropriate explanations” of their exaggerated and erroneous administrative and policing actions with reference to the “sacred” work they were performing for the Holy See.<sup>63</sup>

Future black legends to the contrary, Innocent insisted that the Church’s labor with respect to “toughening up” the State was basically an indirect one. Yes, the pope did claim a

---

<sup>63</sup> Powell, pp. 37-104, 153-172.



## MOUNT TABOR

direct role in imperial affairs, in confirming or rejecting a candidate for the position of emperor, but this in no way emerged from any dogmatic teaching on his part. As far as he was concerned, the papal-imperial connection was merely an historical fact of life, rooted in the action of the Papacy in transferring control of the Western Empire from Constantinople to the Carolingians. Aside from this peculiar responsibility, the Church's role was that of a teacher who interfered politically and socially only when correction was required, *de ratione peccati*, by reason of sin. Such correction most often concerned the behavior of rulers or officials as individual members of the Body of Christ, with—not surprisingly, given Innocent's concern for marriage as a symbol the whole of man's relationship to God—the marital infidelities and attempted divorces of various kings and princes at the top of the list.<sup>64</sup>

Strengthening the backbone and correcting the behavior of all individual Christians, through Church, State, and pastoral strategies varying from those aimed at crusaders all the way down to others designed for rescuing prostitutes, was a central focus of the whole of Innocent's pontificate. This can be seen most clearly in Fourth Lateran Council's legislation concerning parish life. Innocent, in effect, asked the Fathers of the council to consider the difficulties believers would face in changing their lives if they did not belong to a parish community where the moral consequences of their supernatural Faith were regularly offered to them, according to their different vocations in life. He pressed them to work to

---

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52, 73-94, 153-178; Mayeur, V, 575-638; Hughes, II, 361-369.

transform the Old Adam into the New by giving all of the faithful a clear teaching of what each of the Seven Sacraments was meant to accomplish and of the practical context in which each was to be used. It is interesting to note, in this regard, that the pope's and the council's hopes were pinned upon stimulating Christians to at least one parish confession and communion per year. Clearly, at least in a sacramental respect, the new ascent of Mt. Tabor was truly only at its beginning—and this, more than twelve hundred years after the appearance of the Word in human history.

Innocent's encouragement of a pilgrim's attitude to the unpredictable and ever-changing dance of life is both highly significant and illustrative of the spirit of the second wave of the reform movement in its entirety. His pilgrim testimony is best summarized with respect to two measures in particular: support for institutions of higher learning and backing for the new mendicant orders. Both were especially dear to the pope as tools for tackling manifest deficiencies in the already existing ecclesiastical structure and for providing superior teaching and guidance for the dance of life of the Christian community in general.

Historians today are more aware than ever before just how much continuity there was between ancient and medieval culture. Still, everyone admits that there were losses, some permanent and many temporary, regarding knowledge of specific skills, themes, and venerable authors. The Carolingian Renaissance had provided a valuable reinforcement to sagging classical studies. The subsequent Ottonian Renaissance worked to the same positive effect. Although learning in monastic centers declined thereafter, a number of the cathedral schools first encouraged by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious remained quite active,

## MOUNT TABOR

while the study of Latin literature was enhanced and remained strong far into the High Middle Ages, especially in such important French cities as Chartres.

One realm in which western loss of ancient wisdom was clear was that of Roman Law. Knowledge of the fullness of this law, as embodied in the Code of Justinian, had indeed suffered. The early Middle Ages generally worked with that shortened version of the earlier Theodosian Code contained in the so-called Breviary of the King of the Visigoths, Alaric II (d. 507). But this gap was filled from the eleventh century onwards, through the efforts of men such as Irnerius (c. 1050-after 1125) and Gratian (1000's-1100's). The consequences of a deeper understanding of Roman Law for both Civil and Canon Law, which were numerous and serious, are best discussed in the following chapter in union with the highly charged debate over the nature of Church and State that it also nurtured.

Lacunae in philosophy were confronted in the era of the new ascent of Mount Tabor as well. Interest in Neo-Platonism, especially due to the influence of Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite, was primary at the beginning of the age. Nevertheless, the intense study of logic, and the rush of Aristotelian translations that took place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, accompanied by the commentaries of the Moslem scholars Avicenna (c. 980-1037) and Averroes (1126-1198), ended by at least temporarily eclipsing the sway of the Academy and its offshoots.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) and Peter Lombard (1100-1160) were the most well known figures active in the early stages of this move towards logic and Aristotle; St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, and Blessed Dun Scotus (c. 1265-1308)

dominated its latter days. Whatever the current popular understanding of the respective attitudes of these varied thinkers to Aristotle might be, all of them, without exception, found the use of peripatetic arguments to be indispensable to their work. And we shall soon see that through their labors, the Seed of the Logos provided by this, the greatest of Plato's pupils, was separated out from the dangerous uses to which it might be put, harmonized with the Faith, and stored in the corrective and transforming armory of the *agmen* of the Word marching splendidly through history.<sup>65</sup>

Due to any number of factors—including the presence of already existing schools, geographical and political utility, and the fortuitous combination of certain vibrant teachers and enthusiastic pupils—Bologna and Paris rose to the forefront of the legal and philosophical studies thus enriched. In these two cities there developed those new corporations of masters and students, along with such innovative practices as the insistence upon a basic curriculum and the awarding of degrees, which guaranteed the creation of the first true historical universities. With the birth of the universities, for the first time in history, a well-defined scholarly “polis”

---

<sup>65</sup> For survival and revival of learning, see the classic works: E. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Harper & Row, 1963); C. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Meridian, 1970); also, W. Berschin, *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages* (Catholic U., 1988); D. Wagner, ed., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Indiana U., 1986); H. Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (U. of Michigan, 1992; M. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Blackwell, 1999); G. Duby, *The Age of the Cathedrals: Art and Society, 980-1420* (U. of Chicago, 1981); Hughes, II, 266-291, 412-435; Mayeur, V, 427-450, 795-818; Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 441-488.

## MOUNT TABOR

operating within the larger political and social community, became a palpable reality.<sup>66</sup>

Lothair dei Segni studied in both these academic commonwealths. We especially know a good deal about his love for his teachers and his time in Paris. As Innocent III, he provided them much assistance, granting papal protection to their corporate freedom so that they could work in peace and quiet. He did this for two reasons. The pope nurtured universities, first of all because, as a paladin of a Christian and classical culture that grasped the importance of social and individual cooperation in all spheres of life, he understood that only a social environment could provide the proper framework for successful individual intellectual activity. It was solely through membership in a scholarly polis that the individual mind could be steered away from madness and self-destruction to fruitful, human, fraternal achievement. And, secondly, Innocent gave his consistent assistance to the growth of the scholarly polis because he recognized the promise that universities held for the future, as "think tanks" preparing warriors for the battle against "nature as is" on behalf of the correction and transformation in Christ of the whole of Christendom. If the flaws of crusading were to be addressed by toughening up the militant crusade for transformation in Christ in all vocations in life, the marshalling of scholarly resources in just such militant camps of higher learning had to be pressed forward with special papal fervor. Only thus could the beneficial

---

<sup>66</sup> C. Haskins, *The Rise of Universities* (Cornell, 1957); Mayeur, V, 795-818; Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 191-198.

results of human thought successfully be put to the service of struggling Christians in all their varied endeavors.

Let us now turn briefly to the question of the relationship of Innocent to the mendicant orders. We must begin this task by noting once again that the general spiritual awakening, together with the greater diversification of the social order accompanying the growth of material wealth in the twelfth century, had also enriched awareness of the distinct temptations of varying social groups in western Christendom and the differing religious remedies required to overcome them. The reform movement had simultaneously called attention to the deficiencies of the clergy of the western Christian *agmen*, along with its inability to respond militantly to all these dangerous seductions and positive needs. Efforts to deal with clerical insufficiencies led to the numerous and sometimes quite contrasting liturgical and preaching concerns of Clunaic, Carthusian, and Cistercian monks. They also had engendered formation of the many types of so-called Canons Regular, designed to provide a more organized spiritual direction and preaching focus to the daily activities of secular diocesan priests.<sup>67</sup>

Recognition of the new dilemmas of a wealthier society, the possible sinfulness accompanying the accumulation of riches, and the insufficiency of the current spiritual response to the problems of affluence and luxury was central to the emergence of the movement in favor of living and preaching a life of Apostolic Poverty as well. As its name indicates, this movement praised a form of existence that was thought to be in special conformity with that taught by Christ, practiced by his immediate disciples, and somehow lost in the course of

---

<sup>67</sup> Mayeur, V, 141-175; Hughes, II, 258-266.

## MOUNT TABOR

time. It took many forms, a number of them seemingly or openly heretical, in ways that will be addressed more fully in the following chapters. Let it suffice to say at the moment that the errors of some of the proponents of Apostolic Poverty had made the whole movement so suspect in the eyes of the Church by the time that Innocent was elected pope that it appeared highly unlikely that he would have lent his support to any of its followers and their projects.

And yet this is precisely what he *did* do, reviewing and accepting the Apostolic Poverty of the already existing *Umiliati* in Lombardy and, most importantly, enthusiastically approving the new Mendicant Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis. Here, as with the Universities of Paris and Bologna, Innocent saw an initiative both innovative and yet better suited to completing the pastoral work of the unchanging Eternal Word under changed and changing circumstances than anything available to him through the aid of the existing secular clergy and traditional monasticism alone. In taking them under his wing, the pope began the alliance that would make of the mendicants the chief Christendom-wide arm of the Holy See for the correction and transformation of all things in Christ for the remainder of the Middle Ages.<sup>68</sup>

Innocent's labors, both in giving backbone to Church, State, and individual Christian life as well as in promoting pilgrim solutions for dealing with new steps in the dance of

---

<sup>68</sup> Powell, pp.6, 17, 71-72, 114-120; J. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Franciscan Herald, 1968), pp. 3-80; Mayeur, V, 767-793; Hughes, II, 352-361; W. Hinnebusch, *A History of the Dominican Order* (Alba House, Volume One, 1965); Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 85-192.

life, did not go uncontested. Universities, the nature of the studies cherished therein, and the intrusion of these upstart Dominican and Franciscan beggars into academic and pastoral enterprises all proved to be repellent to many of his contemporaries. Their opposition, as the following chapter will make clear, grew ever more intense as the thirteenth century advanced. Opposition was accompanied, every step of the way, by the hold that the spirit of inertia always has over all men if it is not fought forthrightly with every weapon at their disposal. Still, despite the many and often quite intense problems connected with Innocent's initiatives, the Holy See's support for all of them continued unabated in the immediate following pontificates. Blessed Gregory X was to offer especially emphatic confirmation of the mendicants in the face of often thunderous condemnation by bishops and abbots at the second greatest of medieval councils, that of Second Lyon, in 1274.<sup>69</sup>

Appropriately enough, he was to do so in the context of calling for yet another external crusade. For Gregory, like Innocent, and like the whole of the age of the new ascent of Mount Tabor, was a crusader, stimulated by the same crusading spirit that stirred the entire second wave of the reform movement. He was on mission in the Holy Land at the time of his election to the throne of St. Peter, and was deeply conscious of the crisis threatening to bring an end to the Christian presence in the region at any moment. Bringing that awareness of crisis back to Rome with him, he set about preparing for a new "armed pilgrimage" just as his great predecessor would have done—by insisting upon an intense

---

<sup>69</sup> Mayeur, V, 782-785; VI, 13-23; Moorman, pp. 83-304; Riley-Smith, pp. 176-177.



## MOUNT TABOR

internal struggle against the personal sins of Christendom threatening the success of any external crusading enterprise.

Following still further in Innocent III's footsteps, Gregory believed that the greatest of these internal Christian sins was the Schism of East and West. Second Lyons was therefore also called by him for the purpose of healing this scandalous wound, and negotiating with the Byzantine Empire, recently re-established in its traditional capital of Constantinople under the rule of Michael Paleologus (1259-1282), to do so. Through the graces obtained by restoring firm unity to the Body of Christ, Gregory hoped that a lasting victory over the Moslems controlling Jerusalem would finally be merited. A solidly united Christendom would then move forward from strength to strength, completing the work of the Word Incarnate in history.<sup>70</sup> The sad reality of what actually did transpire is, thankfully, not the task of this chapter, whose purpose, which was that of outlining the high medieval understanding of the equipment needed for a new scaling of Mount Tabor, must now be fulfilled and summarized.

*E. The True and the Good Story United*

The underlying greatness of the western medieval reform movement lay in its initial recognition that the Christian pilgrimage to God in the changing earthly realm can never be totally organized in some complete and unchangeable form. It was this that enabled it to see the deficiencies of the admittedly great "words" and glorious vision of Imperial

---

<sup>70</sup> Hughes, III, 1-22; Mayeur, VI, 13-23; Hussey, pp. 220-242; Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 111-112.

Christendom and move on to accept the need for innovative steps in the performance of the always dramatic dance of life. As it analyzed the changed contemporary situation in the light of those aspects of the message of past ages that were of permanent value, it added its own eternally valid contribution for the necessary instruction of future pilgrims who might themselves face yet other, different problems and socio-political conditions.

For high medieval Western Christendom, like its imperial predecessor, indeed had something of unchanging significance to pass on to posterity. It had come to understand the fact that the message of the Eternal Word had meaning for every single individual person and aspect of Creation, and that communicating this message required an authoritative, militant, compassionate mobilization of each and every tool that could give pastoral guidance to the myriad of different "chapters" taking part in the general Christian pilgrimage to God. In short, the underlying spirit of the High Middle Ages taught Christian posterity that the true story of the dance of life was a more complicated and dramatic tale than perhaps even the Church Fathers themselves had recognized.

On the intellectual plane, this achievement was the work of the great thinkers noted above who confronted the dilemmas presented by Aristotle through the commentaries of Avicenna and Averroes in that packed, logic-rich, "question, objection, and answer" style that we identify as the scholastic method. Although much of what these scholastics had to say has to be approached in the context of the crises to be detailed in the following chapter, let us nevertheless identify three brilliant, Word-friendly contributions of permanent value in their labors at this particular juncture.

## MOUNT TABOR

Most important among these contributions was a pronounced emphasis upon the glory of the individual. This grew in response to Averroes' presentation of Aristotle as teaching an eternally necessary universe in which there was no room for the Christian doctrine of personal immortality. For the Seed of the Logos to be found in Aristotle, as a St. Thomas Aquinas cultivated it---in the light of Faith---yielded insights into individual human personality of extraordinary clarity:<sup>71</sup>

A capital text of the *Summa contra gentiles* draws forth the double consequence that the acceptance of a personal God, creator and savior of human persons, brings with it. The first is that divine Providence, and, in consequence, universal order, does not seize individual humans through the species, but equally as individuals. The second is that the human person participates in universal order, not only as all other realities in submitting to the law of the species, but on addressing himself directly to God.

Yes, the debates within the scholastic camp were profound ones. We shall soon see that they were tragically all too divisive as well. But nevertheless, at least in the work of the thinkers we are discussing at the moment—that of men like Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Scotus, all of whom left something of permanent value for awakened Christian minds

---

<sup>71</sup> G. de Lagarde, *La naissance de l'esprit laïque au déclin du moyen âge* (Nauwelaerts, Five Volumes, 1958), II (*Secteur social de la scolastique*), 55, and *passim*.

to digest—the common emphasis upon the importance of individual personality is quite pronounced. The objections of the two Franciscans to their Dominican colleague, whatever their strengths or flaws, are rooted in individual and personal concerns that point to a universe of incredible diversity. In the concept of the inexhaustible richness of the multiplicity to be found in God's cosmos, both Aquinas and Scotus are in union with one another. The Creation that they depict for us is the total antithesis of a laborious, unthinking, and involuntary machine. It is a universe of real, distinct, human beings on the highway to perfection in Christ.

Secondly, the true story of distinct, free, individual human action as told by the scholastics—although in this case, in the work of Aquinas and his followers much more than in that of their colleagues—is one in which the positive role of the State and its ability to aid men in their endeavors is fearlessly embraced. An embrace of the State and its authority as innately beneficial forces, through which the overall order of the cosmos and the *real* mechanisms that are at work in the universe might be investigated and put to use for temporal as well as supernatural goals by free Christian men, reveals the powerful influence of Aristotle's *Politics* alongside a Catholic concern for validating every aspect of God's created nature. God's eternal order is shown to have a positive temporal counterpart that guides man's pilgrimage not only with the laws of heaven but with laws built into the structure of nature itself that thinking men must learn to grasp and use as well. Contrary to what any continued Neo-Platonist enthusiast might think, "human persons are not fallen gods", somehow caught in "the snares of a material world" in which they are ultimately strangers. Quite the contrary. "They insert themselves into the world, which responds to their own

## MOUNT TABOR

nature; they must take sides with it to raise it to the commanded dignity that is in its nature, and they have a mission to bring it to perfection".<sup>72</sup> Nature had its laws, but these were meant for men to use to achieve a common good. The common good was different from that which each of them as individuals might seek, and yet it was beneficial to them as distinct persons nonetheless. Even if such a teaching might unleash an enthusiasm for projects dealing with temporal life that, in the hands of men like Roger Bacon (c. 1214-1294), could seem technocratic and exaggeratedly elitist in character, such side effects were compensated by the general sense of meaningfulness that it gave to all of thinking man's endeavors.

Finally, the opening of scholastic eyes to the reality of a temporal order, guided by natural laws, that must be studied in all of its unique, God-given complexity, allowed for their witness to the existence, the rights, and the riches of a multiform, medieval, corporate society that a man like Aristotle could never have imagined. Having accepted the reality---and also the actual beauty---of a world of distinct corporations interacting with one another in God's multiform Creation, scholastics sought, with the use of Aristotle's *Politics*, to discuss how such societies were to work for the specific common good of their members while simultaneously taking part in the hunt for the higher common good guided by the State. Most importantly of all, these thinkers underlined corporate need to submit to the supernatural Word and gain the supreme good emerging from His law of love. For they did not provide an

---

<sup>72</sup> Lagarde, II, 62-63.

“appropriate explanation of the deeply felt desires of medieval corporations” and thereby bend their knees before the “business as usual” demands of a new swarm of supporters of “nature as is”. Instead, scholastic students of the satisfaction of individual man’s temporal needs and his ascent to God through the positive aid provided by a praiseworthy network of medieval social institutions understood that none of this could take place without the corrective and transforming teaching and grace that comes from the Mystical Body of Christ alone:<sup>73</sup>

Let us conclude that an entire class of theologians knew how to understand the teachings of the corporate order that they were witnesses of. They drew its philosophy from it without sacrificing to its excesses while doing so. As the Church had tried to sublimate the feudal order, they tried to elevate above itself the corporate order, penetrating it with the divine sense of justice and charity. To these collectivities jealously closed in their particularism, they taught the sense of the universal. To these corporate authorities, often more ferocious than individual signories, they recalled before Shakespeare that they must not ‘separate goodness from power’. Gilles of Rome tells us: “Love and charity have the maximum unifying and conjoining strength’.

---

<sup>73</sup> Lagarde, II, 320-321; on corporate life, see Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 161-180; D. Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (Longman, 1988); Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 251-270.

## MOUNT TABOR

The light that is shed by the Word on all of nature and on nature's mission to glorify God might, at times, be obscured, and therefore "missed" by limited human persons weighed down by the burdens and sufferings of daily life. Nevertheless, the same underlying spirit of intense interest in the full meaning of the Word in history also gave to the age of the new ascent of Mount Tabor an ability to tell a good story about this complex, true story. So well did it do this, and so much did that good story enter into the marrow of high medieval culture, that it may be that only those who actually lived its life fully, from birth to death, would ever adequately be able to explain the sublime truths their world came to take for granted as obvious givens.

Clearly, high medieval culture told this good story to the mind, through its encouragement of the life of the universities of Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge, and elsewhere. Extremely important speculative thought in theology, philosophy, and law was to be produced through these organs for the unending enlightenment of believers. The work that was accomplished by a man like St. Thomas Aquinas in his great *Summae* gave to the Christian world an ability logically to tie its beliefs together and explain them systematically that far exceeded the accomplishments of past generations of the most admirable thinkers and apologists. One must say the same thing about their achievement that we insisted upon in discussing the contribution of the Church Fathers: namely, that their labors have eternal significance, and that no one learning and defending the Faith in any future age can ever neglect them without exposing himself and all of Christendom to pointless risk—as well as to the unnecessary labor of painfully having to rediscover what

they already had grasped and offered to posterity. The proof of this point will, sadly, become all too clear in the chapters to follow.

Medieval man in his new ascent of Mt. Tabor also told this good story—not an allegory fit for lesser beings but the exact same tale—to man’s heart and soul, through the preaching and poetry of St. Norbert (c. 1080-1134), St. Bernard, and St. Francis of Assisi. He also recounted it through the buildings that he constructed, especially those designed for the daily worship of the Triune God. How many of these masterpieces testified to the unending diversity of nature in its union with grace in lifting man’s mind, heart, and soul to his eternal goal! One sees some aspects of this cornucopia in the playfulness of the floral and animal elements entering into the supports of the pulpits from which the Word of God was preached in Romanesque churches like the cathedral of Ravello outside Amalfi. One sees others in the stained glass windows of the subsequent Gothic style of architecture, encouraged by the Abbot Suger (c. 1081-1151) through the renovation of his monastic church of St. Denis and imitated in so many of the principal houses of worship throughout Christendom in the years to come. Here, especially, the riot of gorgeous light that those church windows brought before the human eye reminded men that God’s Creation offered more than either the unaided sinful soul could perceive or the word merchants limiting “philosophy” to “appropriate explanations of desire” for securing the dominance of “business as usual” *wanted* it to perceive.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Duby, *Age of the Cathedrals*, pp. 98-135; Mayeur, V, 367-516.



## MOUNT TABOR

How can one complete this chapter without reference to the epic that summarized the character of the new ascent of Mount Tabor as brilliantly as the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid* captured the spirit of archaic Greek and Augustan Roman culture: the *Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri (c. 1265-1321). Steeped in the corporate society of his day, deeply attached to the concept of the State in its imperial manifestation, and awed by the scholastic achievement, this greatest of medieval poets presented in his threefold epic the whole of the drama of God's relationship with man and that of men with one another.

What does he tell us? He explains that all of us, wandering through the confusion of life, must look to the Seeds of the Logos in our environment for guidance. These he introduces us to in the form of Virgil, Dante's ancient Roman predecessor, who shepherds us to wisdom first of all by demonstrating nature's misuse at the hands of the suffering souls in Hell. But "nature as is", even at its best, cannot lead us to eternal life with God. That can only be accomplished through the law of love and the life of grace, which, in Dante's poem, is, of course, represented by his beloved Beatrice.

And what is it that we see when we finally reach Paradise and the souls—obviously still without their bodies, whose resurrection must await the end of time and the Final Judgment—in union with Almighty God? We see the promise of the Word fulfilled, to the benefit of all of the distinct individuals whose divinization the Church Fathers preached and whose personal dignity the scholastics, in a quite different but complementary way, so profoundly

emphasized.<sup>75</sup> In Cantos thirty and thirty-one, through the use of the image of a rose, Dante struggles brilliantly to demonstrate how all the varied forces of mind, heart, and will, corrected and transformed through the grace of God, work together to ensure the ecstasy of the blessed. He depicts everyone firmly fixed on the adoration of God, with the consequence being that all are divinized in their proper place, true to nature, but completely surpassing natural limitations and its insufficient modes of expression and explanation. A more magnificent medieval hymn to the multiplicity arising from unity in Christ can hardly be imagined.<sup>76</sup>

So, ranged aloft all round about the light,  
 Mirrored I saw in more ranks than a thousand  
 All who above there have from us returned.  
 And if the lowest row collect within it  
 So great a light, how vast the amplitude  
 Is of this Rose in its extremest leaves!  
 My vision in the vastness and the height  
 Lost not itself, but comprehended all  
 The quantity and quality of that gladness.  
 There near and far nor add nor take away;  
 For there where God immediately doth govern,  
 The natural law in naught is relevant.

Human hopes for scaling Mt. Tabor anew had thus been aroused as never before. Unfortunately, the anger of the supporters of "nature as is" had also been greatly stimulated along with the opposing passion for finding and fulfilling the

---

<sup>75</sup> Lagarde, II, *passim*; Mersch, pp. 486-530.

<sup>76</sup> Dante, *Divine Comedy: Il Paradiso*, XXX, XXXI.

## MOUNT TABOR

deeper meaning of Creation. The potential for such underground anger to erupt into the public arena was growing all through the period under study in this chapter. Individual Christians, the corporate “chapters” in the pilgrimage to God to which they belonged, and the decisions for good or ill that they took in guiding the Church and human society were to play a central role in determining whether that eruption would be staunched or the fires behind it encouraged and even more warmly welcomed than the embrace of the Redeeming Word.

## Counterattack and Resistance “On the Cheap”

### *A. The Long March to the Triumph of the Will*

External and internal crusaders of the period stretching from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries laid out a fundamental network of routes along which future soldiers of the Word could bring its full message of natural and supernatural fulfillment more swiftly and effectively than ever before. Without reference to the more familiar modern term “transformation of all things in Christ”, Catholic heroes of the High Middle Ages acted as though this were indeed the goal of their militant activity. They had propelled the Mystical Body onto a much more authoritative, self-confident march forward. Due to their cultivation of the proper pilgrimage spirit, they had also learned new steps in the dance of life as their understanding of their mission expanded. Moreover, their ability to tell a “good story” about their noble enterprise proceeded accordingly. Plato’s vision of

## RESISTANCE

the proper union of rhetoric with the deeper hunt for the Logos was thus becoming a reality, since the "good story" that was being told and propagated was finally one in aid of a "true story" as well. And this true story, through the philosophical and theological work of men like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, and Blessed Duns Scotus, had been ordered systematically in a way that would have been the envy of the founder of the Academy as well as many of the early Church Fathers.

But the friends of the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history were not without their limitations, self-destructive fears, and flaws. Moreover, they were met by resistance from the partisans of acceptance of the rut of an unchanging and unchangeable life every step of the way. Over the course of the centuries of the new ascent of Mount Tabor, the efforts of the latter to transform the dance of life into a "Long March" away from the teaching of Christ were to grow. And, as always, they would once again come to involve all of the tactics employed by Isocrates when drawing first blood in this war of the words and the Word.

Readers will remember that these strategies included a hunt for noble ideas and aspirations that might be redirected to serve as appropriate explanations of the need to satisfy the immediate passions of "the natural man". The rhetorician repeatedly emphasized two points once some such appropriate explanation was found. First of all, he insisted that men could find this teaching regarding "nature as is" clearly manifested in a society's "foundation principles"---but as these principles were interpreted by the inspired "words" of the rhetorician himself and the powerful, successful actions of heroic leaders. Secondly, he argued that individuals had

before them a dramatic “either-or” choice they could never escape: *either* an embrace of “nature as is”, with all the rewards that came from an acceptance of the world on its own obvious terms; *or* entry onto the tedious dead end path of the corrective and transforming message of the supporters of the search for the Logos.

Such ancient strategies were now to be resuscitated, but in the new and much more intellectually and spiritually charged environment created out of the *successes* of the servants of the Word made flesh. Through their redeployment, the armory of the soldiers of the rut of life would be stocked with arguments of proven value in blackening the labors of all those men, women, and institutions undertaking a new ascent of Mount Tabor. An alternative vision to one that was solidly Catholic would be constructed in the process. We shall be the tragic witnesses of the step-by-step advance of this counterattack of the supporters of the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is”. We shall see that with many noble words of concern for the foundation principles of Christianity on their lips, they would step-by-step construct a death camp guided by one consistent law alone: that of the triumph of the will.

### *B. Apocalypse Now?*

It might seem to Catholics of our own time that the age “when values descended to the earth”, giving a mighty stimulus to a renewed effort to ascend Mount Tabor, would have been the least likely of any to fall for the kind of simplistic tales regarding the imminent arrival of the Holy Spirit that would render serious labor on behalf of the Word in history superfluous. After all, many zealous believers

## RESISTANCE

continue to argue today that the centuries in question were the greatest in human history. Ironically, however, apocalyptic beliefs of a millenarian nature, dangerous to positive work for Christ, returned with a particular fury precisely at this very moment.<sup>1</sup>

Historians know that such a development had nothing to do with any “panic of the year 1000”, which is yet another legend invented by later mythmakers from the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.<sup>2</sup> In any case, the reasons for a recrudescence of millenarian and apocalyptic concepts were deeper and ultimately much more destructive than any crude superstitious terror could explain. Two different and seemingly contradictory sentiments fed this longing for an immediate and radical change in the human condition from inside the Catholic camp itself.

Even though one of them appears to betray Gnostic tendencies, it is probably best to identify it much more simply, as the reflection of a certain degree of spiritual timidity and fearfulness. It pointed to a deep, nagging feeling on the part of some Christians that each new manifestation of Church influence over the material world might not be as positive as authorities seemed to believe; that seeming

---

<sup>1</sup> On apocalyptic and millenarian ideas in the Middle Ages in general, see R.

Emmerson and B. McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cornell, 1992); N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Oxford, 1979); Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 168-192; Lagarde, V, 25-29; Mayeur, VI, 327-337; R. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215- c. 1515* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 191-234.

<sup>2</sup> Riché, *Grandeurs*, pp. 8-26.

victories for Christ could actually represent a dangerous collaboration with evil aspects of the natural environment; and that this sleeping with the devil would bring on a spiritual disease crying out to God for vengeance.

A second sentiment was fundamentally more solid, even while leading to terribly flawed conclusions: the demoralization of strong supporters of the concept of transformation in Christ in the face of each fresh display of self-interested parochialism and humbug on the part of individuals and corporations publicly claiming to serve the Church's cause. Such dismayed and disillusioned Catholics ended either in a despair that paralyzed their desire to act vigorously for the good or in hopes for an all too swift and simple solution to the problems of dealing with the natural world, achieved through the irresistible aid of the Holy Spirit. Both these spiritually timid as well as rationally dismayed religious sentiments sought, for quite conflicting reasons, a common and definitive "closure" in all natural realms where serious problems had arisen in the work of transformation in Christ.

Popular Catholic hopes that any coming sea change would definitely be one for the better were given intellectual form through the writings of the biblical exegete, Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202). Joachim associated all of human history, divided into three parts, with different Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Each of these eras, he argued, was characterized by its own kinds of institutions and spirit. Joachim claimed that the age of God the Father was over, and that that of God the Son was to give way to the final and liberating reign of God the Holy Spirit beginning around 1260. This third historical era was to be somewhat of an Age of Aquarius, where all



## RESISTANCE

need for authority and punitive law would disappear, as would the institutions associated with them.

Joachim's ideas were condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council. Despite this, they continued to spread and prosper. His apparently accurate prediction of the creation of an innovative religious order committed to an Apostolic Poverty crucial to ushering in the new age of the Spirit made what he had to say especially appealing to many of the so-called Spiritual Franciscans, about whom more anon. Peter John Olivi (1248-1298), a southern French friar from the Spiritual camp, offered important intellectual support to Joachim's thesis, allowing its influence to continue into the later thirteenth century and beyond. He was by no means alone in this enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

In any case, heroic Catholic activists of the High Middle Ages were the first to admit that much more still needed to be said and done on behalf of the profound Drama of Truth that they themselves played a splendid part in carrying forward. They also knew that there could never be a full and absolutely unshakeable development of the meaning of the Word active in human history. So long as time lasted, the appearance of new, free, individual persons, together with their distinct ability to aid or hinder the understanding and progress of a supernatural intervention in man's affairs, made perfect growth theoretically impossible at the same time as it rendered existing levels of achievement precarious. For we

---

<sup>3</sup> For the above, see Mayeur, V, 220, 222, 291, 390, 440, 441, 472, 546, 548, 717, 819-870; VI, 327-337; Hughes, III, 35-36; Emmerson and McGinn, pp. 72-102; Moorman, pp. 114-116, 188-204; Cohn, pp. 108-110.

must repeatedly remind ourselves that a terrible reality of the dance of life is that it *is* precisely a Drama of Truth. One aspect of drama is tragedy. And part of the tragedy of the Christian Drama of Truth is the fact that any given generation can totally forget what its predecessor had seemingly already learned and even come to accept as a "common sense" given; that a later age might need to engage in what amounted to a painstaking "crawl" back to an earlier but nevertheless higher rung on the ladder leading to the fullness of Light.

Aside from recognizing the need for more work on the part of future generations, our Catholic heroes were also painfully aware of the limitations of their own labors amidst their flawed contemporaries, as magnificent as these achievements may now seem to us to have been. Unfortunately, they were all too correct in their assessment. Not only was it the case that ordinary human sinfulness marred the splendid icon painted by Christians in the High Middle Ages. Even well-meaning Catholic thinkers and activists themselves placed new obstacles in the path of a complete understanding of the full message of the Word in those splendid centuries---and at the very moment that they themselves were contributing mightily to developing it.

Perhaps it is the case that some truth lurks behind every intellectual and popular rumbling. For, even if a millenarian change did not arrive in 1260, an apocalypse in miniature did make itself more clearly felt at just that precise moment. A seemingly endless succession of calamities, arriving by the mid-thirteenth century, lasting throughout the whole of the fourteenth, and continuing, fitfully, down through the 1500's, signaled a seemingly conclusive end to the authoritative, self-confident, broadly conceived, nuanced, pilgrim-spirited reformed medieval vision of transformation in Christ.

## RESISTANCE

More importantly still, the determined enemies of the Word Incarnate were able to tap into the malaise that had fed millenarian expectations in the first place. As these opponents began to leave their private hiding places and move back into the public forum, they played upon Catholic sinfulness and failure of imagination, built upon the deep disillusionment of believers who recognized the inadequacies of an otherwise impressive fresh ascent of Mount Tabor, and began the rebuilding of that Grand Coalition of the Status Quo that now dominates our own time and place. One might once again appropriate the argument of St. Justin Martyr to tragic purpose and say that “Seeds of the *words*” were effectively planted in the era under discussion in this chapter and the next. These seeds, all of them immensely valuable to the proponents of “business as usual”, were to emerge definitively into the full light of day with Martin Luther’s public proclamation in the years after 1517 of his doctrine of the total depravity of a nature devastated by Original Sin: a cornerstone of our modern death camp and the triumph of the will.

Adversaries of the Word were thus able to begin putting together that counter “story” concerning the character and the impact of the Catholic outlook in history already rooted in the ancient attack on the Socratics. In doing so, they were able to count upon continued Catholic weaknesses and disappointments that worked to prevent the friends of the Word from fully recognizing and employing their own true and good story in their defense. Catholic failures in this regard meant that the faithful were offered partial explanations and incomplete or hypocritical excuses for problems of both theory and practice. Believers were thus

directed away from that full lifting up of hearts and correction of the natural man and his social order that were essential to the achievement of a truly Christian victory.

A detailed review of this minor apocalypse can do much to help us come to terms with the troubled Catholic present. It is useful for a variety of reasons. It shows us—as do *all* historical studies—that crises do not emerge out of nowhere, and that a given generation's miseries generally have been prepared in a previous age suffering from perhaps more fundamental, even though insufficiently recognized woes. Furthermore, it demonstrates, once again, that resolution of the specifics of any given ecclesiastical disaster may not proceed precisely "by the book", especially if the problems involve new elements in the pilgrim dance of life that have not adequately been confronted by theologians and canonists beforehand. Last, but not least, it points to the fact that the Church's full awakening from a nightmare which diverts her energies away from her real mission is a very difficult enterprise indeed; that it cannot be accomplished "on the cheap", by playing with mere rhetorical phrases shaped into myths of her own; that if it is to take place at all, it must be built not only upon a humble digestion of the lessons taught by recent adversity but also on a deeper inspection of all of the wisdom that the treasury—the jewel box—of her entire Tradition contains. Only thus can she truly arouse herself from her doctrinal and pastoral slumber and prepare better arms for the next inevitable battle with her innumerable outer and inner demons.

Our work in recounting these historical developments will be a tripartite project. First of all, we shall delineate all the problems and failures within the ranks of Catholics conducive to the rebuilding of the ancient coalition against

## RESISTANCE

the Word. Next, we must discuss the series of disasters afflicting Christendom from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, each of which aided immensely in weakening the organs through which "values descended to the earth", further stimulating the already threatening revival of the old enemy alliance. Finally, continuing into the next chapter, we shall examine three major consequences of this mini-apocalypse: the emergence into the open air of the "Seeds of the *words*" in ecclesiastical, political, and social life, ending with the first serious historical "incarnation" of the anti-Logos position; the effective public propagation of the initial batch of black legends concerning the *whole* of the Catholic Faith; and, in the midst of disaster, the first suggestion of hope that the damage done might still somehow be reversed. Such hope was desperately needed. For the entire story of the Long March away from the work of transformation in Christ and towards the modern death camp and the triumph of the willful is a dismal one to tell.

*C. Catholic Tunnel Vision and the Seeds of the Words*

Most prescient prelates, preachers, and men of letters of the High Middle Ages, conscious that their era was no Golden Age definitively breaking the Catholic mold, repeatedly chastised the horrific anti-Christian behavior that they recognized everywhere around them. They, of course, did so primarily for the sake of stirring an awareness of personal sinfulness and obtaining immediate moral reform. Our concern is a different one. We are not interested here in assessing the extent of individual guilt on any given issue but in broad failures of Catholic spirit and action. We are

interested in such an assessment for the purpose of determining exactly how a movement for transformation in Christ that was innately good lost its momentum and ultimately was forced to compete with a belief in a totally depraved universe. One highly useful way of coming to grips with such a tragic historical development is by turning our attention to an innate problem of fallen human persons, much intensified due to the increased self-consciousness of the men of the era in question: a self-destructive "tunnel-vision".

Tunnel vision can have a variety of conflicting causes, some of them seemingly good, with love itself at the top of the list of the positive factors. Human love almost always begins with an obsessive focus on the one, adored, object of affection. Perhaps this is necessary in order to ensure the permanent commitment that should go along with appreciation of the intrinsic value of that which is beloved. Thankfully, many lovers eventually do learn to put their sentiment in perspective over the course of time, admitting the intrinsic beauty of other objects of affection—those cherished by their fellow men among them—in the process. But if they do not do so, tunnel vision sets in, with nefarious results for the lover, the beloved, and everything else that is lovable in the outside world.

High medieval tunnel vision was in one sense very much a product of this kind of intense love—a love engendered by the feeling of intimate association with a particular idea or social institution, its past achievements, and its future possibilities for glory. And such love was stimulated, whether consciously or unconsciously, by the general Catholic awareness of the value of all the different aspects of the natural world redeemed by the Word and their

## RESISTANCE

corresponding utility as tools for living properly and reaching God.

Objects of affection included a wide diversity of theological, philosophical, devotional, and legal concepts, as well as that myriad of corporations representing distinct vocations in life that were analyzed so brilliantly by some of the scholastics. Almost all of these ideas and corporations laid claim to an ancient history—a foundation story—often much older than they actually deserved and sometimes even totally mythical in character. This gave them still greater prestige in the eyes of their already smitten admirers. Whatever the truth of their pedigree, people fell passionately in love with the principles and institutions concerned, as well as their most renowned paladins. Unfortunately, for many, the initial and highly understandable infatuation definitely did not wear off, bringing tunnel vision, sophistic word merchandising on their all too parochial behalf, and inevitable conflicts with other ideas and corporations—and the full message of the Word—in its train.<sup>4</sup>

Tunnel vision was nourished by a negative and many-headed terror as well as by a positive love. Men were fearful that the object of their affection, whatever it might be, would not be offered the honor that was its proper due. Their dread was also shaped by an avarice that grew amidst the commercial boom of the twelfth century and the downward spiraling economic “correction” that characterized the thirteenth. Avarice manifested itself in a given social group’s single-minded determination to exploit all opportunities for gain while denying them to others. It was increased still more

---

<sup>4</sup> See Fichtenau, pp. 3-29, for its earlier manifestation.

by bewilderment and terror over the laborious, Christian pastoral work involved in reconciling one idea, one association, and one set of desires with a kaleidoscope of others, as identified by men such as Peter Cantor, Pope Innocent III, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Hence, fear as well as love could lead to conflicts with the full message of the Word. And this, once again, is a teaching that should inspire affection for the accomplishments of all ages, ideas, corporations, and persons, harmonized together in a proper hierarchy of values that then lifts Creation heavenwards to the greater glory of God.<sup>5</sup>

One last point regarding tunnel vision needs to be made. Yes, this primarily concerned a destructive infatuation with certain specific ideas, corporations, and their leaders. Nevertheless, given the growing Catholic perception that everything natural was ultimately designed for the benefit of individual human persons who were destined to be divinized through Christ, another object of exaggerated love was emerging ever more clearly from the shadows: the infatuated love of self. Ironically, it was becoming more and more possible that the idea or the corporation divinized to the exclusion of all others was being adored not primarily for its own sake but because the self-loving, self-obsessed individual had desired and chosen to adore it. In other words, it was the individual's *will* in and of itself that was threatening to become of greatest importance in daily life. This should have been a shrill warning bell in the ears of the followers of a social-minded religion; a religion demanding the true

---

<sup>5</sup> On eleventh century economic growth, the thirteenth century downturn, and the consequent moral problems, see Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 60-82; Mayeur, V, 756-766.



## RESISTANCE

supernatural correction and transformation in Christ of men and women always sorely tempted to accept the willful demands of "nature as is" to conduct their petty "business as usual".

Let us tackle the consequences of infatuation the way that Popes Innocent III and Blessed Gregory X might have done, by first examining their possible impact on the external crusade. Were there signs of the sickness and distortion caused by tunnel vision noticeable in the Crusading Movement, even in the centuries of its greatest glory? Did these lead to earthbound actions, encouraging unredeemed nature rather than its correction and transformation? And were the stories that crusaders told the world about their activities true ones, or merely good yarns appropriately justifying intense passions that masqueraded actions detrimental to the cause of honest Christian progress?

Some might argue that the greatest example of tunnel vision in this realm was the failure on the part of reformers from the time of Cluny down to that of Blessed Gregory X to see that the "idea" of the external Crusading Movement that they cherished was really itself ultimately only secondary in importance. That criticism is undeniably true for most individuals, although the growing insistence of popes and councils upon the internal preparations that Christendom had to make in order for its external labors to be successful seemed to indicate a progressive development of a proper appreciation of the hierarchy of values on the part of the leadership of the Mystical Body. Moreover, it is clear, both from St. Francis' evangelical visit to the Sultan in Egypt as well as from much of the high-level mendicant advice given to the popes during the course of the thirteenth century, that

a number of the most influential Christian activists were increasingly thinking of external crusading with reference to militant missionary work rather than outright military maneuvers.<sup>6</sup> And, then again, events in the not too distant future—namely, the arrival on the European scene of the Ottoman Turks—would begin to make it seem as though the problem of Christendom regarding crusading involved a different kind of tunnel vision: a national and local parochialism committed to blocking out serious consideration of the outside dangers threatening the independence and survival of the entire believing community.

Still, it ought to come as no surprise to anyone, especially Catholics, that all warfare exposes men to unhealthy, narrow, corporate and personal temptations, even as it calls them to self-sacrifice, honor, and glory. Any examination of the facts as opposed to the theory of external crusading reveals that the crusades were no exception, and that self-interested tunnel vision troubled the movement every step of the way. Desire for fame, envy, squabbles over political power, property, and immediate advantage, exploitation of defenseless peoples, and the settling of scores with perceived enemies at home and abroad who really had little or nothing to do with the ultimate crusading vision, mar the whole of its history. No one escaped the temptation to indulge such passions entirely: neither popes, nor emperors and kings, nor commercial powers such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, nor the leadership of the Crusading States of the Levant, nor military orders, nor individual crusaders, whether noble or common in background.

---

<sup>6</sup> Mayeur, V, 712-734.

## RESISTANCE

Historically, the hideous sack of Christian cities during the Fourth Crusade, Constantinople in 1204 chief among them, stands out most vividly as an example of self-destructive crusading activity.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, misappropriation of funds for parochial purposes was the most consistent problem, and probably did much more damage to the credibility of the whole movement in the mind of contemporaries. Unfortunately, such misappropriation became all the more tempting and embarrassing to the reform movement the more that the Papacy made collection of taxes for crusading purposes both general and efficient.

Sad to say, minds were also misappropriated along with funds. The stories told to stir up crusading emotions often played fast and loose with theology and human passion. Popular rabble-rousers in the 1090's presented crusading as a response to a supposed appeal from the crucified Christ to take up weapons to avenge Him through the brutal destruction of His enemies. Many enthusiasts, preying upon economic hardships, promoted each new call to Crusade as a means of reaching not the earthly but the heavenly Jerusalem. Dubious and all too familiar letters from heaven, along with tales of the glory of charismatic charlatans, were regularly evoked to arouse increased participation. Teutonic Knights justified a crusading movement in the Baltic that struck at Christians as much as pagans by insisting that "Lithuania was Mary's dowry", and that everything done on "her" behalf there was good. All of these words encouraged and camouflaged a violence and rapine having little if anything to do with just warfare but a lot to do with corporate and

---

<sup>7</sup> Hussey, pp. 184-219; Riley-Smith, pp. 119-130.

individual willfulness. In fact, the word merchants behind such sinful behavior were often bitterly attacked by popes, saintly crusading preachers, and representatives to church councils, even at the very moment these regrettable abuses were first propagated. Still, the damage was done, and popular appreciation of the trickery involved can be identified in later medieval vernacular idioms equating "calling a crusade" with "telling a whopper".<sup>8</sup>

We have noted how much the thirteenth century Papacy came to consider the healing of the East-West Schism dividing the Body of Christ as the essential foundation stone of the Internal Crusade. Here, again, failings on both the scores mentioned above may readily be noted. Everyone, Greek and Latin, seems to have recognized that Blessed Gregory X, along with a number of Franciscans engaged as intermediaries in East-West negotiations, had the interests of the Church as a whole at heart. One could make the same case for Patriarch John XI Beccus (1275-1282) as well. But this was certainly not the spirit motivating the many western contenders for the throne of the captured and sacked imperial city of Constantinople, including, most importantly, the Normans of Sicily, their French successor, Charles of Anjou (1226-1285), and the rapacious Venetians, Genovese, and bands of mercenaries eager to ransack the remnants of a troubled Byzantium at the drop of a crusading hat. Neither was religious zeal particularly noticeable in the ecclesiastical policy of the various eastern rivals contending for the recapture of Constantinople from the Latins, with the

---

<sup>8</sup> Riley-Smith, pp. 1-240, *passim*; Mayeur, V, 293-308, 349-363; Vasiliev, II, 375-487; Ostrogorsky, pp. 351-417; Fletcher, pp. 483-524.

## RESISTANCE

victorious Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus at the top of the list. All of them seem to have viewed religious union basically from the standpoint of its political and military advantages or disadvantages, and this regardless of pronounced outward shows of piety.

Good stories frequently replaced true stories in both the hunt for and the opposition to Gregory's proposed East-West Union. On the western front, these were constructed around the idea that the easterners really were everything that the pejorative word "Byzantine" indicated: namely, purely political-minded beings, whose Caesaro-Papist emperors could bring about union through personal edicts backed by the prestige of imperial prerogatives and military strength alone. Hence, the fundamental Latin failure to take seriously the strength of the theological, mystical, ecclesiastical, and lay opposition to repeated efforts to obtain a solid union. Similarly, most eastern "Unionists" apparently believed the "good story" of the all-powerful pope, capable of winning unquestioned military support for a precarious East after the signing of a purely formal "paper" end to the Schism. And, finally, convinced eastern enemies of reunion popularized and seemingly came to believe their own flawed account of events. This rightly chastised the West for the evil done during the sack of Constantinople of 1204. Nevertheless, it conveniently neglected incidents that had helped to embitter westerners against Greeks in the first place; incredibly brutal

acts of violence---the mass slaughter of the Latin population living in the imperial capital in 1182 chief among them.<sup>9</sup>

Tunnel vision manifested itself in the intellectual and spiritual labor crucial to the guidance of the Internal Crusade as well. This is true even in the university think tanks nurtured with great hope and enthusiasm by Innocent III. Such institutions proved to be as much breeding grounds for contending parochial-minded scholars as they were sources of help for the complex cause of the Word Incarnate. This became especially true once academic talents became entangled in the political battles of the age of Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII, to be discussed below. Hence, instead of just enlightening believers, they also aided mightily in the sowing of a deeper confusion and cynicism in their ranks, both clerical and lay.

Part of the problem was corporate and psychological in character. If the hunt for the truth had taken first place in the minds and hearts of the masters and students at the universities, clerical distinctions and troublesome personality differences might have been held in greater check. Ideas would have been judged more upon their merits rather than their source, and both the wariness of defenders of long accepted philosophical arguments as well as the sense of legitimate discovery on the part of pilgrim spirited speculative thinkers would have been much more seriously appreciated. But, as it was, a good number of the secular clergy greeted the arrival of the mendicant friars onto the university teaching scene with a great bitterness that spilled

---

<sup>9</sup> Hughes, III, 1-32; Ostrogorsky, pp. 450-465; Vasiliev, II, 656-676; Riley-Smith, pp. 177, 185-186, 201; Mayeur, VI, 141-207; Hussey, pp. 220-242.

## RESISTANCE

into the intellectual arena. Anger over disagreements in the philosophical realm and their consequences in theology was often purposely provoked for extraneous reasons, to the detriment of a calmer dialogue that might have produced a more profound common understanding of the truth.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, ideas *were* involved, especially those reflecting that commitment to the use of logic in conjunction with the works of Aristotle that had stirred the imaginations of so many brilliant minds. Logical and Aristotelian studies had taken deep root in the embryonic University of Paris already before Innocent's regularization of its legal status. Enthusiasm for them is associated with the arrival among the faculty of extremely charismatic and self-confident teachers like Peter Abelard. We have seen that they also grew in tandem with the first wave of translations of peripatetic writings, accompanied by the Arab commentaries of the man known to the West as Avicenna. A second wave of translations intensified their hold, this one escorted by the commentaries of Averroes.

Averroes' work was still more problematic than that of Avicenna in that it emphasized those Aristotelian teachings that underlined the eternity of the universe and the rational impossibility of accepting the Christian concept of personal immortality. We know precious little about the Parisian logicians and Aristotelians who, while openly proclaiming their belief in a Creator God and eternal life, insisted upon the need for probing ancient philosophical positions that actually contradicted their Faith. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that they made their voices heard. And some of them espoused an

---

<sup>10</sup> See Hughes, III, 122-124; Moorman, pp. 123-154.

“all or nothing” approach towards dealing with the pagan and anti-Christian guides whom they had passionately embraced. Hence, the following sentiments, expressed toward the end of the thirteenth century:<sup>11</sup>

Do we not read in {Averroes’} works that nature shows us in Aristotle the pattern of the final perfection of human nature? That Providence gave him to us that we might know all that can be known?... Aristotle’s writings are a whole, to be taken or left, they form the system of the written reason, so to say...{All} that we now need to do is to study again the master’s theses as Averroes interprets them.

All open-minded men, *especially* those convinced of the immense value of the Aristotelian achievement for elucidating principles of central importance to the Christian life, found this mentality to be not just highly dangerous to doctrinal purity but also irrational. In fact, it is safe to venture that it was recourse to the name of Aristotle rather than any real familiarity with his philosophy that many of those who evoked it counted upon to gain support for their own positions, hoping thereby to gain the aura of higher wisdom accompanying the Greek thinker’s well-earned intellectual prestige. Whatever their philosophical or theological expertise may have been, however, it certainly cannot be denied that such a spirit of exclusivity worked against that open consideration of all of nature’s messages that the full

---

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, II, 412-413.



## RESISTANCE

teaching of the Word Incarnate dictates and men like Aquinas had clearly taken to heart.<sup>12</sup>

But an equally stubborn, closed-minded resistance to the use of logic in general, and Aristotle in particular, also emerged, both inside the University of Paris and without. Although this opposition was primarily concerned with their impact on theology, it also affected attitudes towards the innate value of Reason and philosophy as a whole. Resistance began along with the very first manifestations of the Parisian love affair with the ancient contributors to the world of thought. It grew in intensity through St. Bernard's often quite brutal assault on the work and person of the admittedly often equally bristly Abelard. The tragedy of such resistance lies in the fact that the anti-logic, anti-Aristotle, and ultimately anti-philosophy camp became ever more influential precisely at a dramatic moment in time: precisely when those highly nuanced cathedrals of thought, crucial to harmonizing Faith and Reason and elaborating, through both, the complementary nature of the Church, the State, corporate society, and the perfection of the individual human personality, were in the process of construction at the hands of the greatest of the scholastics.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> See the fears of John of Salisbury and others, in Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 181-198; Haskins, *Universities*, pp. 29, 40-42; *Renaissance*, pp. 341-367; Waddell, pp. 122-125; Curtius, p. 53; On the problem in general, Mayeur, V, 442-450, 808-817.

<sup>13</sup> On faith and reason, Abelard and St. Bernard, see Clanchy, pp. 37-38, 110, 264-325; E. Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (Scribner's, 1938); Mayeur, V, 442-450, 808-817.

An anti-rational “tunnel vision” mentality was able to strengthen its grip by taking advantage of the clashes of the disciples of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus over the differing use of Aristotelian, Augustinian, and Neo-Platonic ideas to be found in their masters’ writings. Many of these followers were more concerned with the use of the logic-drenched scholastic method to expose weaknesses in their opponents’ positions and score points against them than to uncover natural and supernatural truths. Meanwhile, they ignored, or rather did not even contemplate the possibility of undertaking the battle that really ought to have concerned them: one of a common defense against the infinitely more deadly enemies of *any* union of Faith and Reason.

It was just such enemies who were to benefit from their uncharitable squabbles. These anti-philosophers were to prevent the further construction of the truly pilgrim spirited cathedrals of thought begun by the scholastics, to obscure and distort knowledge of the work that their architects and builders had already accomplished, to move into the perceived gaps, and to dismantle the entirety of their intellectual contribution to the new ascent of Mount Tabor. What they were then to do was to add their muscle to construction of the coming death camp: the one whose “order of the day” was to be a mind-obliterating triumph of the will.

Anti-rational tunnel vision struck a major blow with the Great Condemnation of philosophical studies promulgated by Bishop Etienne Tempier of Paris in 1277. This hasty and haphazard Blitz hit not only at the Averroists but also at the reputation of the recently deceased Aquinas. Historians have differed in their interpretation of the full effects of the bishop’s intervention, with some of them stressing the positive stimulus that it gave to the seemingly less risky

## RESISTANCE

studies of the natural sciences. Friends of speculative philosophy and theology can point to the fact that the document's flaws deprived it of much of the impact it might otherwise have had, thereby actually strengthening the long-term prospects of logic and Reason. An outraged St. Albertus Magnus (1193/1206-1280), the great teacher of Aquinas working in Cologne, swiftly took up the case for the defense, as did the cantankerous Roger Bacon in Britain. Moreover, the omnibus Condemnation of 1277 did nothing to stop either the rise of Dun Scotus, who had not yet even entered onto the scholastic stage when it was released, or Dominican acceptance of St. Thomas as the primary philosophical guide of their Order, which would only come sometime afterwards, in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, 1277 gave at least some aid and comfort to that anti-rational spirit that was to become the most important weapon in the armory of the enemies of a meaningful philosophy with practical impact on man and society. It was that spirit that gave the greatest clout to the more extreme supporters of the Nominalist position in the medieval intellectual conflict. Masters of critical logical thought in their own right, extreme Nominalists were to develop what is referred to as the *via moderna* in philosophical studies. The *via moderna* specialized in rigorously drawing forth the meaning of words (*nomina*) and their usage. It took pleasure in critically employing logic to uncover flaws indicating that the speculative thinkers of the *via antiqua*—which was concerned for extracting real, substantive,

---

<sup>14</sup> On the omnibus condemnation, see Mayeur, V, 814-817, 836-843; Hughes, II, 412-434.

significant, universal concepts from philosophical labors—explained less about the world than they thought that they had done.

The general Nominalist call back to a critical focus on the meaning of the words themselves and the weaknesses in the speculative theologians' systems was in and of itself a highly valuable endeavor. In some respects, it might be viewed as differing little from the practical Aristotelian's task of reining in some of the wilder fancies of the brilliant Platonic vision. Moreover, the *via moderna's* eagerness to discredit philosophical humbug was linked together with one project that all the speculative thinkers of the *via antiqua* could equally appreciate: hostility to Averroes and his vision of a universe where everything was dictated by an ironclad necessity.

Unfortunately, however, the extremists' mode of attack would bring terrible long-term harm to the entire cause of the Word in history. In their war against the evils of belief in a necessary universe, they so emphasized the freedom of the divine will as to reject all "capturing and binding" of reality by speculative reason in any way whatsoever. Universal concepts, for them, were impossible, since these implied a subordination of the omnipotent supernatural God to dependent natural minds. If Reason had any function at all, which they thought it did, it had to focus on knowledge of individual existing beings and objects—whose character and truth Nominalists seemingly believed must impose themselves infallibly upon human minds created to receive their message.

Extreme Nominalists insisted that the whole purpose of their logical assault on the system building of the great speculative philosophers and theologians was that of

## RESISTANCE

exposing its fragility. Through this spiritually meritorious project they would cement man's commitment to the only solid ground of unchangeable universal Truth, which was faith in Divine Revelation. Faith seeking rational understanding had led to interminable battles threatening to the very belief that the use of philosophy was supposed to strengthen. Faith in Faith alone—in other words, Fideism—was subject to no such religion-threatening danger. For the Faith was simply the Faith, and, therefore, the *via moderna* suggested, clear and obvious in all regards. Yes, extreme Nominalists mischievously hinted, the omnipotent God, through His irresistible divine will, could, from one moment to the next, *change* the rules of Faith, and the character and significance even of those individual existing realities that supposedly imposed themselves irresistibly upon human minds. In effect, He could make today's "evil", tomorrow's "good"; today's pathway to eternal salvation, tomorrow's highway to perdition. But having ventured this horrible possibility, they then went on to assure men that God's promise of fidelity guaranteed that such a psychologically devastating change of program would never come to pass. Faith in Faith was, therefore, a "no lose" proposition.

However, by playing the extreme Nominalist game ourselves, and imagining a world in which a man trained in its precepts were, *per impossibile*, to lose his faith in God, we can see that he could readily turn into a dangerous disturber of the peace of Christendom and become useful to the cause of "business as usual". In the case of conflict with his fellow men, and in the absence of an authoritative God whose divine will must unquestionably be followed, he would be left with his own intuitive knowledge alone to make decisions of all

kinds. This knowledge could never produce universal concepts that his Reason might claim to be definitive for forming laws existentially valid for the natural world around him as a whole. Conceptual knowledge of the *via antiqua* sort was a blessing for the godless individual, for it could, after all, like ancient Seeds of the Logos, eventually lead a man back to the Faith. Be that as it may, the ex-believer's knowledge under the Nominalist dispensation would be that of specific, individual bits of potentially changeable data alone. And this meant the individual "facts" of "nature as is", shut off from the hunt even for their natural corrective logos, much less that of the transforming Word Incarnate. If clashes with his fellow man, under these conditions, were to arise, which they inevitably would, they would become clashes of earthbound, individual human wills, each of which would be absolutely certain that it was operating with infallible intuitive information. In such clashes, it would be the strongest man with the strongest faith in the obvious truth of his immediate perceptions whose views would win the day.<sup>15</sup>

Tunnel-vision judgments opposing logic, Aristotle, or the hunt for real, meaningful, natural truths to be found in the great scholastics of the *via antiqua*, were matched by other willful choices exaggerating one or the other specific *spiritual* path to knowledge of God and union with Him. Once again, the question at issue here was not that of seeking a "space" for a certain approach to play a role in the life of Christendom—or, for that matter, even the *overriding* role in

---

<sup>15</sup> For Nominalism and its problems, see Hughes, III, 119-123; 225-228; E. Gilson, *Unity of Philosophical Experience* (Scribner's, 1965), pp. 61-121; Lagarde, Vol. IV (*Defense de l'Empire*) and V (*Critique des structures ecclésiales*), *passim*.

## RESISTANCE

the work of a given individual or group. There were, of course, at this moment in history, as at all times, serious and holy spiritual writers and mystics who understood that truth and were doing nothing other than adding new tools to the rich armory of believers seeking the correction and transformation of their souls in Christ. Some of these men and women, like Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-c. 1327), appreciated the intellectual achievement of the great scholastic system builders and used it in their own labors. Continued cooperation of spiritual and intellectual endeavors would have been valuable to their work, since trained scholastic philosophers and theologians recognized the often dangerously ambiguous character of mystical language. They understood the ease with which its pronouncements, distorted by limited or fanatical followers, could end by serving a wide range of unwanted heretical purposes. As Philip Hughes, a brilliant commentator on all such late medieval foibles, explains:<sup>16</sup>

It is not hard to understand that, once out of the hands of men really masters of their task, really theologians as well as holy men, such an apostolate could easily go astray. The subtle explanations of the soul's mystical union with God could, and did, give rise to idle and mischievous debates among the less learned and the half-learned; the delicate business of the practical relation of the workaday moral virtues to

---

<sup>16</sup> Hughes, III, 220; also, Mayeur, VI, 337-340, 520-549; P. Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality* (Newman, Four Volumes, 1953), II, 100-251; Oakley, pp. 276-285.

the high theological virtues could be neglected, and men and women, who visibly reeked of pride, insubordination, injustice and intemperance of every sort, could ignore their sins while they busied themselves with the higher prayer. And, of course, the movement will not have been spared its host of camp followers, many times larger than the army of disciples—infininitely noisier and much more in evidence—whose main occupation was to exchange gossip masked in the phrases of high theological learning, to turn these into party slogans, and, in the devil's eternal way, accomplish to perfection all the complicated maneuvers of the religious life while their hearts were wholly unconverted, their wills obstinately unrepentant.

Returning once again to the tunnel vision syndrome, it was the conviction of some thinkers that all Christians must recognize the paramount value of one specific spiritual pathway to God that was to imperil the future work of the Word in history. Often central to this conviction was a Nominalist-like frustration with the eternal squabbling and uncharitable inadequacies of those using Reason as a staff on which Catholic pilgrims to eternity could profitably lean. Thus, a number of influential writers began to insist that an ultimately non-rational and even anti-rational mystical union with God was the only thing that “really” counted in the life of those “truly” pious Christians eager to fulfill the message of the Incarnation and gain the promise of corrective transformation in Christ.

Many such men and women were mystics who entertained fewer theological pretensions than those of the



## RESISTANCE

school of Meister Eckhart. Mystical teachers of this camp attempted to describe an ineffable union with God in terms of that intimacy with the more historical-scriptural Christ that crusading contact with the Holy Land had nurtured and saints like St. Francis had popularized. These more "sentimental" mystics tended to explain themselves in a deeply passionate, emotive discourse that found logical and rational labors to be pathetically inadequate and pretentious. We will have a great deal more to say about such mystics' anti-rational hunt for intimacy with Christ in the next chapter. But among those pursuing this approach by the late 1200's were, as might well be expected, many Franciscans, including those numerous Spirituals who were especially disturbed by the philosophical endeavors of some of their own brothers in religion, like St. Bonaventure.<sup>17</sup>

Still, Spiritual Franciscan concerns in this regard were swallowed up by their more intense commitment to preaching the supreme and overriding value of a life of Apostolic Poverty in the work of complete transformation in Christ. Spiritual Franciscans were certain that they, with their concern for the full embrace of the life of voluntary impoverishment, were the only true followers of the founder of the order and, through their loyalty to his principles, guides for the life of Christendom as a whole. We shall have much more to say on this question as well, but our ability to do so must wait upon ecclesiastical and secular political developments yet to be introduced into the equation. Let it suffice to note for the moment that dedication to the doctrine

---

<sup>17</sup> Moorman, on intellectuals and mystics, pp. 240-277; Mayeur, VI, 520-549; Hughes, III, 208-229.

of Apostolic Poverty so dominated the Spirituals' vision that they ended by convincing many potential friends and friendly critics, alongside their truly ill-willed opponents, that they had entirely forgotten the need to cultivate the superior virtue of Christian charity.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, no introduction to the problems of a tunnel-vision mentality of a spiritual character would be complete without some tentative reference to the eastern Hesychast Movement. This essentially quietist approach, which traced its roots back to the early Christian mystical tradition, looked for its immediate historical inspiration to Simeon the New Theologian. It would eventually gain its most influential expression in the work of Gregory Palamos (1296-1359). Many Hesychasts claimed to have found a method for achieving individual union with God based upon continual employment of a simple "Jesus Prayer", along with a cultivation of the proper physical position and environment in which to recite it. Commitment to their method, they argued, allowed for a quiet divinization of its mystical practitioner, the depiction of whose sanctity, which glowed with the kind of light that illumed Christ on Mount Tabor, then provided a major subject for iconographers.

Hesychasm became very strong in eastern monastic circles, gradually driving the earlier, communal minded Stoudite monastic vision into the shadows. Although they generally looked upon all things western with suspicion, Hesychasts nevertheless shared with many Latin "mystics of intimacy" a similar dislike for scholastic theology and its intellectual pathway to an understanding of God. They were

---

<sup>18</sup> Moorman, pp. 307-319; Mayeur, VI, 39-42, 277-285, 323-337, Hughes, III, 125-134.

## RESISTANCE

especially horrified that such logical, speculative thought had even begun to win some powerful eastern adherents. Hesychasts had good reason to be concerned. For Eastern friends of scholasticism united with their Latin colleagues in criticizing a spirituality one of whose main effects was to deprive man of the mental tools needed to separate an erroneous from an acceptable form of mysticism.

Criticism of Hesychasm generally focused on the form that this spirituality took through the teachings of Palamos. From the standpoint of opponents, East and West, Hesychasm, in Palamos' hands, was a particularly potent recipe for a theological and spiritual nightmare. Critics were horrified by his apparent claim that the Hesychast could achieve a union with God while on earth that was equivalent to that to be experienced in eternity. Worse still, they insisted that the unity he spoke of was not a complete one. Rather, it was limited to a union with God's so-called "operations"; his "uncreated light"; the light that shown down on Mount Tabor. It thus appeared to recoil from the idea that even the blessed in heaven could touch the actual "core" of divinity and see God fully, in His very essence.

Separating the essence of God from His uncreated light, critics argued, was tantamount to positing the existence of two divinities—one that man could somehow reach fully, even perhaps in this life, and through one particular path to transformation in Christ alone; and another "god" who would remain forever unknown and unknowable. Whatever the outraged objections of the undeniably passionately iconodule Hesychasts might be, this meant that they once again had thrown the doctrinal work completed with the defeat of Iconoclasm into jeopardy. The total divinization of

man in Christ and the proper estimation of the glory of the universe were thereby precluded, with both the individual and the fullness of nature shut off from the truly inclusive, transforming embrace of God. Other complaints were to emerge over time, especially regarding the role of lay spiritual directors in the Hesychast Movement and the disdain its followers expressed for different forms of mysticism and transformation in Christ—including that of a St. Francis of Assisi who had actually won for himself many eastern admirers. But these objections are best left to a discussion of events unfolding in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to arguments heard in Russian émigré circles by the ears of the present author himself.<sup>19</sup>

Tunnel vision also manifested itself on the practical level in the endlessly expanding and intensifying quarrels over privileges and honors indulged in by the mass of corporate institutions active in the society of the High Middle Ages. Such conflicts took place from the lowest to the highest levels. In order to advance their position and mark themselves off more clearly from the common herd, the nobility armed the most basic of corporations—their families—with ever more precise crusading pedigrees stretching far into its highly savage barbarian past. Major and minor guilds in the growing cities of Italy and Flanders joined in the genealogical fun. Each of these two groups looked to its own individual benefit and stood on guard, one against another. On the other hand, both types of guilds, together, were conscious of their common distinction from the property-less “little people”

---

<sup>19</sup> Ostrogorsky, pp. 466, 474, 511-514, 520; Vasiliev, II, 665-670, 697-698; Mayeur, VI, 549-563; also, D. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium. 1261-1453* (Cornell, 1985).

## RESISTANCE

working in their enterprises and increasingly enraged by their employers' oppressive pretensions in their own right. Bourgeois communes created to deal with general merchant needs in growing commercial centers were at odds with local lords and bishops contesting their claims to autonomy. They were also angered by clerical insistence upon exemption from taxation and secular legal chastisement in the towns that came totally under merchant control. Nations—larger, corporate, ethnic entities of a potentially much more vigorous variety—participated in the hunt for distinctions as well, creating legendary histories for themselves that were highly entertaining but damaging to their commitment to the existence of an international Christian Roman community. Many contemporary thinkers—most famously John of Salisbury (c. 1120-1180), Bishop of Chartres, in his *Policraticus*—attributed the growing bitterness of these disputes, which were so destructive to man's overall spiritual health, to the new avarice that twelfth century economic progress had encouraged; the avarice that Innocent III had sought to bring more consistently under the Church's corrective and transforming purview.<sup>20</sup>

It is certainly true that the most noble of the orthodox proponents of the Apostolic Poverty movement—St. Francis of Assisi in particular, with his concern that his followers

---

<sup>20</sup> On the class consciousness of the nobility, see D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility* (Pearson, 2005); Duby, *Cathedrals*, pp. 191-274; *Three Orders*, pp. 271-356, and on John of Salisbury, pp. 263-268; also, see the differences indicated in A. Haverkamp, *Medieval Germany* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 79-94, 200-221, 334-351; Duby, *France*, pp. 155-181, 253-268; Waley, pp. 1-87.

must always work and live as “little people”, *ut sint minores* – were, to a large degree, reacting against the new temptation to look to the protection of one’s own wealth, luxury, and distinctions above all spiritual and supernatural concerns. Still, there were many voices claiming that the Franciscans, as yet another corporate body, like the austere but industrious and now wealthy Cistercians before them, had also fallen prey to the avarice they had precisely been created to battle. Bishops and diocesan clergy complained bitterly about the competition for the spiritual guidance of parishioners offered by these mendicants, and we have seen that the equally self-conscious and defensive secular priests active in the faculties at the University of Paris joined them in their lamentations. We have also noted that such anti-mendicant complaints were voiced in the highest assemblies, at the Second Council of Lyons in particular. Here, as already mentioned, the Papacy staunchly defended the Franciscans and Dominicans, whose yeoman labors on behalf of the Holy See it cherished. In fact, Blessed Gregory X and the council he inspired openly chastised their critics for being driven by their own obvious obsession with honors and privileges; honors and privileges that were, in their case, pointedly identified as being palpably undeserved.<sup>21</sup>

This, of course, brings us to the painful question of the tunnel vision displayed in matters of the internal crusade by the social institution that had taken charge of the reform movement as a whole, claiming a “plenitude of power” in doing so—the Papacy. Ironically, papal tunnel vision emerged from an overwhelming passion to find guarantees

---

<sup>21</sup> Moorman, pp. 339-349; Mayeur, V, 784-785, VI, 13-23; Hughes, III, 125-134.

## RESISTANCE

for an independence that would precisely allow it *not* to become subject to tunnel vision. The Papacy fell prey to the tunnel vision syndrome in two ways: by placing too much emphasis upon the value of its administrative and legal machinery on the one hand and through its obsession with the threat presented by the Holy Roman Empire on the other.

Determined papal efforts to guide the universal Church, along with the European wide passion for backing up legal claims with judgments issued by the highly sophisticated and prestigious Roman courts, led to a vast increase in the work of the Holy See in the period between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. The administrative machinery of the Roman Curia, with its secretarial, financial, and legal arms, thus grew accordingly. Its obvious, undeniable value to the effective exercise of the plenitude of papal power seems to have inspired a corresponding belief that the refinement of administrative organs, canon law, and canonical procedures were *the* key to dealing with all day-to-day Church problems.<sup>22</sup>

Temptations emerging from basically naturalist delusions of such a kind were well described by a variety of thinkers, from John of Salisbury to St. Robert Grosseteste (c. 1170-1253) to Innocent III himself. St. Bernard summarized their thoughts most succinctly in his *De Consideratione* to his former pupil, Pope Eugenius III (1145-1153), now master of the Roman administrative machine:<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Mayeur, V, 200-239, 575-615; Ullmann, pp. 173-250; Partner, pp. 159-202.

<sup>23</sup> Hughes, II, 276; Dawson, *Religion*, p. 202; Mayeur, V, 196-200.

I know the place where you now dwell: unbelievers and enemies of good order are about you. They are wolves, not sheep. Of such as these you are none the less the Shepherd. Before you lies the practical problem how to convert them, if this be possible, before they have perverted you...If I spare you not here and now it is that you may one day be spared by God. To this race you must show yourself a shepherd or deny your pastoral office. Deny it you will not, lest he whose seat you hold deny you to be his heir. Peter, that is to say, who had not learnt, in those far off times, to show himself decked out in silks and jewellery. No golden canopy shaded his head, nor felt he ever the white horse between his knees. There was no soldiery to support him, nor did he go about hedged round by a crowd of noisy servitors. Without any of these trappings he none the less thought it possible to fulfill the commandment of Our Lord: *If thou lovest me, feed my sheep*. In all this pomp you show yourself a successor indeed: but to Constantine not Peter.

The Palace resounds with the sound of laws, but they are the laws of Justinian, not those of the Lord. Is not the enriching of ambition the object of the whole laborious practice of the laws and canons? Is not all Italy a yawning gulf of insatiable avarice and rapacity for the spoil it offers? So that the Church has become like a robber's den, full of the plunder of travellers.

Council after council, even now, even before the worst consequences of the papal bureaucratic explosion were felt,



## RESISTANCE

would vainly utter the same lamentations and warnings. Would that they had been heeded in time! For an exaggeration of the importance of the administrative and legal organs of the Mystical Body was to prove to be a direct highway to an enslavement to the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is". This nature bound obsession would consistently steer the Church away from its true source of strength, which, once again, lay only in heeding and preaching the full message of the Word Incarnate in history and taking its prescriptions for long-term practical action seriously.

Unfortunately, the prestige and rewards of service at the papal court attracted many dangerously ambitious men into its ranks. These, alas, could be regularly counted upon to act basically on behalf of their own, personal, self-interested tunnel vision, just as much as anyone else in the increasingly avaricious society of the High Middle Ages. One sees the results at the very top of the structure, in the ever more bloated conceits, ambitions, and downright troublemaking of the members of the College of Cardinals itself. Self consciously important, rich, and tempted by possibilities for further wealth and power, these self-styled "successors to the apostles" – even when they were often only simple priests or laymen – were ready to block competitors for the papal throne by means of lengthy electoral maneuvers and the labors of reigning pontiffs through political obstructionism and open conspiracy. Their behavior was imitated, every step of the way, by the army of lesser bureaucrats and lawyers active in Rome, ready to promote or stall all business on the basis of profit considerations.

Perhaps the greatest of the problems connected with the growth of papal administrative machinery flowed from the need to find the tax money to pay for the entire project. Obviously, any tax collection enterprise, however worthwhile its purpose, inevitably engenders a certain amount of ill will. Tax collection for the sake of supporting arrogant and corrupt officials significantly adds to the potential anger. But the indirect taxation that the Holy See increasingly developed to pay for the administrative expenses connected with exercising “the plenitude of papal power” was destined to arouse the greatest fury of all. This involved providing salaries for men serving at the papal court in the form of parish, diocesan, and monastic benefices throughout Christendom. Such “papal provisions” of benefices encouraged a plethora of evils, including pluralism—possession of more than one See or abbey—and absenteeism, with all their negative side effects on local guidance of religious life and lay pastoral care.

Sad to say, the system of papal provisions, designed to facilitate religious reform, in effect underlined the worst aspect of the whole medieval Christian attitude towards a priestly position: viewing it not primarily as an office designed for the “cure” of souls but as one that gave to the man holding it a “living”; the aforementioned benefice. Moreover, the successful functioning of this system, given the immense number of different practical problems involved, often required compromises with local rulers, from princes to municipal councils. Secular authorities then exacerbated the potential for spiritual damage by demanding their piece of the ecclesiastical financial pie in exchange for secular compliance with papal will. Once again, council after Church council attacked such unfortunate developments, which were

## RESISTANCE

ultimately to prove to be as destructive to civic purity as they were to ecclesiastical honor and prestige.

Canon lawyers, trained in legal think tanks like the University of Bologna, were available in ever-greater numbers to take up the well paying positions the Papacy offered for their services. Their "appropriate explanations" of the law of the Church proved to be useful to an ecclesiastical life of "business as usual" on behalf of "nature as is" closed to correction and transformation in Christ in two immediately practical ways. First of all, they justified all such money grubbing with reference to deeply admired Roman Law principles, turning the popes into Caesars judged capable of running the Church through their personal fiat as princes alone. Secondly, they called attention to tax collection methods much more suitable for uncovering and gathering funds than those known up until now; methods concerned with workable efficiency rather than distributive and commutative justice.

But such "pragmatic" assistance was highly counterproductive, as it always must be when dealing with the life of the Mystical Body, whose vital principle is not technocratic in character. For one thing, the more that papal financial policies threatened the spiritual well being of the lands being racked for tax money, the more the reputation of those mendicants called to preach on behalf of its money grubbing machinery was jeopardized. The more that this was compromised, the louder and more frequently were Spiritual Franciscan calls for the Church to embrace the life of Apostolic Poverty to be heard on influential lay lips. And inasmuch as these calls resounded in an atmosphere where speculative thought continued to be deprecated, they

discouraged a serious, systematic discussion concerning whether or not a life of clerical destitution was actually mandated by Catholic Tradition. Defense of the papal position in an anti-rational environment of this sort was also easily reduced to an appeal to its recognized "authority" and "will" alone: in other words, to an argument that was essentially Nominalist in nature, and (as we shall see) actually spelled out as such by the Roman courtiers of the fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

That brings us to the second issue, the obsessive concern of the Papacy for the struggle against the Holy Roman Empire. Admittedly, even under the best of circumstances, practical conflict would inevitably have accompanied promotion of the underlying theories of the second wave of the western medieval reform movement. Gregory and his immediate successors on the one hand, and the Emperor Henry IV (1056-1105) and his followers on the other, represented two conflicting visions of how to incarnate the sacred in the temporal realm. Both saw the Empire as being part of an order of things ultimately designed for the greater glory of God, but in different ways. It was not surprising that they thus were drawn mutually to condemn and excommunicate one another. Their words were often backed by the strength of arms, seriously disrupting political and social life in both Germany and Italy. Antipopes and anti-kings were chosen in the process, forcing prelates, nobility, merchants, and common people to take sides in this dramatic contest of Papacy and Empire, whether they wanted to or not.

---

<sup>24</sup> Ullmann, *Papacy*, 227-250, 267-268; Barber, pp. 195-224; on benefices and provisions, see Oakley, pp. 30-31, 47-52, 78, 218-220, 225-227, 241, 272, 290-294, 308-309.

## RESISTANCE

Although the fury of the battle continued beyond the death of its first participants, their departure from the scene did mark the gradual initiation of calmer discussion of the manifold issues involved. This debate addressed the many practical problems of a world wherein local churches were very much dependent upon lay patrons for financial survival and physical protection and where rulers clearly required ecclesiastical good will and help for political stability and the maintenance of legitimate social order. Theologians and canonists of the stature of St. Ivo of Chartres (c. 1040-1115) examined more carefully the "non-negotiable" demands of a reform movement insisting upon the total independence of a supernaturally grounded Church that nevertheless possessed political and social responsibilities. They compared them with the requirements of a Sacred Empire whose very survival depended upon the cooperation of a spiritually grounded Church in the proper execution of its own historically rooted secular and spiritual tasks. Their hope was to find a way of satisfying the valid concerns of both.

A first solution to the problem was offered in 1111. It was radical in nature, proposing a total abandonment by the Church of the temporal goods and positions given to it by a State that understandably expected political services in return. This answer was rejected, awakening prelates, as it did, to a clear recognition of just what such a judgment of Solomon would entail in both theory and practice. Personal bankruptcy along with political and social impotence loomed large as factors in their rebuff.

Concessions on both sides then led to that second, more pragmatic compromise embodied in the Concordat of Worms of 1122 and ratified by First Lateran Council one year later.

This agreement underlined how deeply rooted in theology on the one hand, and history and practical need for assistance on the other, the joint claims of religious and secular authorities on the labors of bishops and many abbots actually were. It confirmed that “fact of life” by giving to Church and State respective control over the ceremonies, documents, and symbolic objects investing prelates with their distinct spiritual and socio-political tasks. Deeds to the lands awarded by the emperor were thus presented through his authority; the bishop’s mitre and crosier through that of the Church. With this pact, an explosive situation--whose tensions could never really be eliminated unless and until a reliable, educated, and entirely lay source of governmental labor were to be made available to the Empire--was reduced to a considerably more manageable level.<sup>25</sup>

And it was extremely good for the Church that it did so, because the battle of Papacy and Empire brought with it many other unexpectedly embarrassing complications for the reform movement. Let us ignore for the moment the irony of Pope St. Gregory VII’s own spontaneous election by the whole of the population of Rome, which totally violated all of the recently established rules for choosing a new pontiff through the medium of the reformed College of Cardinals alone. Much more troublesome than this was the fact that the hunt for armed support for the papal reform cause was potentially causing as much spiritual and physical harm as help to the Holy See.

While many fellow reformers, like St. Peter Damien, disliked the concept of Knights of St. Peter theoretically, in

---

<sup>25</sup> Tellenbach, pp. 185-353; Ullmann, pp. 142-200; Mayeur, V, 69-134; Hughes, II, 209-274.

## RESISTANCE

and of itself, they could also point to the more obvious problem presented by the nature of the allies that political threats and actual warfare brought into the Pope's camp. They wondered *viva voce* whether the Holy See really wished to encourage the kind of disruptive popular "strikes" against unworthy bishops that had characterized the work of the so-called *pataria* in Milan. For some of the arguments of this movement's lay leaders suggested a medieval revival of Donatism, with its ironclad and heretical foundation of the Church's practical exercise of authority not upon her life in Christ but upon the personal holiness of her ministers. Critics also asked whether the aid of the Norman conquerors of southern Italy and Sicily was truly worth both its symbolic and practical consequences. After all, the Normans of Robert (c. 1015-1085) and Roger Guiscard (1031-1101) were responsible for depredations that had long infuriated the Eastern Emperors, manifestly violated that same independence of the Church that the reformers were defending against Henry IV, and ultimately even "helped" the Papacy by sacking the city of Rome herself. And how could the generally narrow parochialism of German feudal opponents of the Empire—the new allies of the reformed Papacy—truly be viewed as a better basis on which to rebuild Christian order than an imperial government with a much broader vision of the needs of a universal Christendom?

Moreover, it could easily seem as though an uncompromisingly spiritual-minded reform movement was, in practice, often obsessed with quite mundane land and money issues generating another batch of peculiarly counter-productive results. The second wave of reformers claimed that independence from the Empire was intimately connected

with the possession of certain contested territories in central Italy. But in order to gain these lands, the Papacy engaged in warfare engendering military expenses whose satisfaction required the non-canonical alienation of other Church properties. Fortunes of war then led to papal exile from Rome, the payment of unacceptable political debts, and heavy borrowing from dubious and usurious forces for basic survival. How did leaving the Eternal City over to the machinations of the old, grasping, Roman “noble” families, happy to be able to play Church against Empire, aid the cause of reform? In what way did the gaining of fresh territories justify granting to Normans—and many other “friends”—privileges that the possession of these lands was intended to assure the Papacy the means of resisting? And what good came from placing the Holy See at the mercy of moneylenders representing new and increasingly avaricious financial interests?<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, even though it reduced the tensions creating the problems cited above, the compromise represented by the Concordat of Worms, along with a similar agreement with the Kingdom of England, was not itself without noticeable risks. Let us remember that it involved recognition of an historical fact of life and not the enunciation of an ideal. As such, it could never lead to a liberation of a bishop or an abbot from the constant difficulty of serving two masters simultaneously. Potentially, it could do damage to the interests of the one or the other, or even both of them together. In fact, the more the existing reality of State service

---

<sup>26</sup> Tellenbach, pp. 185-353; Hughes, II, 209-239; Dawson, *Religion*, pp. 120-138, 199-217; on Normans in Sicily, Barber, pp. 225-250; Mayeur, V, 179-239.



## RESISTANCE

was confirmed and then related to precisely delineated political responsibilities and property grants, the greater its latent threat to the boat-rocking pilgrim spirit that a Church true to her mission must always nurture. The “cuts” that everyone in this compromise got came with a backsliding in commitment to corrective transformation in Christ and a steady advance towards practical acceptance of “feudal nature as is”. And yet all of this took place in a world that outwardly spoke with a more devout religious voice than ever before.

Compromise did not even prevent further battles of the Papacy and Empire, which again emerged under the Hohenstaufen Dynasty during the reigns of Frederick I “Barbarossa” (1151-1190) and Frederick II (1212-1250).<sup>27</sup> By the time of the latter conflict in particular the confrontation of Church and State had reached a peculiar fever pitch. This was due not only to the general increase in corporate and individual greed, jealousy, and rage but also to the passion unleashed by yet another example of the high medieval tunnel vision syndrome alluded to above: that involving Roman Law. For, with the recovery of the major texts offering westerners the full flesh on that skeleton of Roman Law that the Visigothic King Alaric II had provided for the use of his non-German subjects, there also came a disturbing entry into the potent legalist spirit that lay behind its standard operating procedures.

Georges de Lagarde offers an incomparable discussion of the whole of the explosive legal question brought about by

---

<sup>27</sup> See Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 195-224; Mayeur, V, 204-239; Hughes, II, 303-322, 383- 395.

this rediscovery in the first of his five volume series entitled *La naissance de l'esprit laïque au déclin du moyen âge*. Here, he explains that the Roman concept of a public authority that took its right to legislate for an entire society as an unquestionable given hit medieval intellectual circles like a mental thunderbolt. If contemporaries could adopt it to their use, it would, in effect, "liberate" legislators from an enormous burden. It would free them from negotiating with that intricate contemporary complex of testy representatives of endless corporate entities, parochial customs, and personal historical claims to jurisdiction over local populations and their individual lives, all of whose specific rights were enshrined in the varied oral and written statements that characterized "the law" in feudal society. Perhaps more importantly still, it would do so with reference to a prestigious theme that blinded many of even the most alert medieval thinkers to anything else of significance that lay plainly before them: namely, the majesty of ancient Rome.<sup>28</sup>

For just as modern men have tended to treat anything "new" as obviously "better", so did the "common sense" men of the Middle Ages tend to transform their admiration for anything "ancient", with a Greek or Roman pedigree, into an uncritical acceptance of its manifest superiority. We have already encountered this irrational flaw with reference to what passed for the teaching of Aristotle. The same psychological disorder now worked to the advantage of the gems of legal wisdom arriving from the treasure chest of Eternal Rome. Lovers of ancient sagacity were unshakeable in

---

<sup>28</sup> Lagarde, I (*Bilan de XIII Siècle*), 146-168 on the rediscovery of Roman Law; on divergence of interpretation, see, pp. 146-263; Hughes, III, 107-112; Mayeur, VI, 276-285.

## RESISTANCE

their affections and thought that they could easily justify them. After all, had not the second wave of the reform movement itself urged Christians to get “back to the roots” of Tradition when correcting ecclesiastical corruption arising through the ages? Where better to find traditional western *legal* roots than in a Seed of the Logos planted by the venerable Roman *res publica*? And, once again, had not the Holy See itself adapted Roman legal procedures to its own use in developing and exercising the “plenitude of papal power”?

In any case, what followed, in practice, was what always inevitably happens when uncritical excitement and enthusiasm take precedence over the use of Faith and Reason working in tandem: namely, an unthinking surrender of a higher vision to the demands of uncorrected Seeds of the Logos at best, and the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is” at worst. Hence, rather than stepping back for a moment to judge how, and under what circumstances, and to what degree Roman Law and Roman legal procedures might be acceptable and useful in a corrected and transformed Christian society, greater familiarity with their august—but, when left to their own devices, totally naturalist—spirit inspired many thirteenth century legalists to grant them an unwarranted, total obeisance.

Let me add that this total obeisance to Roman Law could involve manifold results in the hands of that complex and potentially hostile mix of existing medieval corporate authorities. The first of the two most important of these consequences was the assistance that it gave to the demand for an untrammelled authority on the part of whatever ruler could make good a claim to public sovereignty in a given

region. Yes, it is true that the fullness of the ancient legal Tradition based its authority ultimately upon the will of the "People of Rome". But this "popular Roman will" had no literal resonance with medieval men. What the term signified to them was merely the final result of the sacrifices of that mass of half-mythical manpower responsible for conquering "the world" already before Christ was born. The "People of Rome", in practice, by the time of Octavian Augustus, indicated the prince that guided them and, therefore, the dictates of the imperial will. It was in such form that the legal thinkers serving the Hohenstaufen Dynasty appealed to the concept, citing the self-evident "majesty" of Roman Law to back up imperial decrees, and claiming for their masters a "sovereign" power that could not be blocked by the merely historical, customary, and local "rights" of the extensive network of corporate powers active in the medieval world, from the Papacy down through to the bailiwicks of petty, rural, baronial families.

But we have already seen that the Papacy had entered the lists against imperial pretensions to an exclusive authority even before the entry of Roman legal theory into the arsenal of weapons wielded by the Hohenstaufen. We have noted that that same body of thought exercised an enormous impact upon the Papacy as well as upon secular authorities, with the former using it to justify the pope's "princely" exercise of the plenitude of *his* power. Popular awe before the "obvious" specific laws and legal procedures dictated by the common sense of the "nature as is" authorities of the ancient past even forced the Church to bow to its wishes in a variety of regrettable ways. These included adopting overly brutal Roman anti-Gnostic methods for dealing with contemporary

## RESISTANCE

heretics that she would never have encouraged on her own steam—including the practice of burning at the stake.

Exaggerated defenders of the plenitude of papal power, such as the Augustinian, Giles of Rome (1243-1316), himself an admirer of St. Thomas Aquinas, used Roman legal arguments to, in effect, claim a total papal control over all matters temporal as well as spiritual. Giles placed everything, from ordinary property questions to the keys to the heavenly kingdom, in the hands of the chief shepherd of the baptized. It was merely for convenience sake, he argued, that the pope allowed secular princes to treat of temporal affairs in regular day-to-day life. One result of his outlook was that Giles saw no need for a Donation of Constantine to endow the Papacy with secular authority. Gratian had already paid no heed to this forged document in his earlier canonical writings. But more and more papal apologists followed Giles in *openly* disdaining its value as the twelfth century advanced. After all, the jurisdiction that the Donation supposedly deigned to assign to the Holy See already belonged to the Papacy by the law of God:<sup>29</sup>

In the same way that in the government of the cosmos there is only one source, one God, in whom lies all power, from which all other authorities derive, and to which all the other powers may be reduced; just so, in human government, and, in the Church Militant, it is necessary that there be but one source, one head, in which may be placed the plenitude of power...and which possesses the two swords, without which its

---

<sup>29</sup> Lagarde, I, 244.

power would not be complete. From that source derives all other authorities, to that source they all merge; and that unique source directs and shelters the whole Church under one unique law.

Attentive readers may also have guessed that it was not just the legal servants of the emperor and the pope who were ready to put the wisdom of the ancient Romans to work on behalf of their masters. By the thirteenth century, thinkers and administrators employed by the kings of France and England were busily laboring to demonstrate that *their* rulers were, in practice, "emperors" in their own lands—the obvious, clear, and therefore self-justified public authorities within their own more circumscribed realms. It was, therefore, to them that *carte blanche* for public sovereignty had to be assured. As might by now be expected, self-conscious municipal authorities appealing to a sovereign, public, Roman legal authority, were not lacking either. One finds them especially active in pressing similar claims to sovereignty in many parts of the Italian Peninsula, particularly where effective power already lay in the hands of the communal representatives of the local bourgeoisie.

A second major consequence of a total obeisance to the legal teachings of ancient Rome concerns the intellectual or spiritual basis on which the self-justified decisions of the obvious public coercive authority would be made. The "People of Rome", certainly at their historical origins, were a notoriously pragmatic lot, not given to philosophical speculation. The result was that the "law", whether in the hands of the Senate and the Popular Assembly to begin with, or emerging from the mouth of the imperial prince in later centuries, could simply mean whatever "worked" in order to

## RESISTANCE

achieve Roman “success”. In other words, a perfect recipe for the exercise of raw, willful power in a manner that an Isocrates and his imitators could take up and “appropriately justify” lay ready to concoct from the cookbooks of Roman Law newly opened up before medieval legalists’ eyes.

Thankfully, tunnel vision in the thirteenth century was not complete enough to reach this end result just yet. One sign of that happy truth was the conclusion drawn by many scholastics from their digestion of Aristotle’s broader philosophical vision and its application to concepts concerning law in general. For Aristotle, in discussing the State, brilliantly roots its character not in any vague hunt for what is “useful”, but in man’s nature, both individual and fraternal at one and the same time. He explains that men need the State in order to fulfill their very *raison d’être* as individuals who are simultaneously social beings. Hence, the greatest of the thirteenth century commentators on Roman Law, men like the Italian thinker, Accursius (1182-1260), who clearly looked to both Aristotle as well as to imperial decrees for guidance, recognized that mere possession of power was not enough of a justification for the action of the law giver. The will of the prince could only have the force of law if his actions ultimately served the common good.

Still, how did one learn the nature of the “common good”? Here, a truly dangerous tunnel vision already manifested itself in the pronouncements of certain contemporary legalists, leading some of them to argue for the total independence of the law-giving mind from the corrective and transforming mission of the Church. It is for this reason that Accursius himself could say that, having rediscovered Roman jurisprudence in its entirety, theological

knowledge was no longer of any importance to the legislator, because “all things are to be found in the body of law”.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, it was but a small step from this position to the definition of the “common good” as the mere maintenance of that “public order” that was the chief concern of the ancient imperial authorities and the historical Roman population itself. And that public order, without the aid of an outside philosophical and theological hunt for the “logos of things”, natural and supernatural, swiftly degenerated into whatever the “business as usual” demands of the most willful proponents of “nature as is” of any given time or place said that it was.

Thankfully, the same age also possessed geniuses like St. Thomas Aquinas, hard at work for the defense and teaching of the full message of the Word in history. He, and others like him, ranging from James of Viterbo, the Augustinian Archbishop of Naples (1255-1308) and one of the first authors on ecclesiology, to the State-friendly John of Paris (1255-1306) and the imperialist poet and essayist, Dante Alighieri, all, in varying ways, emphasized a happier and broader vision. Each of them, with Aquinas in the forefront, saw that Aristotle’s arguments, as Seeds of the Logos, necessarily led men away from the dark, back wall of the cave, demanding increasingly more light for understanding the essence of man’s individual and social nature. With the ever deeper grasp of the meaning of human existence stemming from this increasing knowledge, they also gained a correspondingly ever more accurate definition of the “common good”.

---

<sup>30</sup> Lagarde. I, 162; also, pp. 146-263 on the law, Aristotle, and different schools of thought; Hughes, III, 107-112; Mayeur, VI, 276-285.



## RESISTANCE

Aristotle—like Plato through his philosophical transformation and perfection of an otherwise “dumb” rhetorical science—opened to Roman Law an understanding of its meaning and purpose that its native founders never possessed. And, even though he himself could not have imagined it, Aristotle, following Plato, pointed the way to a supernatural revelation and an institution that would incarnate, correct, and transform his own magnificent labors to the still greater glory of God. He breeched a passage to a St. Thomas Aquinas, who, seeing everything through the eyes of Christ, drew forth from Aristotle and Roman Law a vision of Church and State working in tandem to gain a truly accurate understanding of the common good and the kind of public order that would permit it to triumph. Such, James of Viterbo insisted, is always the primary task of the Word with respect to all authority: not to usurp it, as Giles of Rome often suggested, but to “inform it”, spiritually, and by thus correcting and transforming it, to give it a greater sense of its own meaning and a deeper confidence in its own proper employment.<sup>31</sup>

Putting all this aside, what most concerns us now is simply whether or not the Holy See’s particular strategy in its conflicts with the Empire escaped the limitations of “tunnel vision” and accurately gauged contemporary as well as future spiritual dangers. Alas, one can safely say that it did *not* regularly follow the required high road. It did not always root its often quite legitimate and necessary public resistance to imperial abuses in its real source of strength as spokesman for the Word continued in time. Especially after the

---

<sup>31</sup> Lagarde, I, 241.

pontificate of Innocent III, it seems, step-by-step, to have abandoned efforts to root even its most justifiable measures in their proper theological and philosophical context. In consequence, it badly jeopardized its sense of the nuance always crucial to the proper performance of the Christian dance of life.

There is no doubt, for example, that the practical defense of the doctrine of the plenitude of papal power called forth use of the weapons of interdict, excommunication, and even crusading on an ever more extensive and exclusively political level, disturbing both to the community's daily religious life as well as to individual Christian consciences. And it is certain that the hunt for support for papal demands once again entailed the cultivation of highly parochial German and Italian allies whose interests were not those of a general, stable, political and social order that worked for the benefit of the common good. In Italy, this fueled the already long-lasting Guef (papal) versus Ghibelline (imperial) battle, which ended by pitting not only city against city but also each and every one of the internal urban factions mentioned above against its manifold competitors for power.<sup>32</sup>

Papal exaggerations aroused an equally ferocious imperial response. Frederick II and his advisors passionately excoriated the dangerous path the popes had taken. "They say that the Court of Rome is our mother and our nurse", the emperor lamented, but "her acts do not come from a mother. It is necessary to recognize in them rather the excesses of a

---

<sup>32</sup> Partner, pp. 203-228; 253-257; Havercamp, pp. 223-267; Waley, pp. 90-157; Ullmann, pp. 251-278; Powell, pp. 135-149; D. Abulafia, *Frederick II* (Oxford, 1988).

## RESISTANCE

stepmother". The Roman Pontiffs, he insisted, had become "devouring wolves", whose legates were sent "to excommunicate, to suspend, to punish all those who hold an authority", while, at the same time, "you see them dissipating the goods of holy churches, the shelters of the poor, the homes of the saints that our fathers, in their piety and their simplicity, founded for the sustenance of the wretched and of pilgrims and the support of religious". Taking a cue from the Spiritual Franciscans, he argued that it "was in poverty and simplicity that the primitive Church was founded and that she gave birth to saints", and that her contemporary successor should take guard "lest her riches shall soon have provoked her ruin". Recognizing that the claims of exaggerated defenders of the plentitude of papal power and the coercive ecclesiastical actions individual popes had taken had offended even such deeply pious rulers as St. Louis IX, Frederick called upon all princes throughout Christendom to recognize that their own legitimate authority was threatened when the rights of the emperor were attacked:<sup>33</sup>

Raise your eyes, stand up, sons of men...Cry over the scandal of the universe, the discord of nations, the exile of justice. The ancients of the people who seemed to govern it now only produce the Babylonian Plague. Judgment is changed into bitterness, the fruit of justice into absinthe. Take heed, princes, peoples, hear our cause...Do not forget, above all, princes, that our cause is your cause. Run to your homes with buckets full of water when fire devours the wall of

---

<sup>33</sup> Lagarde, I, 197, 199.

your neighbor...Take fear that the slyness of the pope does not turn against you. It will be easy to humiliate all the other princes and kings if he can bring to nothing the power of the Roman Caesar whose shield has received the first arrows...It is time for you to understand that the honor of all is at stake each time that one touches one member of the body of secular princes.

In making this appeal, Frederick also reminded his audience of the social revolution that the Gregorian reform had everywhere provoked, thereby adding to the pot of mutual envy that seemingly everyone in the age of the new ascent of Mount Tabor incessantly stirred. Hence, his reference to the competition for riches stimulating the avarice of all medieval corporate bodies, from the highest to the lowest, in an era of tremendous economic boom and bust:<sup>34</sup>

Those whom one looks to now as clerics, finding themselves insufficiently fattened by their alms, oppress the sons of the donors of these alms, and even the sons of our subjects, forgetting the condition of their fathers, and do not deign to give witness to any respect towards their emperor, neither towards their king, each time they receive the title of apostolic fathers...How can you display yourselves to be obedient to these men with a false exterior of sanctity, whose ambition leads them to hope that the whole of the Jordan River might flow into their mouth? Oh!...if the simplicity of your credulity looked to defend itself

---

<sup>34</sup> Lagarde, I, 199-200.

## RESISTANCE

against this evil leaven of Scribes and Pharisees which is hypocrisy according to the word of the Savior, how abundant would be the revenues spared which now go to enrich them while impoverishing a crowd of kingdoms....

Neither did the emperor's summons to a general "rising" against papal policies go unanswered. English barons, Italian municipalities, and even, as the following passage indicates, the greatest lords of the Kingdom of France in a forceful protest of 1245, all bitterly registered their discontent with the maneuvers of the Holy See. Once again, all the anger over the social revolution that the ecclesiastical reform of the High Middle Ages assisted entered into such calls for resistance to the clergy. Once again, such purely natural concerns were accompanied by high-minded references to the supposed superiority of the foundation vision of a primitive Church characterized by an Apostolic Poverty possessing no political or social pretensions. And behind it all, there lay the clear threat of the possible use of violent force to flay those wicked clerics who refused to heed the original intent of the Christian founders:<sup>35</sup>

Whereas clerical fantasies, failing to take into account that the Kingdom of France was converted from the error of the pagans to the Catholic Faith by the wars and by the blood of many men under Charlemagne and other princes, and at first seduced us with an appearance of humility when they actually came to us

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 195-196.

as foxes; whereas upon the very ruins of the castles which we founded, the clergy so absorbs the jurisdiction of secular princes that the sons of serfs judge according to their law the children and the sons of free men, when, on the contrary, according to the law of the first conquerors, they should rather be judged by us; whereas one should not take away by new constitutions the customs of our predecessors; whereas they create for us a situation worse than God intended the condition of the pagans to be, when He said: 'Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's': all of us, the Lords of the kingdom, reflecting attentively that the kingdom was acquired not by written right or by the arrogance of the clergy, but through the sweat of warriors, we lay down and sanction through the present decree, on the oath of all, that no cleric or lay person will in the future make a claim before an ordinary judge or his delegate, unless that be for heresy, marriage, or usury, under pain for the transgressors of losing their goods and being mutilated in their members so that our jurisdiction may raise up and breathe, and that the clerics, enriched up until now through our impoverishment...might be led back to the state of the primitive church, live in contemplation, while we shall lead as befits us an active life, and thus cause to be reborn the miracles of which the world is since long time deprived.

*D. The Welcoming Committee of the Grand Coalition*

## RESISTANCE

Although none of the many proponents of the various forms of the tunnel vision mentality noted above were ready to take a final, determined, and openly anti-Catholic step in the thirteenth century, thereby entering into full-fledged participation in the ranks of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, temptations to do so lay all around them. For outright members of the GCSQ, horrified at the progress of the Word in that age of the new ascent of Mount Tabor “when values descended to the earth”, were already on the spot to urge them to cross the thin but still very real line from outraged believer or problem child to open enemy of the full message of Christ. Who, exactly, formed part of this unhappy welcoming committee?

Still active in the GCSQ were a number of those first trenchant enemies of the Christian name, the highly parochial-minded Jews of the post-Temple era. It was really only in the 1200’s that Church authorities themselves started to become aware of just what the Faith of these representatives of the first Covenant actually entailed. Up until that point, their presumption was that Judaism was simply an incomplete Old Testament religion. It was primarily converts from Judaism who made Catholic leaders conscious of the truly dominant elements in contemporary Jewish intellectual life: namely, the Talmud and the Cabbala. If the first of these influences was threatening simply due to the hatred of Christianity that it inspired, the second was much more dangerous because its magical components were couched in a pseudo-spiritual language masquerading their clear support for a willful manipulation of the fruits of “nature as is” that was potentially tempting to all. For the Cabbala’s offer of unmeasured physical power over the

universe could easily play on the ordinary day-to-day passions of every sinful man and institution. And these, we have repeatedly seen, had already been stirred to fever pitch by the raging cupidity and corporate jealousies of the time.<sup>36</sup>

But the day of the Talmud and the Cabbala as major factors in the collapse of Christendom had yet to come. At the moment, a much more significant GCSQ problem was posed by the outright supporters of Gnosticism. Whether native-born or emerging from missionary activity out of heretical centers of Byzantium, a western Gnosticism of Manichean character and in close contact with the East had, by the twelfth century, become very strong in southern France, northern and central Italy, and sections of the Rhineland. Known by westerners much more under the names of Catharism—signifying the hunt for purification—and Albigensianism—with reference to the city of Albi, at the center of a region of particular Catharist strength—this movement was not concerned with correcting abuses in an enterprise otherwise recognized as praiseworthy in character. It rejected the very possibility of a political and social transformation of mankind through any tools, one or many, Catholic, Jewish, or even purely natural in character. We have already seen that it viewed such a project as a blasphemous attempt to baptize the inevitably satanic earthly realm; a horrifying whirl with the devil rather than a joyful dance of life, dramatic and risky though this latter inevitably must be.

One of the reasons that western Catharists made headway was the fact that, like all good Manicheans, they deconstructed solid Christian tools and redirected them to the

---

<sup>36</sup> Mayeur, V, 701-712; VI, 849-882; E. M. Jones, pp. 93-131.



## RESISTANCE

advancement of their peculiar missionary enterprise. Organized in a parallel Church, the self-sacrifice of their preachers and "perfect ones" made them appear to be true practitioners of an Apostolic Poverty that was disdained by wicked popes, prelates, and priests. These "honest laborers" in the vineyard of the Lord then dedicated themselves to work in areas troubled by disorder and scandal, and frequently among "outsiders", like women, who felt that their religious and local civil needs were badly neglected by the orthodox establishment. Far from appearing in any way dangerous, Catharists could thus seem to many ordinary believers to be nothing other than infinitely more admirable representatives of the primitive Catholic Faith than the "modernist" mainstream clergy.

Gnostic "Christianity" and "self-sacrifice" were, however, in reality, based upon a loathing for the material world dangerous to all institutions claiming to work for the correction of the evils of daily, natural life, with the Church and the State being simply the most immediately and obviously affected by it. It was thus of primary importance in fighting them to emphasize the essential difference of Catharist and Catholic visions of nature, along with the full consequences of accepting one as opposed to the other. Recognizing this, Innocent III and his successors wisely deployed the Dominicans and Franciscans in militant spiritual combat against the heretics.

Mendicants lived a way of life that could arouse the same kind of admiration felt by neglected believers for Catharist holy men. Nevertheless, they cultivated their vocation of self-sacrifice in order to direct the faithful to the Catholic teaching regarding the basic goodness of a fallen Creation and the

corrective, transforming grace of the Incarnation. Even better, mendicants knew how to tell a good story about their true tale of Creation, Sin, and Redemption. Through such tools as the use of the crèche, men like St. Francis were able to show the Church's love for women, children, and nature in general in a manner that vividly uncovered the hatred felt by the Gnostics for everything involving the body, childbirth, and the female as mother and nurturer. This hatred was so intense as to lead them to spit at the pregnant women they encountered in public, as well as to give them a prominent place in modern histories of contraception and abortion.

Unfortunately, force, whether in the form of regular armies, local vigilante groups, or an Inquisition backed by the authority of the State, was also clearly needed to crush medieval Gnostics. It was because of this that Innocent III called a crusade to eliminate their threat in southern France. While completely justified, the use of such force was subject to the same kind of physical abuses connected with crusading in other contexts. This meant that clever storytellers could deceive people into thinking either that every deed of an anti-Gnostic crusader was Catholic and good or, crossing to the other side of the barricade, that Catharists were totally innocent victims of a perverse Church and State unified in their torment of the just and poor in spirit. Both such "good stories" portended significant future troubles for understanding and defending the true progress of the Word in daily life. For both refused to recognize either the reality of a universal truth on the one hand or the ever-present danger

## RESISTANCE

of human sinfulness disgracing its precepts in practice on the other.<sup>37</sup>

Two other GCSQ squadrons active in this era are somewhat difficult to pin down precisely: pagan literati and atheist materialists. That their spirit was certainly alive is indicated by a mass of evidence from various sources. These include the pagan and erotic poetry composed by learned bishops benefiting from the cultivation of the Latin cultural heritage during the Carolingian and Ottonian Renaissance, and the naturalist, forest-centered tales, evocative of later, Rousseau-like concepts of “simplicity” and “sincerity”, cultivated by the Anglo-French Plantagenet Family in its opposition to the intensely religious, crusading imagery of the Capetian Monarchy. A naturalist spirit can also be noted in many aspects of even the most important troubadour Songs of the Deed, as well as in the practical and open mockery of Christian moral principles expressed in the verses of some of the wandering student “Goliard” minstrels of the age. Finally, clear indications of the Averroist vision of a universe built upon necessity and devoid of freedom, at least in the form that this mentality may have seeped into the

---

<sup>37</sup> See M. Lambert, *The Cathars* (Blackwell, 1998); E. Peters, *Inquisition* (U. of California, 1989); A. Roach, *The Devil's World* (Pearson, 2005), pp. 34-167; Powell, pp. 121-149; Mayeur, V, 451-472; Hughes, II, 340-351, 375-376, 406-411; Barber, *Two Cities*, pp. 168-194.

popular student mind at the University of Paris, can be found in works such as the renowned *Romance of the Rose*.<sup>38</sup>

In any case, all the materialism and potential atheism noticeable in their many racy lines and speculations fed the lamentations of numerous contemporary preachers. These preachers also insisted upon expressions of actual hatred for the Faith to be heard from the mouths of both common people as well as influential laymen. What is hard to know, however, is who, among such “unbelievers”, were really anti-Christian by conviction and who were not. For many troubadours, Goliards, and bishops who wrote Latin poetry and romances antithetical to Christianity may simply have been following what were deemed to be unchangeable literary conventions handed down from the founders of the classical tradition. They may not have been expressing their true feelings, which might have basically remained those of honest believers. Some “pagan” literati may also have exaggerated their commitment to ancient literary conventions as a reaction to the tunnel vision and pedestrian prose of many of the supporters of logic, law, and Aristotle. These, as we have seen, were just as passionately, though more rationally, criticized by thinkers of unquestionable orthodoxy, such as John of Salisbury, the Bishop of Chartres.

Moreover, people mumbling what seemed to preachers to be materialist guides to action may have been driven to do so merely by the standard operating procedures of their professions, which inevitably focused their daily attention in temporal directions, without leading them to draw truly

---

<sup>38</sup> Haskins, *Renaissance*, pp. 153-192; Waddell, pp. 70-242; Duby, *The Three Orders*, pp. 285-292; Curtius, p. 115, 106-127; Lagarde, II, 30-39, 42-44.

## RESISTANCE

serious anti-religious conclusions from their “practical atheism”. In addition, what appeared to preachers as disdain for the Faith in the thirteenth century often revealed nothing more than a momentary—and perhaps frequently very well justified—rage over the kind of corporate clerical avarice chastised above. And, after all, the voices that exploded in anger over clerical immunities and ecclesiastical courts in commercial towns frequently belonged to the same men who actively supported the work of the mendicant friars and invested a great deal of money and physical labor into rebuilding the cathedrals of Europe.

By this point, however, all of the incendiary materials present in the era when values descended to the earth now lie before the eyes of the reader: tunnel vision; avarice; appropriate explanations of desire, ignorantly or hypocritically justifying the “business as usual” desires of “nature as is” in the name of the Apostolic Faith; Jewish parochial and magical influence; Gnostic denial of the value of Creation; a literary naturalism; and a practical atheism. These incendiary materials rubbed against one another in an atmosphere charged with millenarian expectations. All that was needed to set them off was the mini-apocalypse that did indeed now explode inside and outside Christendom.

### *E. Confrontation and Apocalypse in Miniature*

Each and every one of the obstacles hindering success in the Internal Crusade grew still more formidable in the last decades of the thirteenth century. Although those barriers to unity intensifying the East-West division that Blessed Gregory X considered the greatest of Christendom’s open

wounds must eventually be mentioned in the context of this worsening situation, the logical development of our story requires a preliminary focus on two other factors.

Initially more important was, once again, the continuing battle of Church and Empire. Already by the end of the twelfth century, this conflict had centered round the addition of Sicily to the imperial possessions of Germany and northern Italy and the effects that such an acquisition could have on papal independence of action. When Frederick II died, and his descendants, Manfred (1232-1266) and Conradin (1252-1268), emerged as imperial champions in the southern part of the peninsula, the papal hunt for a political solution to the Sicilian Question reached almost maniacal proportions.

Crusading paladins were sought everywhere. Despite the skepticism and reticence of St. Louis, the king's brother, Charles of Anjou (1226-1285), took up the cudgel, brutally destroying the last of the Hohenstaufen Dynasty by 1268. After the uprising of the so-called Sicilian Vespers of 1282 successfully contested Charles' own locally detested rule, and the Kingdom of Aragon ultimately gained control of the island, the Papacy pressed France herself into the "crusade" against the heirs of the Hohenstaufen and, thus, her own first and unjust imperialist war. Meanwhile, this seemingly endless papal-imperial struggle mingled with and was used for the appropriate justification of the all too earthbound quarrels, internal and external, of most of the growing cities of the entire Italian peninsula. Papal appeal to the weapons of interdict and excommunication in such Guelf and Ghibelline party strife thereby became an almost "normal" staple of everyday Italian urban political life. It is hard to overestimate, in consequence, the non-sacramental existence that many Italian Catholics were forced to lead, sometimes for years at a

## RESISTANCE

stretch, and this during the thirteenth, supposedly the greatest of Christian centuries.<sup>39</sup>

Before moving on to the second, spiritual front, let us note that as the "holy war" against Sicily took up more and more attention, crusading against the Moslems was faltering badly. The inability to get anywhere with what Blessed Gregory X at the Second Council of Lyons had expected to be the mother of all crusades, and then the misappropriation of the funds collected for its prosecution, were a mere foretaste of the troubles soon to arrive. But nothing quite prepared westerners psychologically for the reality of total loss of all direct control over the Holy Land. This came in 1291, when Acre, the last of the Latin outposts in the Levant, fell into the hands of the Moslems.

More than anything else, Acre's fall was significant as a vivid symbol of a much deeper disease eating at the heart of Christendom. Defense of the Holy Land, believers thought, ought clearly to have been at the center of the Church's concerns. But what were the popes doing with their plenitude of power as the infidel prepared his attack? They were occupied playing their centuries old anti-imperial political game. They were, in short, concerned with the petty obsessions of an earthbound spirit of "business as usual" while their higher labor on behalf of the salvation of the Christian People as a whole was left miserably unattended.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Hughes, II, 389-406, III, 22-56; Waley, pp. 145-156, Ullmann, pp. 251-278; Partner, pp. 266-326; Riley-Smith, pp. 167-173; Mayeur, V, 542-543, 627-633; VI, 575-583.

<sup>40</sup> Riley-Smith, pp. 167-173, 206- 209.

Correcting the errors of a politicized Church blind to truly spiritual needs was very much a project of the Apostolic Poverty Movement, with those Franciscans who were eager for a full embrace of St. Francis' vision of total renunciation of all possessions in its forefront. The battle of these Spirituals with the Conventual Franciscans, whose attitude towards mendicant property and its use was much more nuanced, was a dramatic and sometimes brutal one. It went through many twists and turns throughout the whole of the thirteenth century and beyond. Spiritual hopes that a radical change for the better, one indicating that the approach of the reign of the Holy Spirit predicted by Joachim of Fiore was imminent, were strongly encouraged by the election of Pope St. Celestine V in 1294. It was the enthusiasm aroused by his public blessing of the Spiritual Franciscan position and seemingly committed desire to support what they believed to be a central feature of the founding Christian vision that made the sting of his swift abdication all the more disruptive. Sorrow over the loss of this heroic "Angelic Pope", ready to lead the return to the original intent of the Apostolic Church, was likely to cast suspicion upon his successor, Benedetto Caetani, Boniface VIII (1294-1303), even if the new pontiff had offered no further grounds for the Spirituals to attack him. Such grounds, alas, he immediately gave.

This is not to say that Boniface did not perform yeoman service for the Church in a number of respects, beginning with the role he played in urging Celestine to opt for early retirement. Cardinal Caetani realized that the "Angelic Pope's" simple, monastic approach to governance was an open invitation to his sovereign, Charles II (1285-1309), the Angevin King of Naples, to manipulate the Holy See for his own all too "common sense" purposes. Moreover, Boniface



## RESISTANCE

knew how to tell a good story for the sake of the doctrine of the plenitude of papal power—a teaching which, when defined accurately and employed properly on behalf of the corrective and transforming message of the Word, was an enormous blessing for all of Christendom.

Celestine's replacement gave witness to his valuable story-telling ability in two ways. One was through his proclamation of the Jubilee Year of 1300. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims flooded to Rome in response to the papal call to celebration at that dramatic moment, indicating to the world at large that the power of the head of the Mystical Body to motivate men without any appeal to the force of arms was clearly still immense. Secondly, Boniface knew how to express the true extent of Christ's practical power over all individual believers in simple, palpable terms. He did so in what is perhaps the most famous of all papal documents, *Unam sanctam* (1302). The chief import of this work, which, despite the claims of its detractors, was a highly traditional statement of the papal argument, much more nuanced than anything to be found in the writings of zealots like Giles of Rome, was its emphasis upon the fact that values could not descend to the earth in some sentimental, ethereal way. They could only do so, as the pope insisted, by being firmly embodied in a vivid force of flesh and blood: first in the figure of the Incarnate Word Himself and then in the Body of a Church possessing the same kind of muscle and bone as the Savior; a Church firmly guided by the one, visible hand of the Roman Pontiff.

Unfortunately, the good story that Boniface told was flawed by the harm that he did through his own regrettable tunnel vision, revealed through his depressingly mundane

fixation on his family's personal power. This had the effect of weakening his otherwise magnificent statement on behalf of the legitimate corrective and transforming work of the Church, which could indeed only be made substantive and real through a proper appreciation of papal authority. Boniface, sadly, made it seem that the plenitude of papal power meant nothing more sublime than the universal jurisdiction and self-aggrandizement of the Caetani Family.

Caetani tunnel vision then benefitted the ambitions of the equally if not even more grasping Colonna Family. The pope's pretensions permitted the Colonna to masquerade their opposition to Boniface VIII as being representative of a religious and spiritually inspired high road leading ultimately to the kind of poor, humble, primitive Church that alone would be pleasing to Christ. Such word merchandising allowed the Colonna to shine with the aura of heroic sanctity cultivated by the Spiritual Franciscans. Meanwhile, the apocalyptic and political naiveté of the latter tempted them to give encouragement to all of the enemies of Boniface: including precisely those who hid their "business as usual" obsessions under the slogan of a noble crusade for a rebirth of apostolic purity.<sup>41</sup>

However, Boniface's reign is most remembered for another disaster for which he alone was not responsible. For it was during his pontificate that the Papacy really began to pay the price for devoting so much attention to the war of attrition with the Sacred Empire. Tragically, this obsession

---

<sup>41</sup> For Boniface and reactions to him, see Mayeur, VI, 43-53, 271-278, 329-337; Hughes, III, 56-86; Moorman, pp. 193-196; R. Brentano, *Rome Before Avignon* (University of California, 1990), pp. 93-169; Lagarde, I, 231-263.

## RESISTANCE

had caused it to ignore the way in which Roman Law, ethnic feeling, and outward expressions of religious piety could be manipulated to serve the interests of other political authorities, from municipal councils to nation-states, to the detriment of the cause of Christendom and Christ as whole. These authorities' more parochial-minded time had now arrived. And although the Italian city-states and England regularly demonstrated their ability to inflict serious wounds, the first real blood in the battle of Church and Sacred Parochialism was actually shed in conflict with a totally unexpected opponent: the Kingdom of France.

France, like Germany, boasted of its rule by an anointed monarch who could claim to be an heir of Charlemagne's Christian mission. Still, the Capetian Family, the French royal family since the tenth century, not being Carolingian, had to work, like the Ottonians, to overcome its rise through circumstance and election. It had to prove that it, too, possessed *Heil*. This it did by cementing an ever-closer relationship with medieval reform, peace, and crusading ventures. Abbot Suger of Saint Denis was particularly important in creating the religious and political symbolism accompanying this powerful and effective association of Dynasty and Faith. The work of sacralization of the French Monarchy was so fruitful, that by the time of Philip Augustus' (1180-1223) great victory at Bouvines in 1214, the king could present himself as a Moses dispersing the enemies of a people that had become a New Israel. King Louis IX then added immeasurably to the already impressive Capetian aura by himself being universally recognized by all of Christendom as a saint.

Holy France was simultaneously digesting developments in imperial use of ancient political and legal wisdom, applying them to the work of the Capetians, who, as indicated above, were designated “emperors in their own land”. Her digestion was so perfect that imperial spokesmen began to dream that emperors might someday become “kings of France in their own Empire”. By this point, all that was needed for a first class ecclesiastical nightmare to begin was for ministers of government with rhetorical talent to follow up on the above-mentioned complaints of the highest lords of the realm from 1245. They could then offer appropriate explanations of passionately desired despotic State actions on the basis of both “infallible” Roman Law principles and the “obvious” sanctity of the French Monarchy. Should such a crisis come to pass, opposition to the monarch’s wishes would be depicted not just as hostility to natural political wisdom but also to Catholicism and the well being of Christendom as a whole. Words on behalf of French monarchical “business as usual” would then be able to overturn the influence of the Word in history in the name of Christ and of the Faith themselves.<sup>42</sup>

Precisely this *did* take place at the hands of King Philip IV the Fair (1285-1314) and his anticlerical legal advisors: enemies of a corrective transformation in Christ *par excellence*. Desperately in need of money as a result of a lengthy war with England, and eager to make of the French State the overall arbiter of European destiny, Philip’s court hunted for funds from every conceivable corporate and individual

---

<sup>42</sup> Duby, *France*, pp. 182-229, 253-268; *The Three Orders*, 346-353; Mayeur, V, 420, 617-638; Riley-Smith, pp. 94-102, 157-161, 173-176.

## RESISTANCE

stronghold: Church, bourgeois, and international crusading order, with the Jewish community thrown in for good measure. Resistance emerged. And with that resistance came the decision on the part of Philip's legal advisors to pit the sacred Catholic King against the "heretical and immoral" forces wickedly opposing him, no matter how highly placed they might be.

Both the pope, who protested the despoiling of French dioceses, and the crusading Knights of the Temple, rich in properties and gold, and correspondingly accused of all manner of revolting crimes, figured prominently in the ensuing struggle. Philip's legalists summoned the aid of all "high minded men" to rid the Church and the world of two demonic forces: a papal villain who dared to stand in the way of a self-evidently pious king's mission, and a group of false crusaders who had penetrated the sacred precincts of the Mystical Body merely to mock its sanctity through their hypocritical militancy, their blasphemy, and their immorality.

The alliance these servants of the Crown created and the tools that they used to achieve their goals represented a conglomerate of the aforementioned "Seeds of the *words*". Philip's courtiers mobilized for their campaign not only Roman Law thinkers justifying an absolute State power but also the proponents of a primitive Apostolic Poverty outraged over the worldliness of an all too fleshly Church, ambitious Roman families and cardinals eager to overturn the plenitude of the power of the Caetani pope, and democratic "public opinion" to boot. This last force was put to use to guide the first painfully rigged meetings of the Estates General as well as to facilitate the macabre proceedings of history's original Purge Trials.

All such game playing was designed to create the appearance of an overwhelming swell of righteous indignation over the actions of unquestionably wicked criminals that no one other than the undeniably selfless sacred king could effectively enlist sufficient forces to punish. The physical attack on Boniface at Anagni in 1303, the demand for his condemnation for heresy during the succeeding pontificates, along with the demoralizing, Stalinist destruction of the Knights of the Temple (1307) under the bewildered and seemingly helpless eyes of Pope Clement V (1305-1314) were the chief practical fruits of this clever combination of sanctimonious propaganda and brute force. What is truly extraordinary is the way in which the specifics of that propaganda are still believed by considerable numbers of fervent Catholics, while the tyrannical violence of the monarchy, especially in the case of the actions taken against the Templars, is ignored, denied, or even passionately justified.<sup>43</sup>

Examples of the approach of the new storytellers are to be found in pamphlets such as the *Disputatio inter clericum et militem*, the *Rex Pacificus*, the *Antequam essent clerici*, and the official memoirs of royal officials such as Pierre Dubois (c. 1255-c. 1321) and Guillaume de Nogaret (1260-1313). One finds here the most arrogant and blatant claims to date regarding the State's religious responsibilities and the Church's need for obedience and humility in dealing with public affairs. Hidden threats lie everywhere in their pronouncements. These are often couched in a heavily

---

<sup>43</sup> Mayeur, VI, 591-600; Hughes, III, 51-101; Lagarde, I, 231-263; Duby, *France*, pp. 261-268; M. Barber, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge, 1993).

## RESISTANCE

prophetic biblical language, as in the second of de Nogaret's *apologiae* for his attack upon Boniface VIII in Anagni. Here, he laments the fate of the Church:<sup>44</sup>

...the mother of piety, under the chains of such a brigand, displaying in the temple of the Lord the abomination of our desolation, all that which the Book of Daniel can say of Nero, or rather of Simon, or of all other ignominy of crimes still unknown. Where can one look for a sure place; where can one look for a refuge, if the venerable temples of the Lord, if the Roman Church is besieged by such avidities? Where will the wall of integrity, the rampart of the faith be found if the execrable thirst of riches invades the most venerable...Cry and shout, you who approach your lips to the sacred chalice...gird yourselves and groan, priests and ministers of God, cry over the Roman Church, your mother...Rise up, all you who sleep, behold that laws rise up and arms are unsheathed for vengeance.

Consistent statist attacks on ecclesiastical rights during Philip's reign explain the Holy See's preoccupation with conditions in his troublesome kingdom at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Popes who were fully aware of the spiritual strength coming from reliance on the Word, a power just recently confirmed by the response to the Holy Year of 1300, might have taken advantage of the general European indignation over the manhandling of Boniface to humble the

---

<sup>44</sup> Lagarde. I, 261-262.

French Monarchy for decades to come. Instead, their by now ingrained tendency to focus on the political factors that men of “common sense”, wise in the ways of the world, considered to be central to truly pragmatic ecclesiastical decision-making, dictated both a policy of temporary papal presence in or near France, as well as the selection of a line of Gallic popes suitable for handling French affairs. Pontifical absence from Rome contributed mightily to the spread of the chaotic conditions disturbing much of Italy in the 1300’s, where the breakdown of imperial authority had also aided the solidification of the power of autonomous, quarreling city-states. Increasing Italian instability then, in turn, confirmed papal resolve to stay at its “temporary” residence in the city of Avignon, the entirety of which was finally purchased during the reign of Clement VI (1342-1352). Here, directly adjacent to the Kingdom of France but on the road that led to Rome, the popes could make the best of their ever-longer Gallic political vacation.

Ironically, however, the “good story” presented by the supporters of Philip the Fair did not, at least in the short run, succeed. France was troubled by succession problems leading to a change of dynasty within a few decades of Philip’s death. French pretensions crumbled also as a result of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) with England. Fallout from this conflict brought a myriad of festering and bitter social problems still further to the fore, not the least of which was an intensification of the desire for riches on the part of the warring nobility and their bloody-minded *malitia*. All these problems delayed consistent furtherance of the monarchy’s



## RESISTANCE

potential totalitarian ambitions until well into the fifteenth century.<sup>45</sup>

But the Avignon Papacy could not rest in consequence. Fresh problems, confounding the performance of the dance of life as presently understood, swiftly arose, all of them only properly confronted by a fully awakened Mystical Body possessed of a solid pilgrimage spirit. One such horror was the Black Death, which appeared for the first time in 1348, returning repeatedly for some hundreds of years to come. Another was the arrival on European soil of the Moslem threat in the form of the Ottoman Turks. The first killed off as much as half or more of the population of the lands affected, with the clergy figuring prominently among the chief victims, bringing a myriad of nasty religious developments and still further social divisions in its train. The second threatened to sever the land connection with Constantinople, to conquer New Rome herself, to menace the European West, and, worst of all, actually to convert whole Christian communities to Islam. And the Hundred Years' War, with all its attendant horrors, continually brought new destructive surprises that made it little in the way of compensation for its weakening of French governmental pressure on the Roman Pontiffs.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Duby, *France*, pp. 269-287; Mayeur, VI, 591-608.

<sup>46</sup> R. Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester U., 1994), pp. 227-351; apocalyptic conclusions in Cohn, pp. 87, 131-132, 136, 140, 144; Emerson and McGinn; Swanson, pp. 53, 128, 199-206, 220, 280 Oakley, pp. 115, 117, 120, 217, 233, 244, 270-276; Hughes, III, 183-186, 342-361; Riley-Smith, pp. 224-230, 232-233.

Finally, the advancing fourteenth century brought with it another battle of the Holy See with the Holy Roman Empire that the Papacy vacationing in Avignon had to confront. Although this was actually one of its *first* serious problems in its new Gallic home, I have left its discussion till last because of its long-term spiritual, intellectual, and political importance. For even though the reality of the rise of the national monarchies, as well as the increasingly anarchic character of the three kingdoms of Germany, Burgundy, and Italy nominally ruled over by the man called the emperor, made this conflict in and of itself something of an anachronism, it nevertheless gave rise to a ferment providing more solid spiritual and intellectual meat for the proponents of the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is” than ever before. This meat was to prove to be of immense value for the growth of what we justly call “modernity” as such. But before it can profitably be introduced, we must, as so often in history, first return to a discussion of the failure of Christians to put their primary faith in the Word and their tendency to rely, instead, upon secondary words of their own making in dealing with the challenges of temporal existence.

*F. Resistance on the Cheap,  
Fundamental Truths, & Foundation Myths*

Most Catholics somewhat familiar with the problems outlined above think of the post-Boniface VIII era as one of papal captivity and weakness. In almost every respect, this was not the case. French kings, as we have seen, had too many life-and-death quandaries over the course of the next century to pursue a consistent policy of papal humiliation. The popes ultimately came to and left France and Avignon at

## RESISTANCE

will. Moreover, the Church, as the Bride of Christ, was always in a position to strike back at the Seeds of the words and the new problems she was facing with the power of the full, substantive Christian vision.

Unfortunately, she did not do so, and, instead, tried to resolve her troubles “on the cheap”. She was content to use an arsenal stuffed with mere words rather than one filled with weapons provided by the Word made flesh. The Bride of Christ continued to try to make her case with overwhelming reference to the demands of an administrative power machine guided by canonists whose legal theories were in many respects not that much different from those of their secular counterparts. All this indicated a diversion from the Church’s understanding of her main mission and what was best suited to fulfilling it. It revealed a “preferential option for the low road”, a massive placing of her faith in purely earthly tools and gimmicks, a bow to the cynical preoccupations of those who did not really, in practice, believe in the strength coming from spiritual transformation in Christ but, instead, in whatever it was that “worked” in the eyes of men obsessed with “nature as is”—men who did not really have the Church’s best interests at heart.

For the men of Avignon refined therein the most centralized bureaucratic apparatus that the Church had yet possessed; one that both imitated and often surpassed in efficiency those of any of the more troubled secular governments of the day. Popes, cardinals, and officials of the Chancery and Apostolic Camera appointed bishops, collected taxes, and imposed disreputable political interdicts and excommunications throughout much of Christendom with greater abandon and less concern for the spiritual well being

of the faithful than ever before. They did so in tight association with countless princes and other representatives of the late medieval Establishment. Bankers were particularly welcome in their entourage. As Alvaro Pelayo (c. 1280-1352), a Spanish canonist and himself a fervent supporter of the plenitude of power of the Holy See, noted in *De planctu ecclesiae*: "Whenever I entered the chambers of the ecclesiastics of the Papal Court, I found brokers and clergy engaged in weighing and reckoning the money which lay in heaps before them."<sup>47</sup>

A myriad of astonishing abuses, many of them justified and even encouraged by pro-papal canonists influenced heavily by Roman Law and purely utilitarian power considerations, became associated with the Avignon administration. Charitable covers for raking in illicit funds were multiplied. Sees were left vacant or filled in ways that furthered the increase of gross curial muscle and wealth. Legal cases were painfully delayed so as to milk more loot from long-suffering plaintiffs and defendants. And, once again, all this was frequently done in dangerous cahoots with locally important political and banker hacks.

Even more destructive was the persistent treatment of diocesan matters as property rather than pastoral questions. Bishoprics continued to be assigned either to curial officials--to provide, from their endowments, salaries the Papacy could not otherwise pay--or to friends of political allies whose cooperative behavior needed to be rewarded. Since it was

---

<sup>47</sup> L. von Pastor, *History of the Popes* (Herder, Forty Volumes, 1906) I, 72; For the Avignon Papacy, see *Ibid*, I, 57-116; Mayeur, VI, 27-87, Hughes, III, 155-228; G. Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon* (Harper, 1963); Oakley, pp. 38-55.

## RESISTANCE

impossible for papal employees to leave their governmental positions in Avignon to tend to even one diocese – much less the two or more often entrusted to their misuse – episcopal charges inevitably entailed the same absenteeism now consistently practiced by the Roman Pontiff himself. Perhaps the most bizarre development from such unfortunate policies was to be the creation of nominal bishops who were occasionally not even priests. Such “bishops” got the revenues from their “property”, and then employed some consecrated hireling to do the episcopal tasks they themselves could not or would not perform. Meanwhile, once again, all of these abuses were justified with reference to a plenitude of Petrine power backed by a papal “will” that tragically resembled an application of Nominalist theological principles to the daily practical life of the Body of Christ. Hence, the words of the author of the anonymous *Determinatio compendiosa* of 1342:<sup>48</sup>

Especially is he, the pope, above every council and statute...; he it is, too, who has no superior on earth; he, the pope, gives dispensations from every law....Again, it is he who possesses the plenitude of power on earth and holds the place and office of the Most High....He it is who alters the substance of a thing, making legitimate what is illegitimate...and of a monk making a canon regular,...he it is who by absolving on earth absolves {also} in heaven, and by binding on earth binds {also} in heaven....Again, it is to him that nobody may say: ‘Why do you do

---

<sup>48</sup> Oakley, p. 165.

that?'...He it is for whom the will is reason enough, since that which pleases him has the force of law (*ei quod placet, legis vigorem habet*);...he is not bound by the laws...etc (*solutus est legibus*). Indeed, the pope is the law itself and a living law (*lex viva*), to resist which is impermissible. This then is the Catholic and orthodox faith, approved and canonized by the holy fathers of old, from which all justice, religion, sanctity and discipline have emanated. If anyone does not believe it faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved, and without doubt will perish eternally.

Given such sentiments and actions, it is no wonder that political authorities, from national governments to municipal councils, eventually resorted to serious measures limiting or even prohibiting such papal misrule entirely. England provides major examples of successful actions of this sort, with its acts on Provisors that brought appointment to office under national control. The following instance comes from the generally still more troubled German world:<sup>49</sup>

In October, 1372, the monasteries and abbeys in Cologne entered into a compact to resist Pope Gregory XI in his proposed levy of a tithe on their revenues. The wording of their document manifests the depth of the feeling which prevailed in Germany against the Court of Avignon. 'In consequence', it says, 'of the exactions with which the Papal Court burdens the clergy, the Apostolic See has fallen into such contempt that the Catholic Faith in these parts

---

<sup>49</sup> von Pastor, I, 91-92.

## RESISTANCE

seems to be seriously imperiled. The laity speak slightly of the Church because, departing from the custom of former days, she hardly ever sends forth preachers or reformers, but, rather, ostentatious men, cunning, selfish and greedy. Things have come to such a pass that few are Christians more than in name.' The example of Cologne was soon followed.

It is obvious that contemporary events seemed, in the long run, to favor the most extreme opponents of the Catholic vision. The true story of the Incarnation of the Word and the impact that this was meant to have on all of nature could easily now be made to look overblown or even completely wrongheaded. Gnostic and apocalyptic thinkers had merely to point to the wickedness of Catholic leaders and crusading institutions, the divisions in the Catholic ranks, and a world filled with the horrors of the Plague to gain effective support for their false but tempting story. Materialist cynics needed no intellectual argument to do the same. Surely now, critics of "giving flesh" to the consequences of the Incarnation might argue, anyone who thought that nature was meant to serve the greater glory of God had to see that he was battering his head against a brick wall. Surely now he had to realize that actively working to achieve such a goal made him either a fool or a conscious cooperator with malevolent forces far beyond his ability to control and master. This encouragement of cynicism was *the* major reason the Church's scandals were so detested by orthodox believers, bringing forth the harsh, prophetic, and well-known attacks of St. Bridget of Sweden (c. 1303-1373) and St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), along

with their saintly warning that worse was yet to come if evils were not put right.

It was just as the “low road” character of the Avignon period was first taking shape that the ecclesiastical-political peace was once again broken along the imperial front. The roots of this new hostility lay in the valiant though abortive efforts of Henry VII (1308-1313) to re-establish the imperial position in Italy. His labors, which stirred the Guelph and Ghibelline quarrel in the peninsula to a fever pitch once again, demonstrated that the ideal of the Empire, despite all of the blows that it had received, still was attractive on many levels. The vision of the universal peace and rational rule of law that it once provided in ancient times---and could conceivably provide again—a peace and order that might be pleasing to both God and man, permitting Church and State to operate justly, each in its proper sphere, was shared by intellectuals as well as ordinary men and women. That this was true can be seen, on the one hand, in the *De Monarchia* of Dante Alighieri, favorable as it was to Henry’s efforts, and, on the other, in the recurring popular legends regarding the arrival of an Angelic Emperor. Such prophetic myths generally focused on Frederick II, who was said now to lie concealed, like the Hidden Imam of the Twelver Shi’ites, but ready to rise again as Mahdi to lead the People of God to the establishment of a Christendom more holy and more just than that guided by the Avignon Papacy.

Henry’s early death led to an intensification of the budding clash. This took its definitive shape through the struggle of the Papacy against Louis IV (1314-1347) of Bavaria in his attempt to gain recognition as King of Germany and Roman Emperor. Although this conflict, like that involving Henry, did, indeed, cause bloodshed, its greatest significance



## RESISTANCE

lay on the intellectual plane, with respect not only to its indication of the future contours of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo but also to that alliance's inner contradictions and weaknesses. For an odd, but by now somehow strangely familiar combination of distinct forces came together from 1324 onwards to provide Louis with powerful support in the midst of what might otherwise have been a much more traditional imperial political skirmish with the popes. The struggle that these forces waged on his behalf became one over the fundamental structure of Church, State, corporate society, and even all of nature as such.<sup>50</sup>

It is important, at this juncture, to note what has been alluded to repeatedly in the pages above: namely, the passion of a number of those groups afflicted by the tunnel vision syndrome to see correction of the evils of contemporary life in a return to the wisdom of the foundation elements of Christendom, both sacred and secular. These all came together in the battle now under consideration, and on behalf of a heroic, imperially guided return to the original intent of the founders of the Christian order. Battle was joined in opposition to a Papacy that was condemned for having gone far astray from the traditional principles of the constitution of the Church and for having recently rid itself of the one Angelic Pontiff ready to right its wrongs. What this conflict would show is just how powerful on the one hand, as well as

---

<sup>50</sup> For Church-Empire quarrels of the fourteenth century, see Mayeur, VI, 585-591; Hughes, III, 134-155; Rapp, pp. 240-251, Lagarde, III, IV, *passim*; Ullmann, pp. 285-290; Partner, pp. 299-321; Mollat, pp. 190-228.

sophistic and dangerously anachronistic on the other, such arguments could simultaneously be.

Apostolic Poverty did the work of the angels in the imperial “original intent” camp. This theme, readers will remember, lay at the heart of Spiritual Franciscan concerns. Spirituals claimed not only that such poverty was good, but also seemingly suggested that it was an essential mandate for the whole of the clergy, handed down by Christ, the apostles, and primitive Christianity in general. Spiritual Franciscans’ association of Apostolic Poverty with the Christian message as such was so strong that they even somehow equated the term “primacy”—an authoritative and administrative principle—with the abandonment of physical possessions. In any case, Louis IV’s Appeal of Sachsenhausen of 1324 transformed a familiar political quarrel with the Papacy into an overwhelmingly ideological battle; one that tied the mission of the emperor with the attempt of the Spirituals to bring the Universal Church back to the purity of the founders’ vision.

Michael of Cesena (c. 1270-1342), the Minister General of the Franciscans, who fled from Avignon to the emperor’s headquarters in Munich in 1327, brought to this aspect of the imperial project an even greater credibility. For Michael was no extremist, nor did he even have any particular political axe to grind in allying himself with the emperor against Pope John XXII. He was shocked into action due to spiritual decisions taken by that pontiff that he believed entailed a heretical attempt to tamper with an “infallible” proclamation of Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292) of crucial importance to all Franciscans. Michael had agreed with John in his attack on the Spirituals for their seeming elevation of the practice of a life of poverty above the virtue of charity. The problem now

## RESISTANCE

was that the pope, who entirely rejected the myth of the Founding Vision of the Primitive Church, had, by 1327, destroyed *all* Franciscan claims to living *any* kind of life of poverty whatsoever. He did this by abandoning Pope Nicholas' assertion of the Holy See's ownership of the goods that the members of the Order merely "used". John thus publicly thrust legal title to property directly into the hands of the Franciscans as a whole, devastating the argument for a life of poverty of moderate friars as well as that of the more intransigent Spirituals. Surely, Michael of Cesena thought, the errors of the pope had to be corrected. And who else could correct them but the man whom "Apostolic Christianity" identified as the traditional defender of the Church—the Roman Emperor?<sup>51</sup>

Insistence upon imperial responsibility for Church affairs brings us to a discussion of an extraordinary figure with great influence in the imperial camp in the late 1320's---Marsilius of Padua (c. 1270-1342).<sup>52</sup> Little is known about his background, except his birthplace in one of the most troubled centers of Italian political life and his activity at the University of Paris during that period of terrible Church-State turmoil under the reign of Philip the Fair. There has long been intense debate over the precise nature of the Aristotelian, Averroist, legalist, and outright heretical influences on Marsilius' thought and career. Georges de Lagarde insists that all of them together played some role in shaping the man's vision, with the

---

<sup>51</sup> Moorman, pp. 307-338; Hughes, III, pp. 125-155; Mayeur, VI, 271-285, 569-591, 685-694; Lagarde, IV, 3-14.

<sup>52</sup> Lagarde, III (*Defensor Pacis*), pp. 61-357; Mayeur, VI, 271-319; Hughes, III, 145-153; Oakley, pp. 169-170.

heretical element perhaps the strongest of the factors at work upon him, and the Aristotelian the least consistent in its impact. If this be true, it would mean that Marsilius emerged from the extreme Waldensian wing of the “original intent” camp, with its Scripture-based attack upon a fleshly, papal-guided Church and all the activities associated with her. In other words, he would have arisen from an environment that disdained the entire undertaking of a new ascent of Mount Tabor, all of it anathematized as a deviation from the primitive will of the holy founders, including, most importantly, Christ Himself.

Marsilius’ heretical background gives us the primary explanation as to why he might take for granted the continued “Christian” character of the new order he delineates, despite the fact that his vision, viewed as a whole, annihilates any distinctly supernatural spiritual influence over life and rejects all deeper philosophical investigation of existence along with it. The shocking nature of what he was saying may also literally have blinded even a man with Marsilius’ sense of unique personal mission to the logical consequences of his own radical arguments. Whether he was aware of these or not, the impact of all the above-mentioned factors, religious and non-religious together, led him to a political and social theory that replaced a spiritual correction and transformation of nature in Christ with the opposite endeavor: one that openly sought to correct and transform all things spiritual through the teachings of an unexamined natural order. Marsilius makes this absolutely clear in the tome that led to his condemnation by John XXII and his flight to the court of Louis IV, the *Defensor Pacis* (1324)—*The Defender of the Peace*—as well as in a follow-up piece entitled the *Defensor Minor* (c.1342).

## RESISTANCE

As the title of his principal work indicates, “peace” and the kind of order needed to achieve it lay at the heart of Marsilius’ concern. However, “peace” is defined by him in such a way as to make the world safe for the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is” alone. No internal struggle for peace against any evil inside a man’s soul or in the environment he inhabits figures into Marsilius’ study. Peace, for him, is the normal condition of any society so long as there is no outside disturbance violating man’s hunt to satisfy his obvious needs. The “outside disturbance” overturning a society’s regular state of tranquility comes from any attempt to compete with the civil authority—nature’s self-evident “defender of the peace”.

Although many such troublesome forces flourished in Marsilius’ day, due to the tremendous diversity of the medieval corporate order, the greatest threat came from the highly organized, Faith and Reason loving Church of Rome, ruled by pontiffs armed with the doctrine of the plenitude of papal power. In order to intensify recognition of the extent of the danger coming from this monster, Marsilius exaggerated the Church’s claims upon the aid of coercive authority far beyond the wildest fantasies of the most extreme of her defenders. But exaggerated or not, the Roman Church’s sin was crystal clear. Her evil lay in the fact that she had placed all manner of impediments in the path of the “defender of the peace” by daring to suggest that the civil authority’s actions might be in need of correction and transformation according to the demands of both supernatural and natural law.

A civil authority provides “peace” on the basis of the “majesty of the law”. But what enters into the ruler’s calculations in making majestic laws? Marsilius would call it

Reason, but what that Reason amounts to is simply the ability of the defender to impose his will. For law, in Marsilius' universe, is simply that which coercive force is used to impose. Ultimately, as Georges de Lagarde notes, the law, for Marsilius, is what a man must obey in order not to be hung. Any attempt to define it further would open up questions regarding justice that would bring competitive "outside" authorities and concerns into this peaceable Kingdom of the Will – with the pope in the front lines of the troublemakers.

Although the precepts of the *Defender of the Peace* are valid for any civil authority in any given land, they were designed to aid the cause of the fundamental Christian State *par excellence*, the universal Roman Empire. Marsilius promoted the vision of this State's mission in his role as consultant to Louis IV, whom he urged on expedition to the Eternal City in 1328 for a dramatic coronation in defiance of the opposition of Pope John XXII. This coronation called attention to one of the inescapable aspects of the Roman Foundation, namely the need to show that the emperor's ultimate legitimacy, along with that of the majesty of his laws, lay in the "will" of that by now mythically understood force identified as "the Roman People".

Now the real Roman People in the fourteenth century were a particularly wild, unreliable, flighty, and downright treacherous bunch, but that was no particular problem for Marsilius' theory. According to its precepts, "the prince", aided by his intellectual advisors, was actually understood to be the only force that could effectively "create" the People in the first place and then awaken them to that popular will whose authoritative spokesman the ruler must always be. Besides, so long as he could hang the population, his coercive

## RESISTANCE

force would demonstrate that the People had already invested him with legitimate authority anyway.

Unfortunately for Marsilius, the Roman Church, with her mischief making Papacy insistent upon its plenitude of power, was actually alive and vigorous and had to be confronted. To this heretic taking for granted the truth of the call for a primitive, spiritual, Scripture based Church truly loyal to the Founder of Christianity, all that Rome claimed, from the reality of Peter's presence in the Eternal City to the need for a hierarchical priestly order, was nothing other than papal mythmaking. A Church obedient to "original intent" simply had no right to exist as an organized, peace-disturbing body with an effective visible head. Nor could she legitimately call upon the use of any coercive force on her behalf. The fact that she *did* so exist in fleshly form, and openly *did* demand such physical assistance, identified her as an enemy of Christ as well as guilty of subversion of that civil order that alone was intended to defend concerns both sacred and secular.

Papal obstinacy meant that in the name of Christ and nature the defender of the peace—the Roman Emperor—was duty bound to summon a General Council representing the entire Christian population. Original intent, as Marsilius understood it, identified the Christian People as the source of all ecclesiastical legitimacy, in the same way that the Roman People were the fount of imperial authority. Of course they, like their secular counterpart, also had to be "created", and their will awakened and shaped, through the presidency of the emperor and his advisors. This imperial-guided General Council reflecting the awakened popular Christian will was then empowered to punish the contemporary Roman

Church's blasphemy. Such an assembly, "prepared" by intellectual experts to give the answers expected of it, and backed by the coercive authority of the State, possessed the infallible majesty of the law and was therefore eminently suitable to the task of bring the fantasies of the papal beast to heel. First and foremost, this meant driving Jacques Cahors — a man who dared to call himself "Pope John XXII" and had proven himself to be a contumacious heretic by rebelling against the imperial authority and the bible—from his illegitimate and wicked bully pulpit.

Once we have reached this point, we can grasp the real meaning of the peaceful purified order of "original intent" for the future of the Church and Christendom as a whole. In this tranquil paradise, there would be no more Church-State problem for the simple reason that there would no longer be any distinct Church to cause any difficulties for the State. The "Church", Marsilius claims, only existed as an institution due to the unfortunate work of Constantine permitting her a structural life, and then endowing her with property, in the first place. Everything that this unfortunate ecclesiastical disturber of the peace sought to do could and should, by rights, lie in the hands of the prince, who spoke for the Christian People. The defender of the peace must thus concern himself with man's obvious spiritual needs, along with everything else affecting his wellbeing. The emperor must define doctrine, canonize saints, and punish heresy — most important of all, that form of heresy that consisted in even daring to contemplate a *theoretical* questioning of the rights of the civil authority to deal with sacred matters. Indeed, the *thinking* Christian gadfly had to be treated even more severely than his politically active counterpart. The defender of the peace already knew what was best for man —



## RESISTANCE

mind, body, and soul, in temporal and in supernatural life. In fact, eternal life, in Marsilius' corrected and transformed version of it, was depicted merely as an unending extension of earthly existence and man's temporal needs and responsibilities. In this realm, God would use His law—His coercive authority—to punish unceasingly the secular crimes that the emperor chastised during life as though they were sins against the Trinity.

Marsilius gives his ideal prince, the Roman Emperor, the self-evident right to conquer the entire world, so as to provide the blessings of peace to those who might otherwise disturb it from outside its existing borders. Nevertheless, any prince in any land could easily tailor his arguments to fit his specific situation. Therefore it should come as no surprise to the reader that Thomas Cromwell (c. 1485-1540), the intellectual advisor of Henry VIII, immediately commissioned a translation of the *Defensor Pacis* as a powerful tool for crushing Roman troublemakers preventing the king's construction of his own independent Anglican Church in the early 1530's. Neither will it be shocking to learn that Marsilius' recipe for fusing sacred and profane into one, absolutist, "peaceful" society—which he stated in his own twisted parody of *Unam sanctam*—was perfectly designed to whitewash all future political violations of religious and personal freedom. Let us hear Georges de Lagarde on these matters:<sup>53</sup>

The definition of Marsilius is particularly aggressive since he takes over, turning them to his own purpose,

---

<sup>53</sup> Lagarde, III, 235, 224; also, 374.

the very terms of the bull, *Unam sanctam*: 'We declare all human creatures to be subject to the Roman Pontiff', which become, through his pen: 'All the Christian faithful, that is to say, the Church, must be subject to the princes of the world', or 'all men, of whatever state or condition they may be, in reality and personally must be subject to the jurisdiction of the princes of the world...'

The modern State can successively make use directly of the social support of the Christian life, tolerate it while ignoring its social aspect, or condemn it as contrary to the life of the State through its social pretensions. These are all fashions of applying the fundamental principle of Marsilius refusing to the Church the right to live as a social reality distinct from the State and recognized as such.

No one reads Marsilius of Padua any more, but if his thought is still alive, that is above all due to the jealous zeal of political societies that consider themselves to be the most advanced to take away from Christian religious life all that could give it its own social support. Since the appearance of the first edition of our work, thirty years ago, the city of Marsilius has found new and intolerant sectarian disciples. The monism that he extols has a long life. A long future is still reserved for it.

Marsilius' liberation of the otherwise innately peaceful social order from the divisive, corrective and transforming action of the Word in history, given practical clout through

## RESISTANCE

the power of the Roman Church, not only consigned the direction of everything, temporal and spiritual, to the “will of the political community”. It also delivered it over to the deadening *materialist* demands of the *strongest and most willful* interpreter of “nature as is” with a proven ability to hang those who defied the majesty of his particular version of sacred and temporal “law”. An open invitation to construct a world in which the most powerful defender of the peace ready to create the kind of People that would demand the imposition of his willful coercive authority was aided by the third of Louis’ intellectual supports: William of Ockham (c. 1288-1348).

This brilliant English Franciscan fled to the emperor’s camp along with Michael of Cesena in 1327. He did so after attempting to defend himself at the papal court in Avignon from the accusations of heresy filed against him by his Chancellor at the University of Oxford. Those charges concerned both his philosophy as well as the particular arrogance with which he promoted it. But Ockham’s potential problems with John XXII increased due to the outrage that he shared with his fellow Franciscans over the pontiff’s opposition to seemingly any opening whatsoever to the life of Apostolic Poverty. His indignation was intensified still further by that pope’s other, admittedly often quite dreadful sallies into theological disputes, especially his denial of the particular judgment experienced by the individual soul after death before the universal Final Judgment taking place at the end of time. These unfortunate pronouncements were as offensive to John’s most loyal supporters as to as his most violent critics.

In any case, once in open opposition, Ockham's extreme Nominalism offered him yet another weapon useful to bringing low his loathed papal enemy. He regularly employed the logical tools provided by the *via moderna* to reveal what he considered to be the insubstantial humbug lying behind the speculative concepts justifying John's demands for obedience. Given that this "humbug" included the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and the plentitude of papal power through which she was governed, and that such teachings were simultaneously mobilized to undermine the cause of Louis IV within the Empire, Ockham quite naturally turned his anti-papal rhetoric towards ecclesiology and promotion of the contested imperial vision. And he did this alongside Spiritual Franciscans and a Marsilius of Padua whose other principles he did not necessarily share and often even fully rejected.<sup>54</sup>

We can best grasp the dangers emerging from Ockham's crusade by first beginning with his discussion of the nature of the Church, her Magisterium, and the legitimacy of authoritative attempts to promote and defend them. In doing so, we must remember that Ockham took up these subjects in an age when ecclesiology was in many respects still in its perilous infancy. Yes, the Church was regularly called the "Mystical Body of Christ", and was seen to continue the work of the Savior in time. Nevertheless, thinkers also simultaneously referred to her as the "union of all the faithful" and even equated her with "Christendom"—the joint religious, political, and social entity that Marsilius had exploited for his own secularizing purposes.

---

<sup>54</sup> Lagarde, IV and V, *passim*; Mayeur, VI, 281-285; Hughes, III, 119-155; Oakley, pp. 131-174.

## RESISTANCE

It was the confusion to which such lack of clarity could give birth that St. Thomas Aquinas and James of Viterbo had sought to end. They tackled issues like the role of Tradition, Scripture, and doctrinal development in the life of the Magisterium; the exact nature, rights, and limits of the Petrine primacy and the plenitude of papal power; the distinctions between men as individuals and as authorities entrusted with an ecclesiastical office to perform; and, very importantly for the current battle, the reconciliation of the possible errors of a pope as a private theologian with the infallibility of his guidance of Christendom when speaking on matters of faith and morals in the name of the Roman Church as such. Their labors provided answers that would really only be fully appreciated by latter generations.<sup>55</sup>

This was due to the fact that the digestion of their arguments, as well as the further studies that were required to complete them, were for all intents and purposes abandoned in the century following their deaths. Such abandonment was the direct result of the internecine philosophical warfare of the late Middle Ages and the corruption of the intellectual endeavor in the midst of the practical political conflagrations pitting Philip the Faith's scholars against those backing Boniface VIII. Hence, real ecclesiological truths were improperly defended, ensuring that ill-prepared defenders of the papal cause would regularly make embarrassing arguments that logicians like Ockham, who specialized in revelation of the misuse of overblown theological terminology, could easily expose to ridicule and distortion.

---

<sup>55</sup> Lagarde, II, *passim*; Mayeur, VI, 271-298.

In any case, spurred by his concern to attack the pretensions not just of John XXII but of his successor, Benedict XII, as well, Ockham, from 1327 onwards, put together another revolutionary criticism of the nature of the Church and her mission in history. The Church, for him, really was Christendom as a whole. But it was a Christendom conceived of as a mere collection of individuals living by the same faith, seeking salvation for the individual persons composing it, and providing itself the religious and political institutions that it required in order to achieve this ultimately atomistic goal. It was not Christendom as a holistic entity, different from the sum of its members. Such a vision of Christendom would, after all, in his mind, be nothing other than the equivalent of yet another “empty” universal philosophical concept.

Ockham did not deny that the historical “data” vouchsafed a major role for the Roman Pontiffs in the ordinary life of the Church and Christendom to date. Nevertheless, he insisted that the collectivity of the faithful, in seeking to respond to its changing, contemporary needs, could give itself a different kind of governance in the future. Just as it sometimes did without a pope for several years, as was the case with an interregnum, it might envisage a much more extended period of time when no papal leadership was required. In fact, it might face a time when two popes would serve it, or perhaps even one pontiff for each nation, diocese, or city.

Would this not wreak havoc with the Church’s practical teaching authority, as well as Christ’s promise to be with her until the end of time? Not at all, Ockham argued. Christian Faith was known with infallible certainty through a recognition of its foundation documents—the Holy

## RESISTANCE

Scriptures—assisted by that intuitive Reason appreciated by the *via moderna* and confirmed through its universal acceptance by the whole body of the faithful. What was at question in his own time, he claimed, was the addition to the Foundation Message of a novel doctrine concerning the plenitude of papal power that allowed for the so-called John XXII to treat his attack on Apostolic Poverty, as well as his other erroneous teachings, as though they were part of the Deposit of Faith. The only way such a dubious addition could be admitted would be by proving its absolute accord with Scripture, intuitive Reason, and by demonstrating its acceptance by literally each and every one of the Christian faithful without exception. And the only way all this could be ascertained was by openly critiquing papal actions and then publicizing such criticism rather than trying to deny and silence its existence.

In other words, Christ's promise to prevent the Church from falling into error was in no way disturbed by a cacophony of voices contradicting papal teaching, because that teaching was automatically presumed to be a novel distortion of fundamental doctrine requiring criticism. Furthermore, Ockham argued, the promise of Church indefectibility would be maintained so long as just one person—perhaps unknown to all others, perhaps just a recently baptized child—refused to submit to papal change and distortion of the Faith. Thus, on the one hand, Ockham froze Catholic doctrine, denying any possibility of its development in time. Then, on the other, and in total contrast to a Catholic Truth that everyone to date seemingly *had* accepted, he rooted indefectibility not in the shared public teaching of the Body of Christ but in a personal maintenance

of a pure faith that might actually remain forever hidden to the community at large. As de Lagarde complains: <sup>56</sup>

Under these conditions, it would be more frank to say, as Luther would say later, that there is not and there cannot be any doctrinal authority in the Church other than the letter of the Bible as clarified by the Holy Spirit. Ockham only goes part of the way. He maintains the principle of authority, but so well ruins the substance of it that its recognition is nothing other than an occasion to organize a distrust, suspicion, and, if need be, the revolt of the Christian in the face of it. The doctor teaches, controls, and condemns the pontiff. The layman keeps things under surveillance and, if necessary, punishes the doctor, the cleric, the bishop, or the pope. In the name of the faith, one justifies an anarchic and disordered activism of the entire ecclesiastical body, and the logic of the system forbids any institution within it whatsoever from controlling it efficaciously. If there were any reforming ferment that Ockham set into motion in the Church, it was indeed through his theory of the doctrinal magisterium that, while claiming to safeguard the principle of all traditional institutions, irremediably undermines the base of them.

What would happen to the corrective and transforming mission of the Word in history under circumstances where there might be one pope, many, or none at all, and an eternally contested teaching authority? Ockham might well

---

<sup>56</sup> Lagarde, V, 164.



## RESISTANCE

wonder what corrective and transforming mission one was suggesting in the first place. For to say that “the Church” had such a mission was precisely to make her into something “other”, as a whole, aside from her existence as a collection of individuals seeking personal salvation. Yes, Christ was indeed King of the Universe as its Divine Master. But in His simultaneous role as a man in history, attested to by Scriptures and illuminated by intuitive Reason, the Founder showed His intent to be one not of command over the world but of humble obedience to its existing authorities. In other words, the Church *qua* Church had no specific worldly mission other than one that her historically highly flexible government might fulfill by accident—as, for example, in the midst of the chaos of an invasion or the neglect of the maintenance of order on the part of the proper secular authorities. Aside from this, confusion had arisen over “the Church’s” supposed worldly mission precisely because the Roman Pontiffs, through their illicit ambitions, had falsely defined many activities that were purely temporal concerns as spiritual responsibilities, thereby usurping control of them from their natural overlords.

Nevertheless, Ockham, like Marsilius, had to contend with the fact that there actually was a powerful pope, speaking in the name of the Roman Church, with real hopes of calling upon the aid of loyal authorities to coerce men into acceptance of his manifest heresies. Under these circumstances, the whole Church, the community of the faithful, had to destroy him and take over the work of guiding Christendom. Would it be just for it to do so? Yes, because it needed to go down such a pathway in order to survive. Would its actions be infallible? Not unless all that it

might teach in the course of its endeavors demonstrated an accord with Scripture and intuitive Reason, and received the consent of every single believer, the hidden ones included—something that, in practice, simply could never be ascertained.

Be that as it may, a General Council, representing all of Christendom, would be the most effective tool for achieving the immediately essential task of reining in a Papacy violating the original intent of the Founder of the Catholic Faith. But how would such a Council be called? The answer was patent. It had to be summoned and presided over by the emperor. Why? Because Scripture informed Christians that Christ was born under the Roman Empire and obeyed its laws, thereby identifying the imperial State as the sole political institution suitable for guiding Christendom until the end of time.

Interestingly enough, the same Ockham who began by treating the historical role of the Papacy as a valid but contingent one, and who gave the Church no special mission for correcting and transforming the world, then changes his tune once a Roman Emperor, presiding over a General Council, enters into the picture. Through such a Council, Ockham grants to Caesar an almost limitless physical coercive power to legislate in the name of God. In fact, he now says that Christ's promise to be with his Church through all time would miserably fail if the Emperor and his assistants did not use such coercive authority and demand obedience to it, even from those still questioning the orthodoxy of a particular action; even without the approval of all believers without exception. "There will be no Church and State", Lagarde explains, in describing Ockham's ideal Christendom. "The two words are only two sides of the same reality: the community of the faithful, spiritually and civilly organized,

## RESISTANCE

for the temporal wellbeing and the defense of the Christian Faith".<sup>57</sup>

Ockham himself seemed conflicted regarding exactly how to identify the ultimate ground and authority for the extensive decisions that this Imperial State-Church would make. After urging the secular authorities to listen to the spiritual "advice" of the learned clergy in shaping their actions, he admitted that they could actually base their commands on the purely earthbound needs of the individual members of the Christian community alone—an understanding of which the data of life once again imposed infallibly upon their own personal, rational minds. "One comes to wonder", as Lagarde notes, "if the justification at all costs of the established order is not the first and last word of this rather poor philosophy of society and history".<sup>58</sup>

But then, having reduced the foundation for judgments concerning human behavior to the innate, intuitive, "rational" feeling and desire of the existing rulers of society, Ockham immediately leapt back into an eternal world guided by the wishes of the Trinity. This allowed him to identify the personal, utilitarian judgments of the existing authorities with the will of God. Perhaps more astonishingly still, he then associated that will of God with the decisions of a permanently valid imperial Roman State; a "Roman State" whose pretensions were being rendered daily more laughable by the many contemporaries who completely ignored them, even in their German base of operation. "This apologist of empirical knowledge", Lagarde marvels, "testifies to a total

---

<sup>57</sup> Lagarde, V, 264; Mayeur, VI, 281-285, 290-293.

<sup>58</sup> Lagarde, IV, 253.

lack of knowledge of the reality of a social life in evolution. It did not seem unreasonable for him to explain the power of Louis of Bavaria by means of a reality that had disappeared at least ten centuries previously.”<sup>59</sup>

In short, Ockham constructed a Christendom founded simultaneously upon two pillars: 1) the earthbound data of a contemporary natural order, whose unchanging historical character he took for granted as a given, and whose decisions were transmitted through individual men; and, 2) a blind faith that this eternally valid and willful State, guided by willful individuals, reflected the Divine Will of God. He thus preached a political philosophy simultaneously pragmatic (though really quite anachronistic) and doctrinal in character; one that we shall see in many respects foreshadows that of the American pluralist system of the twentieth century:<sup>60</sup>

Since the civil authority is of human origin, since it flows from the exercise of rights conceded by God and by nature, it seems that one could found the legitimacy of established powers on arguments accessible to reason and the simple common sense. But when one does it, one perceives that nothing is decisive for removing all doubt. Only an undeniable fact can get us out of this tight spot (a charter, a privilege, a contract, a constitution, etc.)...And what a windfall to know that there is nothing to look for, since revelation has freed us from all care in testifying that the Empire is legitimate for at least fourteen centuries. It is in this sense that Richard Scholz is

---

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 260-261, 261-262, 252-253.

## RESISTANCE

right in saying: 'State, Church, Papacy, Empire...are placed by Ockham in the domain of truths of the faith and, in consequence, are necessarily justified by divine revelations contained in the Bible'. He is wrong in adding that 'they are not free human institutions', because the text of Ockham cries out the contrary, at least in that which concerns the State and the Empire. But it is indeed true that despite this conviction, the reference to Scripture (as a simple attestation of legitimacy) is so commanding that the theory of free human institutions becomes under the pen of Ockham, as Scholz well says, 'a new theology of politics and the political order'.

It is here that Ockham's realism lacks foresight. His extremely pertinent conception of the structure of the regime of estates in full expansion is associated with a theory of empire as anachronistic as it is unreasonable. How could he have convinced himself for one instant of the rights of an empire maintained inviolate since Christ through so many collapses, transfers of authority, and changes? How could he be satisfied with that supposedly universal authority that no one obeyed any longer?

Ockham's explication {of his conviction} reveals a resignation of Reason before that revealed fact. Once again we have difficulty admitting that the sense of the text that he invokes is really that of revealing to us the legitimacy of the Roman Empire and still more conceiving that we are in a realm that concerns

eternal salvation. The natural philosophy of authority ends in a theological positivism.

Let us review all these dramatic intellectual developments anew before moving on. Ascetic-minded Franciscans who had previously served as the right hand of the Papacy joined together with a Marsilius of Padua of heretical background whose Averroism leaned him towards the vision of a universe ruled by necessity. They joined too with a William of Ockham whose chief concern was assuring the victory of the free will of God and the Christian People as expressed through the personal choices made by Roman imperial authorities with ultimately earthbound concerns. Only two threads linked all three of these strange allies together. The first was a common opposition to Pope John XXII. The other was a firm commitment to one or the other version of a Foundation Vision whose original truth and eternal message an innovative and disruptive Roman Catholic Church was chastised for violating. This triple set of allies of Louis of Bavaria thus shared a “good story” that played on the wickedness of a detested pontiff who was proclaimed “heretical” for the mayhem his religious and civil policies brought to Germany, Italy, and the Catholic world as a whole.

What their good story hid – perhaps from them as much as from the rest of the Christian community – was that the success of its proponents would replace a pontifical mayhem that could still be corrected by reference back to that message of the Word Incarnate in which its authority ultimately was rooted with something much more horrendous. Their victory would replace it with nothing more than “appropriate explanations” for the triumph of the uncontrolled will of a

## RESISTANCE

civic despot posing as God's unchanging temporal agent in a changing world. For the presence of proponents of Apostolic Poverty praising the heroic actions of an Angelic Emperor taking up the fallen standard of the Angelic Pope gave a nice ascetic cover to the reality of natural, willful, coercive power freed from any practical corrective and transforming guidance whatsoever.

This reality was assured by the materialism and totalitarianism of Marsilius' theories, which nevertheless made constant rhetorical hay out of the words "Scripture", "Rome", "Roman Emperor", "Peace", and rule "not by men but by the Majesty of the Law". And it was made certain by an Ockham who worked to the same end, using somewhat more recognizable Catholic language to carry out his subversion of Christendom. For despite his own adulation of an unchanging imperial authority reflecting the divine will, Ockham's Nominalism pointed to a political world concerned purely with the satisfaction of the desires of the powers that be, manipulating individual bits of uncorrected natural data, presented as the dictates of irresistible rational judgments and the demands of God Almighty. Spiritual Franciscans, Marsilius, and Ockham may indeed not have "chosen" the triumph of the fallen will to follow as an unavoidable consequence of their call to return to the Foundation Vision. But, then again, "choice" and "truth" are two different words. "Choice" mistaken for "truth" can hide a great deal of humbug even from the eyes of those responsible for the equivocation.

Unfortunately for the immediate success of this curious alliance, Louis of Bavaria lost his bid for regal and imperial power. Germany and Italy were both embittered and worn

out from the long-lasting struggles it entailed. Moreover, we have seen that the real, contemporary Empire as a whole lacked sufficient strength to back the universal aspirations that Louis proclaimed. Bowing to reality, it recognized, through the Emperor Charles IV's (1346-1378) Golden Bull of 1356, the effective limitation of its "universal" ambitions to Germany alone. The independent-minded princes and municipal councils composing that still large and agonizingly unruly kingdom contested even this more restricted authority in the decades to come, basing themselves on the reality of those local resources and powers that reformers from the time of Cluny to St. Thomas Aquinas and James of Viterbo had sought to confront, tame, and sanctify.<sup>61</sup>

William of Ockham and the *via moderna* found many men ready to carry their torch in the immediate future. His words would not be forgotten. And even if Marsilius of Padua was too much of a unique composite to create a school of thought to follow through on his work, it is safe to say that the various Italian city-states, ever more at odds with one another, remained effective repositories of the whole contradictory mishmash of his Legalist, Averroist, Statist vision. They also continued to combine this together with Nominalism and the Spiritual Franciscan dream. And they did so until such time as the larger European nations, always open to a noble sounding but secularizing message, were ready and able to take the entire vision back under their own more powerful wing, gaining for it a seemingly permanent, European and worldwide victory.

---

<sup>61</sup> Rapp, pp. 252-280; Mayeur, VI, 685-694; Hughes, III, 143-144, 308-309.



## RESISTANCE

One final force must be mentioned at the present, even though it was not itself connected with the imperial designs of Louis IV. This force was also obsessed with a "return" to the "foundation principle" of the "primitive Church" through a general renunciation of ecclesiastical property. Emerging from Britain, the force in question was shaped through the writings of the Oxford scholar-cleric, John Wycliffe (1324-1384). His influence, which was very pronounced in the so-called Lollard Movement in England as well as in the fifteenth century Hussite conflict in Bohemia, brought with it new elements absent from the mentality of the Spiritual Franciscans, but just as dangerous to the cause of the Word in history as anything coming from the mind of Marsilius of Padua or William of Ockham.<sup>62</sup>

Even at his best a cranky and disappointed individual, Wycliffe ended life with what appears to have been a pronounced persecution complex. Still, like almost every sensible educated man of the late fourteenth century, he was justifiably irritated by the misuse of the plenitude of papal power for the purpose of making unfortunate appointments to benefices in England in support of the Avignon administrative machine. A prolific and well-known writer, he was called to serve on a government commission engaged in negotiations with the Papacy over this matter and a battery of related issues, just before the outbreak of the Great Western Schism. Wycliffe's increasing anger over the abuses of the Holy See, perhaps exacerbated by his experiences during his

---

<sup>62</sup> Oakley, pp. 175-212 Swanson, pp. 272-274, and *passim*; Mayeur, VI, 285-286, 344-345, 674-679; Hughes, III, 309-312.

public mission, led him to embrace the idea of a total material spoliation of the clergy.

An exaggerated form of the philosophical Realism dominating the *via antiqua* was at least partially responsible for his doing so. This caused him to see a direct relationship between an existing temporal phenomenon and the universal concept to which it referred. To his way of thinking, Realism meant that God's ecclesiastical kingdom on earth had to be a replica of His eternal kingdom in heaven. Of course, even a brief glance at the state of Christendom made it clear that this excluded any acceptable role for a corrupt institution manipulated by the Papacy and its property-hungry minions. Hence, he redefined the Church as the union of all those predestined to be with God for eternity. Such a Church would necessarily have to be invisible, since no one could know with certainty on earth which believers might be saved eternally. Parenthetically, evocation of the theme of predestination called attention to an increasing fatalism noticeable in Wycliffe's thought; a fatalism that would lead him ultimately to say that all that happens had to happen and that God Himself could thus perhaps actually be considered the author of sin.

Wycliffe justified spoliation by combining his philosophical Realism with certain ideas that he picked up from Richard Fitz Ralph (1327-1377), the Vice Chancellor of Oxford and Archbishop of Armagh. Archbishop Fitz Ralph, an ecclesiastical reformer, was as horrified as any other concerned Christian by the state of the fourteenth century Church. But he was also a man of his age, and this was still ruled by feudal law. Fitz Ralph argued in a book entitled the *Armachanus* that God was like the king in the feudal system, the eternal possessor as well as the author of all property

## RESISTANCE

rights. Just as the king could withdraw property that ultimately belonged to him due to felony, the clergy's property could be withdrawn from its possession due to felony to God. Such felony was manifested through sin. Wycliffe intensified the argument, claiming that no cleric could ever possess property without falling into sin. Having thus sinned by the mere fact of possession, the clergy was guilty of felony. Justice then demanded that the king, in the absence of a Church of flesh and blood that no one had the means of identifying, must stand in the place of God the Father and confiscate their ecclesiastical fiefs.

Such a call for a State guided coercive push to assert the foundation principle of Apostolic Poverty meant that the First Estate would be presented with an offer it could not refuse: spiritual perfection or destruction. In one fell swoop the complications of the clerical dance to sanctity would be eliminated. This charmed many noblemen and ordinary Englishmen who were fed up with their own seemingly unending economic woes. It proved to be especially attractive to John of Gaunt (1340-1399), the Duke of Lancaster, who appears to have been the representative of the "angry young men" of the age, who had been brutalized by Edward III's (1327-1377) wars with France. These Young Turks also shared in the general spirit of mutual envies and ambitions that were repeatedly exacerbated by the consequences of the various recurring outbreaks of Plague.<sup>63</sup>

Why Wycliffe should not have held up the laity to the same high standard as the clergy, with personal sinfulness

---

<sup>63</sup> For the political and social atmosphere, see S. Waugh, *England in the Reign of Edward III* (Cambridge, 1991).

requiring spoliation of its property, seems to have been due to the fact that he saw no such demand in Scripture. It was also probably owed to the need to find some source of practical help in aiding the king to deal with what he perceived to be an infinitely greater clerical evil. And it also simply reflected the spirit of the new age that Lagarde's masterpiece discusses:<sup>64</sup>

One perhaps will be astonished that religious spirits, justly alarmed over the deficiencies of the clergy and of certain spiritual authorities, might make an act of confidence so naïve and so imprudent in laymen and secular authorities whose insufficiencies were certainly not less openly clear. But nothing is more symptomatic of the turn of opinion that we have called the "birth of the lay spirit". Two centuries previously, tired of feudal anarchy, one had turned toward clerics to assume tasks which would have been more suitably given to laymen, but which these neglected or sabotaged. A movement of reflux now carried laymen not only to retake the secular terrain that had been seized from them, but also to take over the role in the religious domain of clerics, whose failure was proclaimed.

In any case, the regal will, in the waning days of Edward III and its immediate aftermath, seemed as though it might conceivably mean whatever John of Gaunt and his angry young followers said that it meant. A spiritual Church might be Wycliffe's dream, but the first consequence of it would

---

<sup>64</sup> Lagarde, V, 280.

## RESISTANCE

inevitably be the satisfaction of the all too obvious “business as usual” demands of these lay proponents of “nature as is” serving as God’s—and their own families’—real estate agents.

Still, Wycliffe represented more than a desire for Apostolic Poverty. His Ultra Realism made him look upon the Bible as the only visible guide for Christians in the way that Moslems approached the Koran: namely, not as a mere sacred tool but as the manifestation of an eternal, divine entity. It was from the Bible and the Bible alone that a Church loyal to the original intent of her founders had to be fed. Such exaggerated Realism, in its insistence upon the need for an unchangeable connection of eternal concepts with their earthly avatars, also meant that the essence of bread and wine could never disappear from the elements consecrated for the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Wycliffe therefore opposed the doctrine of Transubstantiation and claimed that Christ’s Body and Blood were present in the Eucharist as an “efficacious sign” alone.

Faced with growing opposition from the orthodox clergy, and, through the defeat of John of Gaunt’s political faction, from the royal government as well, Wycliffe sent out apostles to preach his gospel. These priests of the Church of the Predestined quite predictably encouraged a vernacular Bible reading already popular with the English population. In doing so, they added commentaries expressing the “obvious” interpretation that *had* to be given to a Scripture true to the founding vision—namely, their own.

Wycliffe’s call for Apostolic Poverty, his new definition of the Body of Christ, his exaltation of the Bible, his attack on Transubstantiation, and a certain touch of that apocalyptic, millenarian spirit that never disappeared from late medieval

Europe, became the hallmarks of the so-called Lollard Movement. Whatever the etymology of this name, its anti-papal, anticlerical equation of a spiritual, scripturally based Church with that of the original intent of the founders of Christianity exercised a wide appeal that did not effectively lessen until the passage of stringent anti-heretical laws in the first decade of the 1400's. Even though in remission by then, Lollardy survived. It began to grow in importance again from the 1490's onward, just in time to be able to provide a sympathetic hearing for the initial Protestant preachers in Britain. But before any of this could come to pass, the Church's commitment to "resistance on the cheap" was to provide still more of the same scandals that had brought Christendom to this stage of degradation—to the horror of faithful believers but the overjoyed amusement of the welcoming committee of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.

### *G. More of the Same*

For our tale of apocalyptic woe is unfortunately not yet finished. Chaotic conditions in a France crippled by the Hundred Years' War eventually threatened the security, both physical and financial, of Avignon. Italy beckoned. Still, before a return to Rome could be contemplated, the Eternal City had herself to be pacified. Pacification led to further political and military preoccupations burying still more deeply papal spiritual concerns. It required a calming not only of the power of a large number of local notables and their mercenary bands but also of many other troublemakers from central Italy, Naples, and as far afield as Milan.

## RESISTANCE

Different popes tried diverse tactics. Innocent VI (1352-1362) relied upon the military-backed mission of Cardinal Albornoz (1353-1363) and the aid of that curious, semi-utopian, republican adventurer, Cola di Rienzi (c. 1313-1354), while his Benedictine successor, Urban V (1362-1370), bet on a personal sojourn in Italy and peaceful persuasion. Gregory XI (1370-1378) returned permanently to Rome in early 1377 before the work of pacification was in any way complete. He died on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1378, as the situation hung between negotiations and continuation of an ugly, unedifying, and very expensive papal war with the neighboring Republic of Florence.<sup>65</sup>

The conclave that met at Rome in April of 1378 was ill prepared and heated. Two Gallic factions, both of which disliked Italy, nevertheless felt compelled to promise the threatening inhabitants of the Eternal City that they would once again be given a pope who was at least Italian. So fearful were some of the electors of the possible reaction of the parochial-minded mob to their choice of the Archbishop of Bari, Bartholomoeo Prignani, as Pope Urban VI (1378-1389), that they temporarily passed off the half-dead Roman Cardinal Tebaldeschi as the new pontiff and then fled for their lives.

But the well-known Urban actually proved to be acceptable to the local citizenry, his coronation was performed without incident, and the frightened Princes of the Church returned. Unfortunately for them, however—and for the Church as a whole—this pure, austere, and learned man

---

<sup>65</sup> Partner, pp. 326-367; Ullmann, pp. 279-305; Mayeur, VI, 726-730; Hughes, III, 188-207; Mollat, pp. 67-189.

quickly alienated his electors and their corrupt entourage through reform measures that did not reflect a reliance on the full message of the Word but on his own “naturally arbitrary and extremely violent and imprudent” character.<sup>66</sup>

But instead of proceeding with the prudence and moderation demanded by a task of such peculiar difficulty, he suffered himself from the first to be carried away by the passionate impetuosity of his temper....The very next day after his coronation he gave offence to many Bishops and Prelates who were sojourning in Rome, some of them for business, and some without any such reason. When, after Vespers, they paid him their respects in the great Chapel of the Vatican, he called them perjurers, because they had left their churches. A fortnight later, preaching in open consistory, he condemned the morals of the Cardinals and Prelates in such harsh and unmeasured terms, that all were deeply wounded....Urban also issued ordinances against the luxury of the Cardinals, and these measures were no doubt most excellent. Would only that the Pope had proceeded in a less violent and uncompromising manner! He certainly did not take the best way of reforming the worldly-minded Cardinals, when, in the Consistory, he sharply bade one of them be silent, and called out to the others ‘Cease your foolish chattering!’ nor again, when he told Cardinal Orsini that he was a blockhead....St. Catherine of Siena was aware of the severity with which Urban VI was endeavouring to

---

<sup>66</sup> von Pastor, I, 123-124.



## RESISTANCE

carry out his reforms, and immediately exhorted and warned him. 'Justice without mercy', she wrote to the Pope, 'will be injustice rather than justice.' 'Do what you have to do with moderation', she said in another letter, 'and with good will and a peaceful heart, for excess destroys rather than builds up. For the sake of your Crucified Lord, keep these hasty movements of your nature a little in check.'

There was to be no patience or compassion from this unruly personality. Urban remained intransigent, convincing many of the men around him, worldly or not, that he had gone stark raving mad. By August 9<sup>th</sup>, the thirteen Gallic cardinals had had enough. They condemned his election as coerced and correspondingly illicit. Then, on September 20<sup>th</sup>, at Fondi, south of Rome, with the quiet support of their three Italian counterparts, they elected Robert of Geneva – who had distinguished himself as the "Butcher of Cesena" in the pacification of the Papal States – as Pope Clement VII (1378-1394) in his place. The Great Western Schism had begun. The Christian world as a whole was to pay a just price for the Church's ever more intense reliance on strategies designed to ensure its success of the kind appreciated by sophist word merchants rather than that promised by the message of the Eternal Word made flesh.

Rome had undergone a "mystic invasion" due to the return of the Papacy to the Eternal City. Saints like Catherine of Siena, one of the generals leading that holy assault, were scandalized by the action of the renegade cardinals and begged for their peaceful return to the allegiance of Urban VI. But the "Roman" pope, to the horror of the real servants of

the Word, thought that he, too, could solve his woes through military force alone. He called yet another political crusade, this time against Queen Joanna of Naples (1343-1382), who had offered sanctuary to Clement. Urban did succeed in forcing his competitor out of Italy after the Battle of Marino. This initial victory did not, however, prevent Clement from returning triumphantly to Avignon (June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1379). Here, he was able to make immediate good use of the bulk of the abusive papal administrative apparatus, which had never followed Gregory XI to Italy in the first place.

By 1379, both sides, their bases established, began a fervent competition for political and financial support. Tax collectors from Rome and Avignon appeared almost everywhere. Bankers, with their usual concern for even-handedness, often served both pontiffs simultaneously. In many dioceses, two bishops and two cathedral chapters emerged, with the very validity of the masses offered by the opposing sides coming under theoretical and actual physical attack. Pro-Urban bishops were barred entry to certain Sees and pro-Clement prelates to others. Serious servants of the Word looked upon the spectacle with an equal mixture of confusion and horror. Archbishop Peter Tenorio of Toledo, a praiseworthy prelate, prayed simply, in the Canon of the Mass, for the man who was truly pope, since he himself could not determine who that might be. Still, at least he continued to offer supplication. In some places, public worship ceased altogether.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> von Pastor, I, 117-207, for the whole history of the Schism; Also, Oakley, pp. 55-70; Swanson, 2, 46, 149-150, 154, 180, 203, 296, 309; Mayeur, VI, 89-116; Hughes, III, 229-305; Partner, pp. 366-395; Ullmann, pp. 292-305.

## RESISTANCE

Supporters of Urban included most of the States of the Church, the emperor, Flanders, England, and Portugal. Clement gained the backing of important sections of the emperor's hopelessly splintered domains, such as Speyer and Mainz, along with Savoy, Scotland, and—after much soul searching and delay--Aragon, Castile, and Navarre. Many French prelates and the University of Paris were terribly troubled by the split. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of France accepted Clement in 1379 after an orchestrated public assembly of the sort perfected by the legalists of Philip the Fair to give that monarch's crimes a broad respectability. The University's coerced public stamp of approval in 1383 led faculty and students who disagreed with the decision to leave for new centers of higher learning like Heidelberg and Lerida. Many cities and some states, like Naples, really could not make up their minds concerning whom they wished to support or switched their allegiance due to dynastic changes. Even the army of mystics eventually divided in two along with the rest of Christendom, Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) remaining firmly with Urban, while Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419) and Peter of Luxembourg (1369-1387) were linked with Clement.

The Roman line of popes suffered due to its lack of administrative structures. It also has an inadequately documented history. We know that Urban's situation remained forever troubled. He had miserable relations with his twenty-nine newly created cardinals, some of whom he imprisoned, tortured, and put to death under atrocious conditions. Difficulties with Naples pursued him throughout his reign, while he continued the very abuses that he had so vigorously condemned beforehand. Prignani's successor was

the sick, badly cultivated, and apparently impossibly simoniac Boniface IX (Pietro Tomacelli, 2 November 1389-1 October, 1404). Boniface was perpetually destitute and lived by dubious expedients, offering enough examples of sales of benefices and plenary indulgences, Jubilee corruption, and outright robbery to give credence to Nicholas de Clémangis' claim, in his book *On the Ruin of the Church* (1401), that "money was the origin of the Schism and the root of all the confusion."<sup>68</sup> He was followed onto the Roman throne by Innocent VII (Cosimo Megliorati, 17 October, 1404-6 November, 1406) and Gregory XII (Angelo Corrario, 30 November, 1406-4 July, 1415). Avignon's line is much better known. It is also simpler to memorize. Clement VII, who died on 16 September, 1394, was followed only by the Aragonese Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna, 28 September, 1394-either 29 November 1422 or 23 May, 1423). Nevertheless, this one superhumanly wily figure, ordained a priest only after his election, gave the Roman popes more than a run for their money for the prize of greatest irritant to prostrate Christendom.

As the original protagonists of the Schism died, more and more contemporary Catholics began to echo Archbishop Tenorio's fear that there might not be any definitive way to know the identify of the true pope. Perplexity was accompanied by an expansion of local and national efforts to ensure self-protection, thereby promoting a shriveling of the universal spirit of Christendom to ever more parochial levels. Aragon very speedily organized its own Apostolic Camera to collect Church taxes. England soon re-enacted laws promulgated during earlier tiffs with the pre-1378 Avignon

---

<sup>68</sup> von Pastor, I, 146.

## RESISTANCE

Papacy to fill the kingdom's bishoprics. Others then followed suit, with certain rulers beginning to enjoy the benefits of the game so much as to remember William of Ockham's arguments and suggest that there should forever be as many popes as there were political jurisdictions. Peter Suchenwirt (c. 1320-1395), an Austrian poet, related popular reactions to the situation in simple rhythmic form:<sup>69</sup>

In Rome itself we have a Pope--in Avignon another;  
 And each one claims to be alone--the true and lawful  
 ruler. The world is troubled and perplex--'twere  
 better we had none; Than two to rule o'er  
 Christendom--where God would have but one. He  
 chose St. Peter who his fault--with bitter tears  
 bewailed; As you may read the story told--upon the  
 sacred page. Christ gave St. Peter power to bind--and  
 also power to loose; Now men are binding here and  
 there--Lord loose our bonds we pray!

Meanwhile, the number of apocalyptic-minded lamentations and expressions of heretical contempt grew ever higher:<sup>70</sup>

The preaching of a Saint Vincent Ferrer responded to the expectations of the crowds to whom he announced the arrival of the Antichrist. The whole labor of Gerson displays his horror before the peril that the schism caused the Church to run. It is to the

---

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>70</sup> Mayeur, VI, 107-108

people that the preaching of Wycliffe and Huss were addressed. The numerous prophecies of the epoch, Hildegarde, Saint Briget, Ermine, Telesphorus well illustrate the popular inquietude. The recluse, Marie Robine...saw 'appear before Christ all the curates of the world, the priors, the abbés, the bishops, the pope and twelve cardinals; they were simply dressed, but their words were lying...Against them was raised the cry of vengeance of all those who died, through their fault, without being succored'.

Given the general failure to think on the higher supernatural plane, contemporaries again followed Ockham and hunted for whatever solutions simply might "work" to save Mother Church. Three "practical" and "workable" suggestions for exiting from the Schism were offered and toyed with by both the Roman and the Avignon Courts: the *via facti*, or reliance on military support; the *via concessionis*, which sought a solution to the problem through joint resignation; and, finally, the *via conventionis*, or resolution of the division through the meeting either of representative cardinals of the two papal courts or a General Church Council. Despite the early appeal to the *via facti*, employed both by Urban and Clement—the Avignon pope in alliance with France and its claims to the Kingdom of Naples—the future really lay with the latter two suggestions.

Jean Gerson (1363-1429), the great theologian and later Chancellor of the University of Paris, in both a discourse of 1391 and a treatise *Super materiam unionis ecclesiae*, saw the path to sanity in a joint resignation of both men for the common good of Christendom. The ten thousand graduates of the University of Paris who placed their comments

## RESISTANCE

regarding possible means for ending the confusion in a chest at the Church of St. Marthurin in January of 1393 thought the same. They urged the calling of a commission or a General Council only should mutual abdication fail. Others, however, were already mapping out the precise route that the *via conventionis* would have to take. These even included firm supporters of Urban VI like Henry of Langenstein (c. 1325-1397), Professor of Philosophy and Theology at Paris, who addressed the subject in his *Proposition of Peace for the Union and Reformation of the Church by a General Council of 1381*.<sup>71</sup>

Political pressure of some sort would be required to get either of these two approaches involving resignation or conciliar negotiation moving. Gerson and Philippe de Mèzières (c.1327-1405), a devout, crusading, and prolific spiritual writer of the day, argued that such pressure must inevitably come from the King of France. Charles VI (1380-1422) was certainly willing to play the role of royal nudge, though his increasing insanity ensured that any French activity would be sifted more and more through the conflicting influences of his brother Louis, the Duke of Orleans, his cousin John, the Duke of Burgundy, and his uncle John, the Duke of Berry.

Although Clement VII had enough influence with the French Court to deflect such growing pressures, and the good sense to die before they became overwhelming, his successor, Benedict, was under the gun from the very outset of his reign. The new Avignon pontiff had, after all, hesitantly taken an

---

<sup>71</sup> For the varied plans, see R. Swanson, *Universities, Academics, and the Great Schism* (Cambridge, 2002); Mayeur, VI, 289-293; Hughes, III, 229-305; von Pastor, I, 117-207.

oath, along with the other *papabili* during the conclave, to resign if his Roman counterpart did the same. He repeated this solemn promise, voluntarily, after his election. When it instead became clear that he had repudiated his pledge and showed some preference for the *via facti*, the French government turned against him. A Council of Paris, in early 1395, presided over by Simon de Cramaud (c. 1345-1423), Bishop of Poitiers, future cardinal and a notable representative of that legalist and parochial spirit that was again very much active in its push for vigorous State interference in Church affairs, publicly called for the joint abdication of the two popes. The king's relatives, accompanied by university experts, went to Avignon from May 22 to July 9<sup>th</sup> in a frustrating mission to get Benedict to agree to the *via cessionis*. Negotiators were dispatched to other countries, like England, to obtain governmental backing for the proposal there as well.

Benedict adamantly rejected requests for his early retirement. When his stubbornness became painfully clear, the University of Paris radicalized, its utilitarian-minded canonists above all others. Anti-papal writings multiplied. A new council, attended by three hundred archbishops, bishops, abbots of monasteries, and delegates from each cathedral chapter and university, once again presided over by de Cramaud, met in May 1398 to tackle the problem. Thoughtful, careful theologians like Gerson and his great teacher and friend, the future Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly (1351-1420), urged tremendous moderation in dealing with Benedict, if for no other reason than the need to avoid giving scandal to ordinary believers. Nevertheless, the council, stirred by the preaching of two proponents of national Church government, the Abbé Pierre Leroy of Mount St.



## RESISTANCE

Michel and Bishop Gilles Deschamps of Coutances, withdrew its support from the Avignon pope and established a new Church order for the Kingdom of France. A number of Benedict's cardinals eventually joined in the action. Withdrawal of obedience was followed, in September, by an outright assault on Avignon and a lengthy siege of the Apostolic Palace by a royal army under the command of the brother of the most renowned marshal of the French Army.

But all did not work out well with this 1398 settlement. The anti-Benedict *Blitzkrieg* shocked even many of those people who were not disposed to be friendly to him. English policy changed with the death of the pro-French King Richard II (1377-1399). A national or "Gallican" Church in a semi-chaotic France proved easily controllable by ambitious noblemen and the lovely ladies whom they wished to please. Further disputes among the king's close relatives, opposition from a clergy which discovered that corrupt and hateful Church taxes were being more efficiently collected by royal officials, and growth of precisely that scandal among the common faithful feared by Gerson and d'Ailly condemned the Gallican scheme to a swift death. The *coup de grace* came with the pope's dramatic escape from his besieged palace on May 11, 1403 to freedom in Provence. On May 28<sup>th</sup> of that same year, an assembly of bishops gave up the rebellion and restored French obedience to Benedict and the Avignon line. Still, restoration of obedience did not mean surrender to Benedict's obstinacy and perceived perjury. Jean Gerson, in a sermon preached before the pope in Tarascon, on New Year's Day, 1404, continued to urge pursuit of every lawful means to end the schism. Moreover, the radicalized University of Paris

remained exceedingly hostile to him and attracted to ever more heretical and legalist theories of ecclesiastical order.

At best, critics of the Papacy could be men who simply wanted to find a way to make the machinery of the Church work more justly and efficiently than was the case in the immediate past. Radicals could sometimes be Nominalist in outlook, inspired by the work of William of Ockham, who, readers will remember, did not view the structure of the Church as something written into the Deposit of the Faith, but, rather, as ecclesiastical furniture that could be rearranged according to the character and needs of the day. On the other hand, they might be men who lived off another variation of the "Return to the Foundation" theme---the pleasant myth that a broader, more representative government of the Church reflected the spirit of a happier, collegial minded Apostolic Age that the ambitions of the See of Rome for a plenitude of power alone had sadly overturned. Both these approaches viewed the popes as simply useful instruments of the Church at large. Applying their suggestions meant that the Mystical Body of Christ, through the agency of a General Council, could judge pontiffs and limit or even withdraw their powers should necessity demand it. Still more radical thinkers, either directly influenced by Marsilius of Padua or accidentally touching upon the same themes that he had underlined, supported what became known as "Conciliarism" chiefly because it guaranteed local civil society a greater practical power to direct and subordinate religious affairs to secular "business as usual" concerns.

By this point, however, sincere and less radical supporters of the *via cessionis* were encouraged by hopeful noises coming out of Rome. Boniface had steadfastly refused all proposals for healing the split, profited from his

## RESISTANCE

competitor's woes, and seen his prestige rise through the relative success of the Jubilee pilgrimage to the Eternal City in 1400. But now his successor, Innocent VII (1404-1406), claimed that he would never even have been elected had Benedict XIII shown some readiness to resign. Innocent thus pledged his full support to a swift and peaceful resolution of the dilemma.

Alas, Benedict had now once again given his heart over to the *via facti*. He was much too busy making military advances into Italy and pumping reliable financial resources to fund them to parley with Rome. Renewed indignation over his selfish inflexibility stimulated the radicals of the University of Paris and the Burgundian party allied with them to seize the advantage, open direct negotiations with Innocent, and declare a second withdrawal of obedience from Avignon in January of 1407. And their irritation with Benedict became more strident still due to his "change of mind" and odd tango with Innocent's successor, Gregory XII.

This began in December of 1407, when both men agreed to meet to discuss the *via cessionis* at Savona. Benedict's subsequent delays and hedging, along with his own second thoughts regarding abdication, led to Gregory's abandonment of the project. That renunciation was followed by the Avignon pope's renewed, but dubious, change of heart, his swift appearance at the designated meeting place, and the shedding of many crocodile tears over the absence of his Roman sparring partner. Dietrich von Nieheim, in a satirical *Letter of Satan to Giovanni Dominici of Ragusa*—Gregory's advisor—expressed the nagging belief of many horrified observers that this comedy of contradictory moves may have been a fraud contrived from the very outset by two

incomparably hypocritical pontiffs to stymie real efforts to obtain their resignations.

By 1408, all Christendom was in a *via conventionis* uproar, moderates and radicals alike. The Avignon and Roman popes were left dependent on local support, Benedict retiring to Perpignan, on the safer territory of his native Aragon, and Gregory to the cities of a variety of Italian patrons. Given these unfortunate circumstances, seven of Gregory's cardinals and four of those from the Avignon line gathered at Livorno, in Italy, to begin negotiations for a way to end the farce on their own steam. Their number eventually reached nineteen, and, with the help of both political as well as theological and canonical backing, these princes of the Church called the Christian world to council in Pisa on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1409.

Almost five hundred fathers sat at their assembly, twenty-two cardinals and eighty bishops among them, though scholars predominated, jurists most noticeably. Moderates like d'Ailly were present alongside more radical, heretical, extreme Nominalists. Legalist elements were there as well, including the president of the gathering, the seemingly ubiquitous Simon de Cramaud. All, whether reluctantly or jubilantly, knew that they were called to judge, rebuke, and potentially remove both claimants to the Papacy. Witnesses were heard testifying to papal cruelties, secret agreements, perjuries, and even dabbling in sorcery. Benedict and Gregory, both of whom refused to answer the council's order to appear, were jointly condemned and excommunicated on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1409. The cardinals who summoned the council were thereupon delegated to select the man whom the canonist Francesco Zabarella (1360-1417) now called merely the principal minister and servant of the Church. Their choice, on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1409, fell on Peter

## RESISTANCE

Philarghi (c. 1339-1410), the Greek-born Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, who took the name of Alexander V. Alexander's short reign was followed, in 1410, by the election of the man whom many contemporaries suspected of having poisoned him: Baldassare Cossa (c. 1370-1419), the governor of Bologna, thereafter styled Pope John XXIII.

Despite the fact that the Pisan popes were able to gain considerable European-wide backing, and John XXIII even to establish himself in Rome, their two competitors remained a permanent nuisance. Gregory and Benedict retained support in important countries. Both held or tried to hold councils of their own to back up their legitimacy. Moreover, the Pisan faction was itself very quickly plagued by internal disputes. Everyone came to loathe cardinals of all description as an extraordinarily venal, ambitious, quarrelsome, and incompetent body of men. Many Italians militating in Pisan ranks bristled at French influence and the spread of heretical and legalist ideals therein. While reform was on the lips of all, each national group had different ideas of what constituted a scandal requiring instant action: for some, it was the pro-papal teaching of the omnipresent Franciscan friars; for others, it was the failure of the Church to secure positions for the graduates of the vocal University of Paris. A new reform council, which his Pisan electors obliged John XXIII to hold, met just long enough in Rome to turn disgustedly against their new pontiff as the chief obstacle to purification of the Church.

Finally, the perennial struggle for the Neapolitan throne having taken a perilous turn, the Pisan pope was forced to quit the Eternal City and petition the rulers of Europe for new political protection. Help, under the circumstances of that

particular moment in time, was only available from Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor since 1410. Sigismund was personally eager to rebuild the shattered prestige of his realm and contribute to doing so by finding a definitive way out of the continuing papal horror show. He and his Empire had never accepted the results of Pisa, so their defense of John XXIII was a tricky one to say the least. It came to entail the summoning of yet another council, which opened at Constance on November 1, 1414, with the usual suspects from throughout Europe—practically all of them together at this point--in attendance.

John initially presided at Constance as the legitimate pontiff. Nevertheless, Sigismund and the Council Fathers, Gerson and D'Ailly prominent among them, soon saw the abdication of all three popes as an essential prerequisite to enjoyment of a single universally recognized head of the Church. Hopes for the success of this renewed appeal to the *via concessionis* were temporarily complicated by the fact that the erratic John, who swore to abdicate in March of 1415, changed his mind and fled the city for the Black Forest to try his luck anew. His efforts floundered, and, becoming aware of the desperation of his position, he ultimately threw himself on the council's mercy. Its fathers found him guilty of being an unworthy and unlawful pope, removed him on May 29<sup>th</sup>, and popped him straight off into prison.

Events now took a dramatic turn. The aged Gregory XII spontaneously and unexpectedly offered his own abdication. Interestingly enough, though already considered deposed by Pisa, he managed to bow out in a manner that most subsequent writers argue to have bolstered Rome's claim to

## RESISTANCE

possess the legitimate line of pontiffs. Ludwig von Pastor describes the abdication scene as follows:<sup>72</sup>

The way in which this was done is of the highest significance, and must by no means be viewed as a concession in non-essentials to the assembled Bishops. Gregory XII, the one legitimate Pope, sent his plenipotentiary, Malatesta, to Constance, where the prelates of his obedience had already arrived, and now summoned the Bishops to a Council. His Cardinal-Legate, who had made his entry into the city as such, read Gregory's Bull of Convention to the assembled Bishops, who solemnly acknowledged it. Malatesta then informed this Synod, [i.e., the beefed-up Council of Constance] which Gregory XII had constituted, of his abdication (4 July, 1415). His summons had given the Synod a legal basis.

Only the Avignon pope, now in Aragon, was left. Personal efforts by Sigismund to obtain Benedict's voluntary withdrawal, even under the same conditions as that of Gregory, delayed proceedings against him for some time. Negotiations having finally failed, the council tried him *in absentia*, declaring his deposition by July of 1417. Support for de Luna faded away, and he himself fled, along with three remaining Cardinals, to the fortress of Peñíscola.

The way was thus sufficiently well cleared for Odo Colonna to be elected the sole truly serious pope on November 11th, 1417, though by an innovative method

---

<sup>72</sup> von Pastor, I, 200-201.

involving the tallying of the votes of representatives gathered in separate national units alongside those of the cardinals united in conclave. He took the name of Martin V (1417-1431). The new pope confirmed the council's grant to the ex-Gregory XII of the Cardinal Bishopric of Porto and made him permanent papal legate in the March of Ancona as well. John XXIII went from prison life to the position of Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum. Benedict survived, in opposition, until his death in 1422 or 1423, leaving two warring successors behind him. One of these, a mysterious Benedict XIV, lived and died somewhere in France. The other, Gil Muñoz, Pope Clement VIII, finally abdicated in 1429 and was rewarded with the Bishopric of Majorca. Clement VIII's College of Cardinals then brought a final and rather unsurprising end to the Great Western Schism by entering into conclave in Peñíscola and formally electing Martin V as his successor.

But the Schism, so many decades in duration, had not, exactly, ended "by the book", according to the crystal-clear rules of a canonical system that had previously acted as though it had all the infallible answers to every ecclesiastical problem. Just look at the complications involved in the solution to the problem once again. How "legal" was the pressure exerted by Sigismund and the other secular powers and university scholars in gaining the desired results? Had it not precisely been the contention of the Church, since the time of the reforms of the eleventh century, that such intervention in the affairs of the Papacy was nefarious? What rendered this particular involvement permissible? What was the legality of the strange addition of national electors to the College of Cardinals in the Constance conclave? And what about the man elected? If Gregory XII really were the legitimate Pope up till then, what did this have to say about



## RESISTANCE

the actions of Odo Colonna, the future Martin V, one of his own renegade cardinals? Colonna, after all, had fled Rome, taken part in the Council of Pisa, and helped to elect Alexander V and John XXIII. Why did he not have to do penance for his "schismatic" activity before becoming Supreme Pontiff himself? But, then again, how could he have humbled himself without rendering the abdication of his former master, Gregory XII, itself ludicrous?

Moreover, what should one think of Alexander V? The next universally recognized Clement and Benedict took up the numbering that had been used by the Avignon pontiffs of those names (VII and XIII), therefore, historically identifying the Frenchmen as anti-popes. On the other hand, the next Alexander, Rodrigo Borgia, who ought, by right, to have styled himself the fifth of that line, assumed that he was the sixth. Does this mean that he believed Alexander V to have been legitimate? Apparently. If so, then how could the simultaneously reigning Gregory XII have also been the true pope? And why was Alexander's successor, John XXIII, not valid, as Angelo Roncalli perhaps clarified in 1958 by adopting the numbering previously used by Baldassare Cossa?<sup>73</sup>

What all this says is that the Church recognized that in dealing with the Great Western Schism she was confronting a specific historical problem for whose resolution she did not have all the answers at her fingertips. Under these trying

---

<sup>73</sup> Perhaps, since his designation as such may only have provided a needed clarification given confusion over the numbering of popes by the name of John earlier in the Middle Ages.

circumstances she therefore had to rely both on her pilgrim spirit as well as her firm conviction that Christ would never abandon His Bride. Just because there was a confusion and division over the present identify of the pope, such perplexity did not signify that there could be no pontiff in the future. The immediate problem was obtaining a legitimate pope to whom virtually everyone would give his obedience. Just because existing, fallible Canon Law and its willful interpreters could not adequately and effectively identify the present pope did not mean that the Mystical Body had to presume that Ockham was right, and that she could, should, and would function with two, three, or maybe even innumerable local pontiffs. The Word was more powerful than the words of the law books and the dicta of the canonists, as St. Bernard had already insisted during the schism of the early 1100's that he had helped to end by supporting the "healthier" candidate for the pontifical throne. And if keeping the Bride of Christ alive and well temporarily involved a bewildered respect for the otherwise problematic interventions of Parisian pedants, renegade cardinals, puppet electors promoting parochial national causes, and emperors evoking powers that had been rejected several centuries earlier, all could be forgiven in the end. What counted in the *uncertainties* of the perplexing moment was the *certainty* of the need for a unified Papacy; what counted was what James of Viterbo had called "thinking on the universal level". Here was a supreme illustration of the pilgrim spirit in action in troubled times, dancing new steps in the dance of life that no one had ever imagined necessary or even possible beforehand. Here was an illustration of that *rooted* and *principled* pilgrim spirit, worlds apart from any policy shaped

## RESISTANCE

by the anchorless meandering that would be guaranteed by an Ockhamite Church.<sup>74</sup>

Judged in this context, the actions of Jean Gerson, Pierre d'Ailly, Pisa, Constance, Sigismund, and Odo Colonna to end the Great Western Schism come off fairly well. They bore little resemblance to other, more wickedly irregular maneuvers in the Church's past, such as those that the famous Robber Council of Ephesus permitted itself in the fifth century at the time of the Monophysite Controversy. Does this mean that bad motivation and heretical, legalist, and opportunistic theories and behavior played no role whatsoever in the conclusion of the Great Western Nightmare? That would be inaccurate. There was plenty of bad to match the good. But a Church that had been deeply bewildered regarding precisely how to confront her many ills while seeking to emerge from her practical administrative labyrinth seems to have thought their judgment best left to history and Almighty God.

Nevertheless, all too much damage had been done to the Church and her ability to correct and transform all things in Christ throughout the entire era of "resistance on the cheap" stretching from time of Boniface VIII to that of Martin V. It is this unfortunate truth---along with the recognition of the powerful assistance that the long detour of the Body of Christ away from her real sources of strength and her proper evangelical mission provided for the further growth of the "Seeds of the words"---that required our dedicating so much space to the twists and turns of the period of the Avignon Papacy and the Great Western Schism. What would really be

---

<sup>74</sup> Hughes, II, 294.

important for the long-term future as a whole was whether the road to recovery paved at Pisa and Constance was to be a “high road” or remain a “low road” reflecting a continued resistance “on the cheap” to a world filled with terrible dangers pulling men to a cynical acceptance of “nature as is”.

If the high road were taken—the path back to the corrective and transforming message of the Word Incarnate—the route that would lead to a new attempt to address the obvious lacunae in Catholic ecclesiology and pastoral activity would somehow be found. If not, the concatenation of forces and circumstances promoting an understanding of nature as the realm of inexplicable divine and human willfulness would be allowed to solidify. If the high road were to be taken, the pilgrim spirit tying the development of doctrine and experiment together with the unchanging Deposit of Faith would grow and prosper. Entering upon the low road would permit the accidentally Nominalist aspects of the Church’s contemporary flirtation with trying “whatever works” in new and difficult situations to become the essential guiding principle in her daily life. This would wreak havoc with the fullness of the Christian message, and embolden the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo to emerge from the underbrush into the full light of day. Unfortunately, it was to be the second of these itineraries that was to be the favored thoroughfare in the immediate future. And this made for a tragic continuation of the Long March to that camp of the willful in whose precincts we are still forced to pitch our own tents.

## **The War of All Against All? Or the Peace of the Reinvigorated Word?**

### *A. The High Road to Recovery*

A restoration of papal unity, important though this was, was not a sufficient corrective to the problems weakening the Church's ability to deal with her primary work on earth. That work, as the medieval reform movement had confirmed, was one focused on a redemption of individual human beings that simultaneously required the correction and transformation in Christ of the natural, social environment in which they lived. Unfortunately, it was precisely this transformative ideal that was the undeserving loser in the entire pathetic history of the Church in the years between the humiliation of Boniface VIII and the end of the Great Western Schism. "They say that the

world must be renewed”, the friar Giovanni dalle Celle (1310-1396) cried out, giving voice to the enormous temptation of even the most orthodox thinkers to abandon commitment to the full message of the Incarnate Word in reaction to a sea of troubles; “I say, it must be destroyed”.<sup>1</sup>

If the reunified Church were to defeat such despair, then it was essential for her to regroup and reform, undertaking three projects simultaneously. First was the revitalization of the brilliant intellectual endeavor that promised to deepen her understanding of her own nature and structure as the Body of Christ: what is known as the study of ecclesiology. Sound ecclesiological investigations could not help but clarify the proper role of everything of significance to her teaching and administrative authority—the character, strengths, and real limitations of papal power included. With these investigations would also come a better appreciation of her relationship to the State and the whole of corporate society. A second task involved a commitment to serious pastoral activity that would inspire and aid the hunt for individual sanctity in the ranks of both clergy and laity. Thirdly and finally, the Church had to fend off further temptations to a resistance on the cheap that merely reflected the wisdom and the desires of the varied proponents of “business as usual”. These included not only the worldly “common sense” suggestions for dealing with the dance of life that openly led Christian men and society headlong into the abyss. They also involved those zealous and seemingly high-minded calls for a return to a foundation vision that actually served as a tool for a manipulation of the full message of the Word in history by the strongest and most willful elements in society. In short,

---

<sup>1</sup> von Pastor, I, 145.

## AGAINST ALL?

true Christian reform of head and members demanded a “high road” to recovery whose signposts were provided by the Word.

Certainly, the century from the Council of Constance (1414-1418) to the advent of Martin Luther (1517) rang forth with many noble sounding “words” calling for a “reform of head and members” at all levels of Christendom. And, thankfully, many contemporaries were indeed laboring to effect serious corrective and transformative change according to the precepts of the greatest of the medieval reformers. A rush through events of fifteenth century ecclesiastical significance in order to get to the “big news” of the Reformation often blinds one to the intensity of the contemporary traffic on the high road to the understanding and fulfillment of the Catholic vision of the Word in history. Modern historians have published excellent studies illustrating the fact that practical reforms and substantive action firmly grounded in a solid hierarchy of values took place even in the deadliest of decades since the mini-apocalypse had begun. Far from ending at the time of Constance, these praiseworthy enterprises continued and even picked up impressive speed in the century to follow.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporaries on the high road well understood that the Church had been wasting time on a self-destructive low

---

<sup>2</sup> For the following, see Mayeur, VI, 355-395, 414-447, 465-499, 707-719, 744-751, 762-766, 795-811; VII, 143-207, 215-435 *passim*; Hughes, III, 386-497; Oakley, pp. 54, 65-71, 73, 75-79, 127, 213-259, 285-312; Swanson, pp. 14, 45, 49, 50, 341 and *passim*; Moorman, pp. 481-585; von Pastor, 1-VII (Martin V through Leo X), *passim*.

road towards implementation of the teachings of Christ; a low road that had paid overwhelming attention to fallible, political, legal, and administrative means of carrying out her mission. This low road had neglected the meaningful teachings of the scholastics, Peter Cantor, and Innocent III, and had cherished rhetorical slogans offering “appropriate justifications” of insufficient parochial strategies for the victory of the Word in history instead. The reformers of the high road saw that giving *primary* attention to *secondary* tools in effect overturned the hierarchy of values and blinded the Church to the source of her real strength. For Catholic muscle, as always, was built through recourse to that revelation and grace that gave her the power to transform all flawed earthly endeavors for the greater glory of God and the consequent benefit of individual men. Those on the high road by no means rejected the cultivation of ordinary political and structural tools. They simply insisted that these must always be used as a “fool for Christ” would use them: not according to the dictates of a limited tunnel vision, but in subordination to the exalted mission of making all of nature a conduit for transforming grace.

A number of the high road reformers fought the good fight by tapping into the uncompleted intellectual enterprise of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century speculative theologians and ecclesiologists. By the end of the 1400’s, Duns Scotus’ works were being collected and systematically studied, and a proper school of thought that would reach its peak by around 1600 was in formation. Men such as John Capreolus (c. 1380-1444), the so-called “Prince of the Thomists”, had always maintained loyalty to the thought of the Angelic Doctor, while Juan de Torquemada (1388-1468) applied Thomistic teaching to a variety of uses, including the



## AGAINST ALL?

struggles of Pope and Council, Church and State, and East-West reunion. Soon, the even more significant figure of Tommaso de Vio, known popularly as Cajetan (1469-1534), would also demonstrate the vigorous strength of this Thomist revival, working through it to address manifold problems, including those arising from an age of exploration and discovery of new worlds.

Members of monastic and mendicant communities worked zealously to bring their fellow religious back to an appreciation of their true foundation missions. Prominent among these were the so-called "four pillars of the Franciscan Observance": St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), St. John of Capistrano (1385-1456), Blessed Albert of Sarteano (1385-1450), and St. James of the March (1391-1476). Preaching was a great strength of all these men, whose approach in many respects built upon the massive, highly organized "revival campaigns" organized by their Dominican predecessor, St. Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419). They dedicated much of their lives to reconciling bitter private and public disputes, convincing sinners to replace their faith in a worldly wisdom divinizing the hunt for power and riches with a primary devotion to Christ—whose Holy Name (and corrective power) St. Bernardino taught people to cherish above all other "words". Meanwhile, the age especially abounded in pragmatic guides to living the Catholic life. An admirable work of practical catechesis was particularly notable in lands disturbed by heretical movements, as was England due to the impact of the Lollards. In some areas, high road reformers attempting to purify clerical and lay spiritual life received the vigorous aid of political leaders. The cooperation of Cardinal Francisco Jimenez de Cisneros (1436-1517) and Isabella the

Catholic (1474-1504) in Castile is a major case in point, but certainly not the only one.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, a pilgrim spirit ready to deal with new steps in the dance of life different from those required at the time both of the Christian foundation as well as that of the new medieval ascent of Mount Tabor was also visible. Prelates like St. Antoninus of Florence (1389-1459), who aided in the scholastic revival encouraged by Capreolus and Torquemada and later taken up by Cajetan, built upon the earlier vision of Peter Cantor and Innocent III. Antoninus did this by applying central Catholic principles to the fresh problems faced by varied social groups each in their own specific spheres of action. Even if such vibrant, pastoral-minded bishops did not satisfactorily answer all the questions that they raised, they nevertheless did Origen-like service in providing the basic language and framework for studying and addressing them more effectively in a rapidly changing climate. Their situation, in short, was in many respects similar to that of the first scholastics when confronting Aristotle's political and scientific writings and seeking to use their teachings to deal with the high medieval social order.<sup>4</sup>

All these initiatives encouraged the recovery and further development of an understanding of the full message of the Word in history. Nevertheless, two other forces illustrative of contemporary vitality, those represented by Renaissance Humanism and spiritual confraternities, must also be singled out to move our story forward. Examining them will help to explain both the brilliant explosion of Catholic thought and

---

<sup>3</sup> Mayeur, VII, 397-400; Oakley, pp. 261-270, on St. Vincent Ferrer's life.

<sup>4</sup> Mayeur, VI, 479-489.

## AGAINST ALL?

practice that would follow upon the Tridentine reform and also the dangerous revolution unleashed by Martin Luther. Double-edged swords these forces may have been, but that is the fate of every natural tool in our fallen world. Besides, the acceptable edge of the swords they wielded was sharply positive indeed.

Renaissance Humanism, as begun by Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) and Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), was, at its best, an invitation to Christendom to attend a highly necessary “finishing school”.<sup>5</sup> It was in many respects simply a call to recognize the pressing need to complete divine and abstract disciplines—namely, fields such as theology, logic, and mathematics—with others that focused on human affairs and the skills essential to plumb their message—studies of literature, the languages used to produce it, and history being chief among them. Without the knowledge provided by these “human-centered” disciplines, one could not have a complete appreciation of how men succeed or fail to fulfill the demands of God and nature on the practical level. One could easily be “lost in space” in consequence, capable of forming theories about the essences of things but lacking in all perception of the specific problems individuals and societies

---

<sup>5</sup> On the Renaissance, see Mayeur, VII, 467-520, 617-673; Hughes, III, 361-385; Oakley, pp. 103-104, 133, 251-259, 258, 313, 317-318; Swanson, pp. 160, 174-177; J. Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (Atheneum, 1994); P. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (Johns Hopkins, 1989); Berschin, pp. 243-280; J. Plumb, *The Italian Renaissance* (Harper, 1965); On Petrarch, see J. Plumb, ed., *Renaissance Profiles* (Harper, 1961), pp. 1-17; von Pastor, I, 1-56.

face while performing the dance of life in our magnificent but sin-ridden earthly ballroom.

The studies that Petrarch developed and that we now call "humanist" lay at the center of the aesthetic approach to life nurtured by the ancient Greeks and their Roman imitators. This aesthetic outlook sought to understand the universe by grasping the character of "the beautiful" and perfecting the methodology for gaining possession of it. Cultivation of such subjects led humanists to a special regard for the greatest representatives of aesthetic achievement in various ancient fields of endeavor. These included Cicero and Virgil for Latin prose and poetry, Homer for Greek epic, and Plato for his success in presenting philosophical arguments in practical human settings with a fine feel for rhetorical style. Aesthetic heroes of the ancient artistic and architectural world were soon to join the ranks of humanist models. An impassioned hunt began for missing ancient literary texts and artistic objects, so that the fullness of the Greco-Roman genius might be revealed, its linguistic and creative skills imitated, and its spirit revived. That hunt also led to the cultivation of a Greco-Roman inspired devotion to physical education unknown to medieval man, justified by the need to develop a healthy body as a solid home for a sound mind.

Humanism proved to be immensely useful to the Church for the development of what is called "positive theology" in distinction to "speculative theology". Speculative theology uses logic to draw forth the consequences of the primary data of Christian revelation in a systematic and therefore ultimately more intellectually comprehensible and applicable way. We have seen that St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus were the chief representatives of speculative theology in the Middle Ages. But a careful reading of what

## AGAINST ALL?

they said should actually lead the Catholic to an appreciation of positive theology as well. This, in contrast to its speculative confrère, explores the root data *in se*. A positive theologian's material includes the direct study of Holy Scriptures, liturgical texts, early canonical legislation, decrees of Church councils, and information regarding the historical behavior of the faithful through the ages.

With the greater facility in Latin and Greek (and an eventual familiarity with Hebrew) obtained through humanist schooling, examination of such source materials became more fruitful still. As humanists went about their work in positive theology, they began to realize the importance of understanding "contexts" to grasp the real meaning of the Latin and Greek words they loved so dearly. This proved to be yet another stimulus to interest in Church History and its valuable teachings regarding the practical problems of life. Fascination with history, in turn, made humanists even more aware of the significance of the Church Fathers. They looked to St. Augustine in particular, whose pre-scholastic style was, like that of Plato, especially appealing to their refined classical aesthetic tastes.

Prudence and reserve in approaching anything new—even when it is at root ancient—is perfectly understandable, especially when its impact on sacred studies is as yet unclear. Unfortunately, mainline schools and universities were not only slow to respond to humanist enrichment of the store of western knowledge; they were often openly hostile to its passion for rediscovery of neglected aspects of the ancient past. Such a display of scholarly tunnel vision helps to explain the need for humanists and their patrons to open their own academies, the best of which cherished the new

studies alongside with and in deep respect for the old. The fact that a comprehensive Humanist education could be a *Word* as well as a word- drenched accomplishment of major proportions is shown to us by men of the caliber of Guarino da Verona (1370-1460), Vittorino da Feltre (1378-1446), John Colet (1467-1519), and many others. The following passages regarding Vittorino's achievement in Mantua capture the spirit of their amalgam of secular and sacred studies most succinctly:<sup>6</sup>

He believed that education should concern itself with the body as well as the mind, with the senses as well as the spirit. Wrestling, fencing, swimming and riding alternated with hours devoted to Virgil, Homer, Cicero, and Demosthenes. Luxury was eschewed, and Vittorino educated the poor with the rich. Nor was he prejudiced about the sexes; the Gonzaga princesses enjoyed the same extensive education as the princes.

A villa, formerly the recreation hall of the Gonzaghi, was transformed by him into an ideal schoolhouse. Because of its pleasant surroundings and the spirit that prevailed therein, it was called the 'Casa Jocosà' or 'Pleasant House'. All the scholars were boarders and Vittorino endeavoured to make the school as pleasant and enjoyable as the ideal home...The instruction given was of the new Humanistic type but

---

<sup>6</sup> J.H. Plumb, *The Italian Renaissance*, p. 26; also, "Vittorino da Feltre", *Catholic Encyclopedia*, XV, 490; Mayeur, VII, 228-229, 507, 629-632; Oakley, pp. 255-258; Hale, p. 194; Swanson, pp. 55, 177, 241, 250-251.

## AGAINST ALL?

Christian in character and spirit. It was not merely a literary training but embraced the physical and moral requirements of a liberal education. Letters (Latin and Greek), arithmetic, geometry, algebra, logic, dialectics, ethics, astronomy, history, music, and eloquence were all taught there, and frequently by special masters. The pupils were directed also in some form of physical exercise, chosen usually according to their needs, but, at times, according to their tastes...He was an exemplary Catholic layman and as a teacher strove to cultivate in his pupils all the virtues becoming the Catholic gentleman. Every day had its regular religious exercises at which, like morning prayer and Mass, all assisted. He was a frequent communicant, and desired his students to approach the Sacraments every month.

One group of contemporaries that shared the humanists' love for at least some ancient *Christian* ideas and practices that they believed had been neglected in the immediate past were the supporters of the Dutch reformer, Gerhard Groote (1340-1384), and the so-called modern devotion—the *devotio moderna*.<sup>7</sup> Disturbed, like so many other pious Catholics, by the disasters of his own time, Groote blamed the mini-apocalypse of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the failure of the world around him to plumb the original roots

---

<sup>7</sup> Oakley, pp. 100-113; Swanson, pp. 79, 90, 100, 112, 174, 340; Mayeur, VI, 526-527; Hughes, III, 215-225; On the *Devotio*, Gerson, and systematic spirituality, see, also, Pourrat, II, 252-336.

and spirit of the Christian message. What was chiefly needed, as far as he was concerned, was not Apostolic Poverty but a firm focus on Christ Himself: Christ, both as the intellectually unadorned model for proper daily behavior presented to us in the Scriptures as well as Christ through His Real Presence in the Eucharist. Hence, the theme of the greatest literary monument to the movement, Thomas à Kempis's (1380-1471) *Imitation of Christ*, with its call for a simple, intimate piety opening our hearts and souls to a struggle to incarnate Jesus in our ordinary day-to-day existence. Hence, also, the movement's commitment to discovering a systematic spiritual methodology that would keep Christ permanently close to the individual soul and thereby avoid the religious torpor that all too regularly followed hard upon past eruptions of new fervor in the life of the faithful.

Groote, along with a friend, Florens Radewyns (c.1350-1400), was the most important figure behind the society called the Brethren of the Common Life that lived and prayed together according to the *devotio moderna*. Although they did not generally take vows, some of the Brethren did wish to follow a clerical rule and formed a congregation of Augustinian monks that spread throughout the Rhineland and beyond. Both the lay Brethren and the Canons Regular spiritually associated with them eventually became involved in schooling. Even though they generally had little interest in the secular literary pursuits of the humanists, those supporters of the *devotio moderna* engaged in education inevitably promoted their own "back to the sources" vision. As the decades advanced, this would in certain respects parallel the work being done by the Italians, but in a way that gave special encouragement to positive theological interests.



## AGAINST ALL?

The Brethren were not without their enemies. However, the enthusiastic assistance of Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson—the latter of incalculable significance as a sage guide for all serious late medieval paths to sanctity and mysticism—enabled them to defend themselves successfully at the Council of Constance. There, they faced a variety of accusations, including that of entertaining heretical inclinations similar to those of the thirteenth century Beghards, whom they in many quite innocent respects did, indeed, approximate.

In the history of a period replete with so many dismal religious developments, the Brethren of the Common Life were one positive element. A second constructive factor needing emphasis here was the impressive contemporary expansion of the network of congregations, sodalities, and corporations that professed their spiritual responsibilities fervently and publicly. The later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were especially rich in the creation of small, tightly knit bands of laymen or laymen and clerics together, all aiding attainment of that individual Christian perfection that was essential to the general elevation of public community activity, secular and sacred as well. The more the low road became the route of preference for the bulk of the powers that be in the life of Christendom, the more these Catholic high road cadres seemed to gain in popularity, particularly in the numerous cities dotting the Italian Peninsula. A Franciscan and Dominican spirituality, guided through the work of preachers as different from one another as St. Bernardino of Siena and Savonarola (1452-1498), was seminal in shaping many of them.

Another highly significant influence on such congregations was St. Catherine of Genova (1447-1510). Born into an old aristocratic family, St. Catherine was the recipient of a unique spiritual experience that gave her a life-long insight into the absolute purity of God and the corresponding horror of a failure, through sin, to fulfill one's role as a Christian. This gave her an appreciation of the suffering of the souls in Purgatory, which she also described as an ineffable joy, given their realization that their punishment was the means by which they would be united with the source of eternal love. Anyone grasping the message of St. Catherine had to understand what it meant to become a true, reform-minded, soldier of Christ. For the vision that she received was akin to that of the apostles who saw Christ in all His glory, transfigured on Mount Tabor. And no one sharing such a vision could ever have the temerity to argue that having recourse to willful papal judgments or taking advantages of loopholes in canon law gave him the "right" or the "privilege" of staining the purity of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Whoever the guiding force upon them might be, spiritual firebrands organized in confraternities took the socio-political role that was part of their path to sanctification very seriously indeed. This is vividly illustrated in a startling variety of ways, including the aforementioned dedication to resolution of public and private feuds, the creation of the so-called *Monti di Pietà* as alternative sources of credit for poverty stricken men and women who were otherwise subject to the

## AGAINST ALL?

oppressive burden of usury, and Savonarola's dramatic "bonfires of the vanities".<sup>8</sup>

One example of the corporate embodiment of such spirituality was the *Compagnia del divino amore*, the details of whose history are instructive for the future in many ways.<sup>9</sup> This was established in Genova on 26 December 1497 with a membership of thirty-six laymen and four clerics. The *Compagnia's* chief aims were the stimulation of piety, the encouragement of frequent communion, the offering of spiritual aid to condemned criminals, and the promotion of charitable work among the poor. Also important among its functions was care for the incurably ill, especially those suffering from syphilis, an office which ultimately resulted in its funding of the Genovese hospice called the *Ridotti degli'incurabili*. A Rule provided for a prior elected for the brief term of six months.

Ettore Vernazza (1470-1524), a wealthy Genovese layman, appears to have been an animating force in the *Compagnia*. Vernazza, a spiritual pupil of St. Catherine, whose first biography he wrote, was a selfless apostle of the work of "divine love". He died in the plague of 1524, after having inspired charitable activities in Naples similar to those of Genova and after having aided in the formation of a Roman

---

<sup>8</sup> Mayeur, VI, 362-395, 541-542; Hughes, III, 492-496; Oakley, pp. 113, 123, 125, 231-239, 243-248; Swanson, pp. 65-67, 142-143, 175; on St. Catherine, see Pourrat, II, 286-290.

<sup>9</sup> See Mayeur, VII, 120, 337-341, 490; J. Rao, "The Theatines and the Question of Catholic Renewal" on "For the Whole Christ" ([www.jcrao.freeshell.org](http://www.jcrao.freeshell.org)).

*Compagnia* centered round the Church of Saints Silvestro and Dorotea in Trastevere.

This Roman *Compagnia del divino amore*, established sometime between 1513 and 1517, was to prove to be of enormous influence. The Church of Saints Silvestro and Dorotea probably was chosen as its seat due to its proximity to the Genovese quarter of Rome as well as to the sympathy of its Rector, the Florentine Giuliano di Domenico Dati, a penitentiary of the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. John the Lateran. Like its model in Genova, the Roman *Compagnia* founded a hospital—that of St. Jacopo degl'incurabili at St. Giacomo in Augusta. It was also responsible for the Monastery of the *convertiti* near Santa Maria Maddalena al Corso, which aided former prostitutes. Associated with the *Compagnia*, or, later on, with one or another of its various activities, were an entire generation and more of Catholic proponents of renewal: among them, Gian Pietro Carafa (1476-1559), San Gaetano da Thiene (1480-1547), Gaspare Contarini (1483-1542), and Gian Matteo Giberti (1495-1543). Their regular gatherings in Trastevere encouraged both a positive direction for their piety and charity as well as a spiritual camaraderie in a common cause. The Catholic Reformation orders of Barnabites, Camilliani, Oratorians, Scolopi, and Somaschi were all, to a large degree, products of the *Compagnia's* influence.

A direct offspring of the Roman brotherhood was also the Order of Clerks Regular. This was first born in the mind of Gaetano da Thiene and then put into effect with the aid of Carafa and several others. Thiene envisioned it as having a positive impact by promoting a union of simple diocesan priests living a common life dedicated to prayer, proper intellectual formation, sound liturgical performance, good

## AGAINST ALL?

preaching, frequent communion, and selfless works of charity. These were all lessons that he had learned in the school of "divine love" provided by the *Compagnia*.

Two practices of the Order of Clerks Regular seem to have been particular developments of such lessons. The first of these, based on the recognition of the greater efficacy of any solidly knit organization, was the clear intention of forming an elite corps. The "Theatines", as they were commonly called, after the Latinized name of Carafa's See at Chieti, were designed for exclusivity. Not only did they keep from their ranks insufficiently rigorous members but also excluded those who might be useful elsewhere for the work of religious renewal. They thus respected an evangelical division of labor. Hence, in addition to establishing particularly strict rules for the entrance of novices that showed no concern for how this would limit their expansion, the Clerks Regular blocked the efforts of even men of the highest merit to join them. Giberti, the Bishop of Verona, whose reform constitutions for that city's clergy were later useful as models to Trent, was mercilessly excluded, despite his fervent entreaties. Joining the Theatines would have required an abandonment of his episcopal privileges, and, perhaps, brought an end to the good that he was doing in the Veneto. Indeed, if Thiene had had his way, Carafa himself would not have been admitted, since he, too, would thus be forced to retire from his work of reform in the diocese of Chieti. Only a passionate scene, during which Carafa apparently fell on his knees before Thiene, stating that he would hold the latter responsible for the state of his soul before God on Judgment Day were he not allowed to enter

the envisaged Order, occasioned an exceptional bending of what was to be the otherwise inflexible rule.

A second development of the spirit of the *Compagnia* by the Theatines was their insistence upon an absolute Apostolic Poverty. But this poverty was not elevated above charity as the highest virtue, as it had been with many of the Spiritual Franciscans. Selfless expenditure of one's energies for the sake of the poor was the rule of "divine love", and total abandonment of one's means of survival as a priest became the guidelines for the Theatines. They even rejected the model of Franciscan and Dominican mendicancy. Theatines simply "waited" for whatever aid came their way. Not only did such rigor complete their witness to the life of charitable self-abnegation; it also assisted the work for general renewal, demonstrating to the public the serious commitment of at least some priests in the midst of general clerical laxity. So sincere were the Theatines in this matter that they often lived in abysmal conditions, turning down any offer of steady contributions from regular donors, fearful as they were of anything that would compromise them and cause them to grow lax. Carafa, as required, retired from his diocese, retaining merely the title of bishop, and abandoned all of his revenues and his entire family inheritance. Even after having been named a cardinal under Paul III (1534-1549), he vigorously rebuked every effort to accord him episcopal privileges. In fact, fulfillment of the necessary duties of this princely office, for which he held the greatest respect, often forced him to appeal to the pope for defense from literal hunger. This high road was thus as difficult to negotiate as any that a man might imagine. And it was proof positive that the world that Giovanni delle Celle wished to see destroyed was not beyond redemption.

## AGAINST ALL?

*B. A Much Too Trafficked Low Road*

However impressive the travelers on the Catholic high road may have been, the contemporary low road does appear to have been much more clogged with traffic. The voyagers pushing and shoving their way down this thoroughfare plodded along in their familiar mindless way, endlessly repeating their seemingly noble slogans regarding God, man, and "the reform of head and members". As they did so, they continued to assure one another that they were on the right path to eternity. But the fact that their pleasant sounding slogans were disguising a hike away from transformation in Christ was about to be made clear for all who had eyes to see. For traffic on the low road would soon be openly identified as a march to a kingdom ruled by a doctrine of total depravity. And this doctrine would permit all of the varied "Seeds of the words" to deliver one common deathblow to the concept of correction and exaltation of the individual and his natural environment. Once again, this deathblow was to be delivered in the name of the Christian foundation vision, its apostolic doctrine, and the proper worship of God. It would prove, however, to be the most potent recipe for the victory of the strongest and most willful proponents of the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" to date. Those partially awakened Catholics who trod this path with some trepidation were to discover that they could do nothing to quell their laudable fears until they ran back to the high road with their whole heart and their whole mind. Would that escape from the low road had not proved to be as difficult both to contemplate as it was to execute!

General treatment of “a reform of head and members” as a meaningless slogan meant that those men and women who were indeed able to climb above petty contemporary concerns to contemplate the world around them from the perspective of the Eternal Word had a pretty dismal view from their loftier heights. Many reformers, horrified by what they saw through the eyes of Christ, found it hard to escape the continued grip of the despair expressed by Giovanni delle Celle. It did not seem to them that there were a sufficient number of ecclesiastical or secular elements healthy enough to encourage the rest of Christendom and give their efforts to correct and transform nature any universally substantive effect. This was the conviction of John Nider (1380-1438), a Dominican thinker passionately dedicated to Church reform no matter what the obstacles in its path. His judgment regarding the hopelessness of a “general” as opposed to a painstakingly slow and piecemeal set of improvements was expressed in a work entitled, appropriately enough, the *Formicarius*, or the *Ant Hill*:<sup>10</sup>

Is there any hope for a general reformation of the Church in its Head and its members? ‘I have’, answers Nider, ‘absolutely none in the present time, or in the immediate future; for goodwill is wanting among the subjects, the evil disposition of the prelates constitutes an obstacle, and, finally, it is profitable for God’s elect to be tried by persecution from the

---

<sup>10</sup> von Pastor, I, 355-356; for the whole discussion of the “low road”, see von Pastor, Volumes 1-VII, *passim*; Mayeur, VII, 121-207; Hughes, III, 386-497; Oakley, pp. 71-259 and *passim*; Swanson, *passim*.



## AGAINST ALL?

wicked. You may see an analogy in the art of building. An architect, however skillful he may be, can never erect an edifice unless he has suitable material of wood or stone. And if there is wood or stone in sufficient quantity, but no master-builder, there will be no proper house or dwelling. And, if you knew that a house would not be fitting for your friend, or when built would be a trouble for him, you certainly would be prudent enough not to build it.'

Temptations to take the low road to reform and recovery of the grand medieval vision were three-fold. The first and most important of these was the perennial strength of the natural, customary, human "rut". That rut was, of course, initially dug into man's soul by Original Sin. Its repeated command to commit oneself to "things as they really are" was the "stuff" that every sophist word merchant counted upon to get on with his labors on behalf of an unchangeable natural order. This rut was deepened and widened still further with each unimaginative, routine response to the repetitive evils of late medieval life. What the age needed was to attack continuously identified evils from the ever-fresh perspective provided by viewing nature with God's eyes, in and through participation in the life of the correcting and transforming Word. What the age got, for the most part, was the dull, cold shower provided by the wisdom of the rut. And, worse still, this was offered to it as though it actually were the complete, substantive message of the Catholic Faith, working in tandem with an obvious, pragmatic, common sense.

For the clergy, enslavement to the rut signified tunnel vision efforts to attend to immediate, “practical”, clerical matters. Such practical considerations, to begin with, involved doing whatever was necessary to replenish ranks horrifyingly depleted by the various bouts of Plague. Ravages caused by that hideous disease had the effect of opening the clerical estate to almost anyone available, clearly including men eager for nothing more exalted than obtaining three square meals a day with minimal harassment from either ecclesiastical or secular superiors. Rut-like pragmatism also entailed finding some kind of agreeable position once the gap in clerical ranks was eventually in some areas actually even overfilled. The emergence of an often desperate clerical proletariat and underpaid priestly lower class out of the superabundance of the ordained then fanned all manner of angry, materialist, and, ultimately, revolutionary passions. This was especially true when invidious comparisons could be made with the condition of comfortably settled monks, priests, and prelates, many of whom paid scanty wages to replacements from the ranks of the disadvantaged to carry out the functions they either could not legitimately perform or were happy to neglect.

For the laity – whose situation, once again, differed from country to country and from urban to rural areas – commitment to the rut often emerged as the potent downside to its otherwise quite positive corporate-and ritual-drenched spirit. Without reference to the Eternal Word, such a spirit inspired a conviction that one did what he did because that was what he was obliged to do on behalf of the group to which he belonged. It led to the belief that one received what he received from prescribed actions since that was what fulfillment of communal and individual ritual responsibilities

## AGAINST ALL?

definitively promised. Failure to extricate oneself from this rut meant that the fruits that flowed from one's spiritual labors were viewed mechanically, as a kind of automatic "gift", emerging necessarily out of the customary structure of things. Anyone interested in the limitations of such an outlook should take a closer look at the frustratingly repetitive problems faced by Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) in his grand tour of the German world in 1451-1452 on behalf of the joint cause of consolidation of papal power and general ecclesiastical reformation and enlightenment.<sup>11</sup>

One poignant example of the attendant danger to the Catholic vision can be seen with reference to devotion to the Real Presence, which grew ever stronger in the post-reunification era. Although Eucharistic piety is obviously an intrinsically good thing, many of the fruits that communities and individual believers seem to have expected from the display of the consecrated elements, either at Mass or in a monstrance in Church or on procession were secular, mundane, and highly fanciful.

But even when the fruits they awaited were of a higher character, believers generally lacked a recognition that the "seen" Real Presence was a consequence of a sacrifice offered by Christ the High Priest, first of all in the person of the ordained clergyman, but also with the laity united with Him through membership in His Mystical Body. Such a recognition, were it present, would have brought with it an understanding that the truly present Christ should regularly

---

<sup>11</sup> Mayeur VI, 708-709; von Pastor, II, 104-137; Oakley, pp. 113-114, 122, 239-243; Hughes, III, 340-342.

be received and used to make a sacrificial, corrective, and transforming offering of one's whole life in its natural, social context to Almighty God. For a gift is not the same thing as a sacrificial offering, and Catholics needed a sense of both gift and offering for a complete grasp of the full meaning and methodology of Christ's redemptive mission. A Christendom based solely on the concept of the gift was reminiscent of the Carolingian era—a time when Redemption for the many seemed to be a reward for the labor of the king-emperor and his clergy alone. It had discouraged that active participation in the pilgrimage to God that reformers of the High Middle Ages knew to be a vast advance on the skeletal work done to implement the Catholic vision before them.<sup>12</sup> For a central problem of the "gift mentality" was this: while one waited passively for the gift to be delivered, the rut created by an unexamined cultivation of material desires and social hatreds continued to offer men their main, substantive guidance for the conduct of their daily lives. It was this rut that preachers like St. Bernardino and Savonarola—prudently in the case of the former and tragically impatient in the case of the latter—were vigorously trying to weaken or even entirely overcome.

As noted in the previous chapter, the passions deepening that rut were legion. They pitted rich urban merchants against their less successful comrades; the entire city bourgeoisie against a proletariat that had forcibly been prevented from gaining the higher wages they expected to come its way as a consequence of the labor shortage following the Plague; the ever more impoverished lower

---

<sup>12</sup> J. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (Benziger, Two Volumes, 1950), I, 103-141; Oakley, pp. 82-130; Swanson, pp. 92-190.

## AGAINST ALL?

nobility against its higher lords, the money men of the cities, as well as a peasantry that had indeed gained the post-Plague privileges that town workers had not; and diverse local authorities mobilized against anyone threatening to impose a more centralized unity upon them. An Italian proverb of the time taught that no man was too poor to own a dagger. Whether the average individual literally owned a weapon or not, it seems all too clear that most men were not ready to drop the daggers they held so tightly in their hearts against their neighbors—even as they watched as many consecrations as time would allow in order to collect as many fruits that a given Sunday morning's viewing might provide.

There is no better way to tackle the more detailed problems of this all too natural, customary, sinful rut than by focusing our attention, first and foremost, on the Papacy's continued insistence upon grappling with its own mission in an overwhelmingly political and administrative fashion. Once again, it was not that such matters could or should have been neglected entirely by wise pontiffs. Rome's power and reputation, along with that of those forces historically allied with it, had, after all, been dragged deeply into the mud by the political and financial shenanigans of the forty-year schismatic circus. A major consequence had been that the "reform" Councils of Pisa and Constance had left the Papacy bereft of a significant proportion of its earlier economic means of survival. Separate negotiations with the various nations that had demanded recognition of their special status at Constance had repaired some of the damage, but most of these had produced temporary concordats allowing for

regular, energy draining discussions regarding future Church-State adjustments.<sup>13</sup>

Martin V (1417-1431) left Constance to return to a still troubled and half devastated Rome. He was practically penniless, unprotected, and even ridiculed by the street urchins along the way, happy to mock the hopelessness of the Homeric tasks lying ahead of him. Martin and almost every single one of his successors for the next century and more saw no other choice than to bury themselves in petty financial concerns, peninsular politics, military actions, and family alliances, merely to be able to ensure their basic economic and personal survival. Finding the means of pacifying and exploiting the resources of the lands directly under their theoretical control—a joint military, political, and business enterprise most popularly symbolized by the dubious exploits of the Della Rovere and Borgia popes, Sixtus IV (1471-1484), Alexander VI (1492-1503), and Julius II (1503-1513)—took up a much greater part of their daily schedule than any supernatural correction and transformation of Christendom as a whole. Unfortunately, it seems to have engaged the greater part of their *spirit* as well as their labor, making their own repeated reiteration of devotion to “a reform of head and members” a rut-like slogan especially offensive to men truly in love with the more substantive message of the Word in history.<sup>14</sup>

Rome’s political and military projects, difficult under the best of conditions, were made more so by the strength of the

---

<sup>13</sup> Mayeur, VI, 117-139; VII, 77-142; Hughes, III, 321-340.

<sup>14</sup> von Pastor, Vols. 1-VII passim; Mayeur, VII, 77-142, 309-491; Hughes, III, 386-497; Ullmann, pp. 306-332; Partner, pp. 396-446; Oakley, pp. 71-79.

## AGAINST ALL?

“vassals” of the Papacy, including feudal lords and bourgeois municipalities. None of these subordinates wished to be reintegrated into a seriously functioning Papal State, particularly one that might be firmly rooted in the proper hierarchy of values. Even more dangerous than rebellious subjects were the other rut-buried governments of the Italian peninsula, each of them practicing one form or another of civil control over spiritual activities. Such secular domination they justified with reference to the elegant sufficiency of arguments built up since the High Middle Ages to support mundane interference in the realm of the sublime.

Most perilous of all, in the long run, were the problems presented by what historians call the “new monarchies”: the nation-states of France, Spain, and England. These countries gradually overcame many of their recent, bloody, internal disputes and significantly rebuilt the central powers of their kings during the second half of the fifteenth century. New monarchies were in many respects more parochial minded than their “pre-apocalypse” counterparts. In fact, their mentality might be described as that of petty Italian principalities writ large. Nevertheless, when they set their mind to it, they were able to apply statist principles on a much greater scale than the Republic of Florence or the Duchy of Milan. And this then worked to the ultimate detriment of those fervent Italian models of “business as usual”, whose failure to think their way to a broader political vision ensured their conquest by such new – and much more powerful – self-interested, national entities.

New monarchies successfully blocked most papal efforts to regain a control over dioceses and taxes that had been lost during the Great Western Schism due to the maneuverings

and incompetence of the three warring papacies. Monarchical demands and dynastic ability to recruit the parochial “words” of intellectuals on behalf of claims to be a “defender of the peace” were already amply clear at the time of the Council of Constance, when standard operating procedures were altered from those of previous synods precisely in order to represent more narrow national concerns. Praise of “a reform of head and members” coming from French, Spanish, and English lips actually entailed honoring a renewal that bent the Church slavishly to their local priorities—which might or might not be in conformity with the message of the Incarnation. Given that “reform” seems overwhelmingly to have been a question of nationalization of clerical benefices, it generally was not true reform. Full-fledged “national churches”, formally in union with Rome, were, therefore, well on the way to completion. Some of the most noble-minded churchmen of the age even praised these parochial developments as a magnificent display of concern for the original intent of the founding Christian vision. Let us return to Largarde on this subject:<sup>15</sup>

From the end of the Fourteenth Century, writes Johannes Haller, the Church of England became a Church of the State. With the practical tolerance of certain pontifical interferences alien to her essence, she resembles an already completed construction that is still surrounded by scaffolding. Thus disguised, the Church of the State was already perfected under Richard II. She persisted under the Lancastrians, up until the day that a more personal monarch [i.e.,

---

<sup>15</sup> Largarde, V, 306, 308; Oakley, pp. 71-79; Hughes, III, 333-334.



## AGAINST ALL?

Henry VIII} would judge it good to pull down the useless scaffolding of theoretical privileges of the Holy See.

Approving, from his standpoint, after the Council of Constance, both the ordinance of 1407 and that through which the Dauphin confirmed it in March of 1418, Gerson congratulated the Most Christian King for 'having solemnly, through a decree registered by the Parlement, promulgated the ancient and legitimate liberties of the Gallican Church'. He judged that the king was right in holding it to be an intolerable error, blemished by an inadmissible usurpation, that anyone should accept 'any judgment of any pastor whomsoever, even the Supreme Pontiff, that might directly or indirectly oppose this decree. To protect himself against a similar audacity, the king must be able to count upon the support and obedience of his subjects, above all the clergy, who must conform to the prescriptions of the Apostle ordering us to obey the king as excelling all others, above all when he uses his legitimate power to carry out his own oath and protect ecclesiastical liberty'.

Outside political pressures would perhaps have been less troublesome had there been some unity inside Rome herself. Contemporaries might well have considered hopes for such a unity to be the utopian fantasy of men lacking in all natural common sense. For the bitter rivalries of influential families resident in the Eternal City returned along with the destitute but nonetheless still prestigious Roman Pontiffs. These heirs

of the Crescenzi and Tusculani fought with one another for positions in the College of Cardinals and for election to the See of Peter with both partisan fury as well as pure pagan joy in combat. So much did both Roman and other noble families court outside assistance and financial support that the cardinals coming from them were accurately referred to as "Florence" or "Venice" or "France" to indicate the true root of their strength as well as the central focus of their "loyalty". Of course, this supposed loyalty was often put seriously to the test. It could change in character from one moment to the next, depending upon two things: the finances and military fortunes of possible patron states on the one hand, and the political choices made by other "princes" of the Roman Church representing rival families equally committed to undermining the power of the reigning pontiff on the other.

Many of these less than noble-minded cardinals were also perfectly happy to support those decrees of the Council of Constance that emphasized conciliar supremacy. Instead of confirming papal power, they followed Constance in calling for the convening of regular synods to keep the "chief minister of the Church" in line. The Papacy had never really fully accepted the legitimacy of the legislation embodied in the decrees *Sacrosancta* and *Frequens*, but several of the councils Constance mandated were, indeed, convoked by the Holy See, and did, in fact, meet. It was in the name of Constance and its theories that the Council of Basel, which stayed in session from 1431 until 1449, soon went down the road of rabid anti-Romanism. In fact, it went so far down that road that it deprived the Papacy of literally almost every single means of material survival, deposed the "tyrannical" Eugene IV (1431-1447) who disapproved of its teaching---and

## AGAINST ALL?

was driven from the Eternal City by local opponents---and created a new schism under the antipope Felix V (1441-1449).

Although proponents of reform almost universally detested the Roman cardinals and the Roman curia, government by council soon took its place close behind these earlier villains in their ever-thickening black books. Already before Pisa and Constance, when the French Church had resorted to national synods to express her outrage over the behavior of Benedict XIII, the tendency of conciliarist theory to accomplish little more than merely cut off excessive papal funding and stop Roman nomination of unacceptable bishops and abbots had become clear. Even then, the idea of government by council and the slogan of "protection of the ancient local Church liberties" had lent themselves to appropriate explanations for the "business as usual" concerns of parochial political interests and the advancement of the careers of unworthy clerical and academic opportunists. It was at least partly due to recognition of this truth that substantial opposition to tampering with central papal authority rather quickly arose from the ranks of a French episcopacy and a University of Paris that had at first been tempted down the conciliarist path.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, constant supervision of the Papacy was tedious, and the endless Council of Basel suffered badly from neglect by the "sovereign bishops repressed by Roman tyranny" who were supposed to rule the Church through its organs. Prelates basically left its conduct in the hands of ambitious scholars and benefice-hungry lesser clerics eager to

---

<sup>16</sup> See, especially, von Pastor, I, 282-361; Mayeur, VI, 117-139; VII, 77-142; Hughes, III, 306-342; Oakley, pp. 67-79, 170-174, 203-242.

exaggerate their role in the formation of Catholic doctrine and the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. Whatever prestige that synod might have possessed was squandered through the almost unbelievable money-grubbing of Felix V. Himself a secular ruler, the master of the Duchy of Savoy in his former life, Felix was painfully aware of just how little funding the “reforms” of Basel left him and just how much this ended by depriving the Council Fathers—whatever they might actually be—of any real impact as well. For in the final analysis, the Council of Basel, as the excellent, though embittered Strasbourg reform preacher Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510) noted, was not even powerful enough to reform a single convent of nuns in the city in which it was still in session—once the local municipal council expressed its opposition to any change.<sup>17</sup> Reform, in the hands of the conciliar opponents of the plenitude of papal power, might just as readily have been labeled a total sell-out to secular self-interest and an open proclamation of ecclesiastical impotence.

In sum, despite the constantly reiterated statements of devotion to a “reform of head and members”, the low road was the route of preference in the post-reunion era. Church life was characterized by a succession of unseemly secular machinations, guided by religious leaders chosen primarily for their political and financial talents or contacts. Popes, even the best of them, were simply too busy seeking political survival to take their supernatural mission to heart for lengthy periods of time. The bad pontiffs were often under justifiable suspicion for condoning the most despicable of crimes. Government by councils had proven to be a recipe for

---

<sup>17</sup> von Pastor, II, 49.

## AGAINST ALL?

the rule of more parochial forces equally if not more deeply buried in the earthbound rut. Under these circumstances, no cynic could be blamed for identifying power and money as the main concerns of the Church or for citing indifference to the life of the spirit as positive aids to the success of a clerical career – whether in the service of Papacy or council.

No wonder, then, that the external crusading ideal that had been the chief *practical* inspiration for the medieval reform movement continued to suffer.<sup>18</sup> We last discussed this vision with reference to the bad and costly joke that crusading seemed to have become after the resounding failure of the massive efforts of Blessed Gregory X to galvanize everyone behind a grand eastern assault in the 1270's. Yes, there were a vast number of suggestions following the shock of the fall of Acre in 1291 regarding how best to move the whole enterprise forward, with calls for either one massive or many small campaigns, for the unification of the crusading orders, and for the designation of the King of France as commander in chief of the entire enterprise prominent among them. Unfortunately, however, the one truly impressive effort designed to clear the land route to Constantinople in 1396 under Sigismund (1368-1437), the King of Hungary and future Holy Roman Emperor, led to an embarrassing rout at the disastrous Battle of Nicopolis.

After that point, the movement appears to have become still more farcical. One cannot escape the conviction that for every man seriously engaged in crusading debates, there

---

<sup>18</sup> On the problems of late medieval crusading, see Riley-Smith, pp. 208-240; Hughes, III, 342-361; Mayeur, VI, 883-889; von Pastor, I-VII.

were a score of others who saw them either as merely highly entertaining rhetorical jousts or as opportunities for a storytelling useful solely for the further building of noble or merchant city prestige and privileges back at home. Certainly the work of the most active of the fourteenth and fifteenth century crusading orders, the Teutonic Knights, whose annual campaigns attracted soldiers from throughout Europe to their Baltic sphere of influence, overwhelmingly continued to appear to many reformers to be nothing other than self-serving humbug. And this became all the more obvious once the Lithuanians, whose paganism had served as justification for their “apostolate” in the region, converted to Roman Catholicism and joined in political union with the Kingdom of Poland.

Moreover, that aspect of the *internal* crusade that Innocent III and Blessed Gregory X thought most necessary for the success of the *external* one—namely, the reunion of the churches—was also impossibly obstructed by the strength of the customary rut. This is not to say that the reunion Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1446/1447) did not involve the active participation of a number of serious “high road” personalities, East and West, as well as precisely that debate of major doctrinal issues that the Greeks had always wanted and the Romans, up until this point, had sought to avoid. In fact, practically everything, from Trinitarian questions to the nature of sanctity itself, was examined at Ferrara-Florence in some detail. Nevertheless, the entire venture clearly reflected major tunnel vision problems, along with a lack of Christian charity and solid pilgrim spirit.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959), especially pp. 131-304; also, Vasiliev, 643, 647, 672-674; Ostrogorsky, pp. 562-

## AGAINST ALL?

Greek and Roman Christians had discovered ever more grounds for division since Patriarch Cerularius founded his own disputes with the West chiefly upon the matter used by the Latin Church for confecting the Eucharist: a distinction that still rankled in eastern minds in the fifteenth century. Aside from other long-term disagreements regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit, the recitation of the *filioque* clause in the Latin Creed, and mandated clerical celibacy, the atmosphere had been further poisoned due to newer debates over the fully developed concept of the plenitude of papal power, the doctrine of Purgatory, the validity of scholastic speculative theology, as well as teachings underlining the Hesychast spirituality discussed in the previous chapter. Given the increasing number and depth of the quarrels, many modern observers have quipped that perhaps the only thing that would have significantly contributed to a friendlier atmosphere would have been eastern joy at seeing Eternal Rome sacked, thereby avenging the savaging of the Queen City of Constantinople at the hands of a western “crusading” army in 1204.<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly enough, many contemporary Greek prelates, the venerable Patriarch Joseph II (1360-1439) of Constantinople among them, were deeply interested in Church reunion. On the other hand, most were so hardened in their positions that nothing would allow them to see the contradictions in their familiar apologetics, or to take the

---

564; Hussey, pp. 260-296; Mayeur, VI, 821-848; Hughes, III, 346-350; von Pastor, I, 312-325. The date of the Council’s closure is uncertain

<sup>20</sup> Mayeur, VI, 821-839.

conclusions of an honest theological debate seriously. Their narrowness of approach allowed them to attack the tyranny of papal claims while treating the Patriarch of Constantinople as “Father of the Churches” and defining his relationship to eastern bishops in a way that seemed to parallel the Roman ecclesiastical theories they claimed to detest. Their disdain for “Latin” philosophy as something utterly destructive of Tradition blinded them to the central role that the Greek Fathers had played in adapting Platonic teachings and Aristotelian logic to explicate Christian dogmas. Finally, their flawed ecclesiology and political closure to the pilgrim dance of life was reflected in their continued commitment to the idea of a necessary and eternal union of the Church with the rapidly collapsing authority of the Roman Emperor. This comes across very clearly in the response of Patriarch Antony IV (d. 1397) to the growing pretensions of the Turk-free Grand Duchy of Moscow:<sup>21</sup>

If the Byzantine Patriarch is the Ecumenical Patriarch, this is, in effect, because he is the Bishop of Constantinople, the second Rome. Rome was once the first because she was the capital of the Roman Empire: since Constantine, the true capital of the Roman Empire is Constantinople: it is just that her bishop has received the succession of the Roman Pontiff, who nevertheless retained before the ‘schism’ (let it be understood that it was Rome that caused the schism) a primacy of honor and a role of judge. The universality of the Church coincides with the notion of a universal empire, which the imperial Byzantine

---

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 300-301; also, 609-627.



## AGAINST ALL?

ideology never renounced. John Kalekas expresses this without detours when he writes, in the text cited above, that Constantinople is 'the seat of the Church of God and of the Empire that comes from him'. The most explicit presentation of this theme is nevertheless found in a much later text, one that is much closer to the disaster befalling the Empire: in 1393, Anthony IV writes to Grand Duke Basil of Moscow, who wants to suppress mention of the Byzantine Emperor in the liturgies celebrated on his territory. The letter reaffirms the universality of the Church, that of the Byzantine Empire (on which all other sovereigns depend, qualified as 'local sovereigns'), and the indissoluble bond between the two: 'The Emperor holds in the Church a place that no local sovereign can have. It is the Emperors who have confirmed religion throughout the universe, called together the Ecumenical Councils, sanctioned the canons, combated the heresies, established the primates, the division of provinces and dioceses: this is what justifies their dignity and their place in the Church. Of course the pagans created the power and role of the Emperor. Nonetheless, the sacred Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans receives from the Church today the same ordination, the same rank, the same prayers (liturgical commemorations) and great anointing. ...For Christians, there is no Church without the Emperor; Empire and Church are tightly united'. In consequence, the Patriarch, who is the symmetrical correspondent of the Emperor, is the head of the Church. Anthony calls himself 'the

universal doctor of Christians'; he 'holds the place of Christ': in Latin terms, he is the 'Vicar of Christ', a title that in the West is reserved to the Pope. This astonishing text, almost anachronistic, takes up the ancient themes of the imperial ideology, elaborated in the first centuries of the Christian Empire: as there is only one Christ in heaven, there is only one Empire on the earth, where the Emperor takes care for bodies and the Patriarch for souls.

Admittedly, there were good reasons even for open-minded easterners to consider the Council of Ferrara-Florence a less than purely spiritual event. It was a political and religious "hot potato" from the moment of its conception. Deciding who would host such a reunion synod pitted the supporters of Pope Eugenius IV (1431-1447) and the doctrine of the plenitude of papal power against the Council of Basle (1431-1444) with its call for a constitutional and synodal form of Church governance. Finding a home for the gathering stirred up international and interurban fears and rivalries, while its change of venues reflected the troubled state of a mid-century Italy plagued by the ambitions of the Duke of Milan and the ravages of the *condottieri* at his service. Besides this, the choice of the Eastern Emperor for a papal-guided council was understood by many to be a basically military decision, one that favored Eugenius over the conciliarists simply for being most capable of eliciting aid for a beleaguered Constantinople from western princes.

A determined imperial concern for gaining the succor of the West, together with the good will of the universally esteemed patriarch and the eagerness for a serious reunion on the part of the pope and a number of Latin and Greek

## AGAINST ALL?

prelates, ultimately succeeded in bringing the council to life in 1438. What then took place was a late medieval *Blitzkrieg*, with the Latins overwhelming their generally much less well-educated eastern counterparts on issue after issue. The Greek Acts of the Council record numerous debates in which the westerners clearly demonstrated four crucial points: that their supposed errors were actually essential developments of doctrine explicating the unchanging Faith under pressure of historical challenges to its teaching; that Church Fathers and saints honored by all of the synod's participants could be shown to agree with what the Latins had said and done; that a number of the causes for division were due to exaggerated concern for purely local customs; and that failure to allow a pilgrim Church to deepen her knowledge and presentation of Catholic doctrine was tantamount to a declaration of paralysis condemning the Mystical Body of Christ to impotence in the face of fresh dangers to religion.

Men like Bessarion of Nicaea (c. 1403-1472), Isidore of Kiev (1385-1463), the lay imperial advisor George Scholarius (c. 1400-c. 1473), and the patriarch himself were deeply impressed by what they heard. Their realization that the grounds for the schism were to a large degree illusory, and that Greek adherence to an unexamined Tradition had blinded them to their own internal disagreements on many important matters, led them to support the Union of the Churches. As Scholarius noted:<sup>22</sup>

But you all see that the Latins have contended  
brilliantly for the faith so that no one with a sense of

---

<sup>22</sup> Gill, pp. 225-226.

justice has any reason to reproach them....They brought forward from the common Fathers of the Church the six most renowned in dignity, wisdom and the struggles for the faith (I pass over the others) as witnesses of their doctrine, each of whom must be judged the equal of all the men in the world, and those not just incidentally and casually but as if they were for us judges of the present dispute. They argued so precisely and clearly, expressing the question in exact words as befits teachers, appending also the reasons and the texts of Holy Scripture from which they had drawn that doctrine as an inevitable conclusion, just as they culled others from other texts....Besides, they put forward others from the common Fathers, those of the East I mean, adorned with an equal wisdom and honour who said, they too, just the same as those others, though not so plainly, if their words are examined in a spirit of truth and wisdom, and they offered in proof of their doctrine no merely specious reasoning, no coercion, but everything straightforwardly and as flowing from the divine Scriptures and the Fathers. On our part nothing was said to them to which they did not manifestly reply with wisdom, magnanimity and truth, and we have no Saint at all who clearly contradicts them. If indeed there were such, he should in some fashion or manner be made to harmonise with the majority much more justly than that the multitude of the Teachers should be forced into his mould....Nor shall we say that the Doctors are mutually contradictory, for this is to introduce complete confusion and to deny the whole of the

## AGAINST ALL?

faith. Who is so simple-minded as to believe that the Latins wish to destroy the faith and to adulterate the trinitarian theology of all the Doctors? Surely a man who affirms this deserves nothing but ridicule, for no accusation would be disproved by more numerous, more weighty and more truthful arguments than this one.

Almost all of their colleagues joined these men in accepting Union in July of 1439, but seemly more out of bewilderment, frustration, and homesickness than any truly deep conviction. A few, such as Mark of Ephesus (1392-1444), remained adamantly and openly opposed to reconciliation throughout the council and its conclusion. Their grounds for rejecting it were based upon a mixture of their general parochial stubbornness with the particular accusation that the documents supposedly demonstrating the agreement of the eastern and western saints had been distorted at Latin hands. Hence, Bessarion's justified lamentation:<sup>23</sup>

They brought forward passages not only of the western teachers but quite as many of the eastern...to which we had no reply whatsoever to make except that they were corrupt and corrupted by the Latins. They brought forward our own Epiphanius as in many places clearly declaring that the Spirit is from the Father and the Son: corrupt we said they were. They read the text mentioned earlier in Basil's work against Eunomius: in our judgment it was

---

<sup>23</sup> Gill, p. 224.

interpolated. They adduced the words of the Saints of the West: the whole of our answer was 'corrupt' and nothing more. We consider and consult among ourselves for several days as to what answer we shall make, but find no other defence at all but that...

Patriarch Joseph died in Florence. Bessarion and Isidore went on to become cardinals. Mark, along with those of his compatriots who had opposed the Union in their hearts while voting in its favor, stayed on the offensive after returning home, maintaining an unchanging polemic that ignored the substance of what was discussed at the council. They continued to harp regularly on the same rut-inspired themes: that the Latins were *ipso facto* heretics; that they were indisputable manipulators of fraudulent texts; and that the Greeks who had accepted the Union had done so either due to unbearable political pressure or to outright bribery. So effective was this approach that, despite the best efforts of the succeeding patriarch, the emperor did nothing to promote the work of Florence. So effective was it that George Scholarius — an admirer of western theology, a translator of St. Thomas Aquinas, and one of the most scathing critics of the ignorance and parochialism of his fellow Greeks at the synod — repudiated his earlier acceptance of East-West friendship. This rejection of the Church Union translated into a general indifference to the outcome of the final conflict with the Turks in 1453. And it may not be far from the truth to say that the Sultan in effect rewarded Scholarius, now known by the monastic name of Gennadius, for his anti-western sentiment—by calling upon him to become the first Patriarch of Constantinople under Moslem rule. In short, another nail had been driven into the coffin of East-West understanding,

## AGAINST ALL?

burying hopes of Christian unity still further. Willful, stubborn, parochial-minded words had trumped a proper respect for the message of the Word.<sup>24</sup>

But no one should think that most westerners were particularly far-sighted in outlook either. Petty political and military goals designed to gain the power and riches that “common sense” told them were needed to keep the machine of “nature as is” on even keel were everywhere more important in the minds of most clergy, kings, princes, and merchant republics than unifying Christians and protecting Christendom from invasion. Italian maritime cities in particular judged the level of their support for the Christian East on the basis of the financial gains that might flow from its success. They had begun to weigh the greater profit that might be realized through active cooperation with the Ottoman Turks from the moment that ferrying infidel soldiers and families across the Bosphorus from Asia into Europe proved to be lucrative. A public reiteration of old crusading themes was of significance to them—as it was to many a powerful Christian king or knight—only insofar as it could be effective in stalling for time as they eked out a bit more gold from their “business as usual” enterprises.

We have seen that when confronted with the self-seeking of the late Empire, St. Augustine had wondered aloud if there were anyone who was still concerned for the common good. When looking at the relationship of East and West from the standpoint of the Moslem threat, and with respect to the union of the Churches that would strengthen Christendom’s

---

<sup>24</sup> Gill, especially pp. 131-304, 349-411; see, also, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 5 (1854), 178.

ability to respond to it, one is tempted to pose the same question. Was there anyone who put the cause of the Eternal Word and the defense of the lands where His message had taken root above the mystical, ethnic, or varied materialist demands of their own parochial tunnel vision?

Yes, some men were, such as those who took part in the Battle of Varna in 1444. It was here that one of the chief Latin Fathers at the Council of Florence, Giulio Caesarini, died, while serving as papal legate with the unsuccessful crusading army Eugenius had helped to raise for the defense of Constantinople. Clearly, however, most were not. It is little wonder then, that Pope Pius II (1458-1464), in the wake of the capture of Constantinople in 1453, when the need for a true military crusade was the greatest, lamented the western game-playing of his age, and placed greater hopes in the conversion of Mohammed the Conqueror than in aid from the hypocritical Christian population.<sup>25</sup>

In a long and eloquent letter he attempted to convert the Sultan Mohammed II to Christianity. If he accepted baptism, the Pope wrote, a second Roman Empire might arise in the East, with Mohammed at its head. Pius reminded the Sultan that Clovis had brought Christianity to the Franks, and Constantine to the Romans; he depicted a Europe once more united and, for the first time in centuries, at peace. The epistle...was widely circulated in Europe, but whether it ever even reached the Sultan is not known.

---

<sup>25</sup> J.H. Plumb, *Renaissance Profiles*, p. 102; see, also, von Pastor, II; Hughes, III, 356-360; Reilly-Smith, pp. 235-236.



## AGAINST ALL?

Despairing of both Turkish conversion as well as princely assistance, Pius assumed personal leadership of the crusade that he had called to liberate the East. His subsequent death in Ancona, while vainly awaiting the help of the flower of western chivalry—which had organized many a splendid banquet as pleasant venues in which to take the Cross—demonstrated how little even a pope could do when one was actually aroused to take his responsibilities as defender of Christendom from external assault seriously.<sup>26</sup>

The Duke of Burgundy now said that he was too old to come. The King of France, exasperated by the Pope's recent support of the accession to the Kingdom of Naples of Ferrante of Aragon, sent word that he could join no Crusade so long as he was still at war with England. England—torn by the Wars of the Roses—sent a similar message. Frederick III was engaged in invading the Kingdom of Hungary, while the envoys of that country—which alone, in the recent past, had defended Europe against the Turks—bitterly complained of this new menace. No single voice was raised to echo the old Crusade cry: '*Deus lo vult*—it is God's will!' Of the Italian rulers, Borso d'Este declared that his astrologers forbade him to attend; Malatesta suggested the employment of Italian mercenaries, but only to get their pay for himself. The Florentines and Venetians both feared the loss of their eastern trade, but Venice promised to

---

<sup>26</sup> Plumb, *Renaissance Profiles*, p. 101, 104-105; Reilly-Smith, pp. 235-236.

furnish sixty galleys, if every expense was paid from the general treasury and she was given the supreme command of the naval forces and awarded the spoils of the war. 'To a Venetian', the Pope commented, 'everything is just that is good for the State; everything pious that increases the Empire'.

In all the history of the Crusades there are few episodes more pathetic than this journey of the dying Pope up the Tiber and across the Apennines—well aware that his enterprise was doomed. Often, as they drew near the coast, his attendants would draw the curtains of his litter, so that he might not see the bands of deserters who, scenting the prospect of defeat, were fleeing home before they had even begun to fight...The last Crusade was over, with the death of the only man who had believed in it.

Pius II was an exceptional figure even in Rome herself. His own cardinals and curia looked upon his crusading fervor as nothing more than so much madness. After all, it interfered with the more practical business of local political and financial gain. Their calculations allowed no role for "fools for Christ", with their naïve commitment to the common cause of the Word made flesh. As Chateaubriand would later remark, there are ages when far-sightedness and commitment are taken as signs of dull-witted limitation rather than prophetic genius and virtue. This was definitely one of them. It was an era that belonged to the Rut Triumphant when what was needed for the cause of Christ was an age dominated by the Church Militant. In order for that to happen, however, a better ecclesiology explaining

## AGAINST ALL?

what the nature of that militancy truly ought to be was desperately required. In short, the Long March to the death camp governed through the triumph of the willful was definitively picking up speed.

*C. The Progress of the "Seeds of the Words"*

But let us remember that Christendom's burial in mankind's Original Rut was not the sole reason for the traffic on the clogged low road to "a reform of head and members" in the post-reunification period. "Seeds of the words" continued to grow after 1418 as fast as, if not even more swiftly than beforehand. These more conscious and thoughtful stimuli to the Long March to 1517 and beyond must be addressed in two separate steps. First of all, we need to look to the "seed" represented by the intellectual and spiritual forces that had emerged before the mini-apocalypse of the fourteenth century and had already once combined to chastise the Roman Church for "abandoning the Christian foundation vision". Secondly, we must turn our attention to an examination of another such germ, emerging from negative aspects of the "back to the sources" movement encouraged in parallel but different ways by Renaissance Humanism and the *devotio moderna*.

Little more needs to be added to what has already been said about the influence of Marsilius of Padua. We have seen that he was too complex, innovative, and contradictory a voice to found a discernable school of thought to carry on his teaching. But, once again, the radical legalism that Marsilius represented and the spirit behind his vision of a single, secular-religious community guided by the civil authorities

was certainly very much alive in the practical political activity of the Italian city-states of his home peninsula. Although Marsilius' writings figured prominently in the *Songe de Vergier*, the collection of legalist texts commissioned by King Charles V (1364-1380) of France, and Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469-1527) *Prince* (1515) seems to take up his concern for a monist, secular-guided society, Ockham's more Catholic-sounding approach to secularization—his alternative good story—also played a role in both. Furthermore, a French and Machiavellian hunt for a secular-sacred State whose political decisions changed according to whatever “worked” to confirm and strengthen the sway of a given willful ruler certainly sounds more like Ockham than it does Marsilius. Nevertheless, it is only the continued presence of at least some Catholic faith or the total lack thereof that indicates whether the influence of the Englishman or the Italian was ultimately the greater.

William of Ockham's extreme Nominalism continued to thrive. Eighteen new universities were founded in Europe between 1348 and 1506, and the *via moderna* in philosophy dominated most of them, including Innocent III's great “think tank” of Paris herself. Men ranging from Nicholas of Autrecourt (c. 1299-c. 1369) to Pierre d'Ailly (1350-c.1420) and Jean Gerson (1363-1429) demonstrated its hold on the greatest minds of the age. The new (1477) University of Tübingen, with its admittedly somewhat eclectic luminary, Gabriel Biel (c. 1420-1495), was particularly important in Nominalism's immediate pre-Reformation history. Everywhere that the so-called *via moderna* in philosophy ruled, the overriding importance of the divine will was stressed. Yes, men like Biel used divine willfulness to emphasize the arbitrary contract that God had made with men that happily---and irrevocably-

## AGAINST ALL?

-- guaranteed that their good works would gain them eternal salvation. But other Nominalists feared that his position unacceptably limited God's liberty, cheapened appreciation of His gratuitous gift to men, lulled them into a semi-Pelagian smugness regarding the value of their free will actions, and thereby contributed to the *quid pro quo* "rut" mentality poisoning the age. While struggling towards Luther's God of absolute willfulness, unmoved by "good" human actions, they satisfied themselves with a basically willful and arbitrary Church. Hence, the approach of the influential and deeply pious theologian and reformer, Pierre d'Ailly:<sup>27</sup>

But we are not altogether without clues to the spirit that animated his reforming activities. And those clues point—unexpectedly perhaps, but certainly with no little insistence—to the centrality of his preoccupation with ecclesiastical authority. Even his early theological writings make unambiguously clear how very great an emphasis he was prone to place, in matters religious as well as moral and legal, on will, power, and authority. At its very deepest, according to him, the roots of obligation are engaged, not in the persuasive grounds of reason, but in the executive prescriptions of the will. It is not from the rational ends it serves, however compelling they maybe, that

---

<sup>27</sup> Oakley, pp. 310-311, 130-174; Mayeur, VI, 103-116, 290-293, 360-395; Hughes, III, 225-228; Lagarde, III, 358-377; V, 290-337; J. Farthing, *Thomas Aquinas and Gabriel Biel* (Duke, 1988); F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (Paulist Press, Nine Volumes, 1983), III, 122-180, 203, 231-247, 331.

every law, divine and natural no less than human, derives its obligating force, but rather from the command or prohibition of the competent superior authority.

Of all the themes emphasized in the imperial coalition of the first half of the fourteenth century, the most high-minded was the summons to "return" to the life of Apostolic Poverty. When such a call does not dethrone charity as the highest of virtues and works together with a healthy pilgrim spirit accepting the reality of historical change and development of doctrine it can serve as one of the most noble of tools for remedying the practical conduct of life according to the dictates of "nature as is". We have seen that the Observant Franciscan cultivation of Apostolic Poverty was just such a "high road" venture in the era under consideration, and one that did indeed avoid the false steps taken by its Spiritual forbears. So, also, was the path that was trod by the Theatines. But, unfortunately, banners tying Apostolic Poverty with a foundation vision filled with heretical implications for the structure of the Church as a whole were hoisted alongside those proclaiming more modest goals.

Remaining English Lollards continued to wave one such flag, but Czech supporters of Apostolic Poverty raised most of them.<sup>28</sup> The latter had been stimulated by earlier developments in Britain following the marriage of King Richard II to a Czech bride and the subsequent quite close ties of Oxford with the new imperial University of Prague.

---

<sup>28</sup> On Huss and the Hussites, see Mayeur, VI, 342-352; VII, 443-466 Hughes, III, 306-343; von Pastor, I, 161-163; Oakley, pp. 68-69, 178-212, 294-301; Cohn, pp. 205-222; E. M. Jones, pp. 149-200.

## AGAINST ALL?

Students returning to Central Europe from studies in England brought Wycliffe's writings with them, where they influenced Jan Huss (c. 1369-1415), priest and preacher in Czech at the Bethlehem Chapel in the imperial city.

It was not really Wycliffe's heresy that gripped this brilliant but somewhat inconsistent reformer's mind and heart. Nor was it any desire to offer the laity an excuse to expropriate the clergy to satisfy its own equally earthbound ambitions. Rather, Hus was attracted by his perception of Wycliffe as a militant fellow traveler of an already potent Bohemian reform movement seeking both a pious secular society as well as a purified Church. Wycliffe's symbolic appeal to Huss was so great that he began appropriating the Englishman's heretical terminology in defending his own generally much more moderate outlook.

This was at least partly due to the fact that the atmosphere at the University of Prague was also heated by a bitter rivalry between German supporters of the Nominalism of the *via moderna* and Czechs who, like Wycliffe, were Realists of the *via antiqua* school. Whatever the reasons, Huss' insistence on calling upon the English heretic's arguments bewildered his judges at the Council of Constance—both Cardinals Zabarella and D'Ailly as well as Jean Gerson. Nevertheless, as good Nominalists themselves, the judges saw contumacy before an assertion of the divine authority of the Church as more than sufficient grounds for his condemnation anyway. Huss' judgment and execution, despite the safe conduct provided him by the Emperor Sigismund, intensified Bohemian rage against a corrupt and unjust Church that the dead man's preaching had helped mightily to arouse.

Still, the Hussite Movement that takes its name from him was highly complex. Yes, it exalted the role of the Bible in Church life, though not everywhere in the all-encompassing spirit that Wycliffe had encouraged. Moreover, rather than rejecting Transubstantiation, a large number of Huss' supporters gave voice to the growing Eucharistic piety of the age, expressed, in their case, in a longing to receive Holy Communion under the forms of both bread and wine. And, far from favoring the imperial State authorities who were condemned for betraying Huss, it pursued still more vigorously the earlier Czech passion for a general reform of all of society, lay as well as clerical. Unfortunately, this passion, in the hands of its much more radical Taborite faction, evolved into a demand for the swift creation of a Republic of Virtue, participation in which was made dependent upon one's public commitment to personal holiness—and apparently his ethnic background as well. Under such conditions, the painfully difficult confirmation, correction, and transformation of nature proclaimed through the message of the Word in history to all of mankind took on more and more of the characteristics of a willful, parochial, revolutionary Purge. Nuance and self-criticism in this zealous religious cleansing were as little welcome as any other satanic temptation. Besides, how could a Czech saint, an "obvious" servant of God, support anything that was wrong? Or a German sinner, an "obvious" tool of the devil, defend anything that might actually be right?

A joint Church and State crusade against self-proclaimed rebels to the Council of Constance and the Empire was inevitable. But insofar as that crusade failed to recognize and deal with the complexity of the natural and supernatural issues involved in the Hussite uprising as a whole, it



## AGAINST ALL?

threatened merely to intensify outrage over the pursuit of rut-inspired political and personal self-interests under the masquerade of service to the universal cause of Christendom. Failed or woefully incomplete efforts to separate the political from the religious elements active in the whole Hussite Movement occupied a good deal of the energy of the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire of the fifteenth century. Such efforts were stalled by the conflict of the Council of Basel with Pope Eugenius IV. They were also thwarted by the violent internal squabbles of the moderate Utraquists—those concerned primarily with the reception of the Sacrament under both species—and the more radical Hussite factions. The final result was two-fold. Frustrated radicals nursed a bitterness ready to explode anew when a stronger enemy of the complex and serious work required to assure true transformation of men and society in Christ appeared on the central European scene in the first decades of the following century. Meanwhile, the first purely local and parochial-minded “church” on European soil—that of the Bohemian Utraquists—was pragmatically “accepted” by Roman pontiffs who understood that its basic subordination of a universal religion to national religious feeling bode no good for the future.<sup>29</sup>

“Seeds of the words” nurtured in a millenarian and apocalyptic environment were soon to be powerfully fertilized by a general account of the whole of history highly detrimental to the Roman Catholic Church and her work of correction of nature and transformation of all things in Christ. For mobilization of the past, along with the power to define

---

<sup>29</sup> See von Pastor, II, 441-445; III, 213-239; Oakley, pp. 178-212.

the “true” foundation stones of western civilization and identify their “real” friends and enemies, was about to slip more definitively from her hands. Both were to fall under the control of men *literally* more interested in “words” than in the substance of the Word; words that would then be shaped into black legends and alternative good stories manipulated by a Grand Coalition of the Status Quo that would now finally emerge from the underbrush into the full light of day.

Negative features of Renaissance Humanism powerfully assisted this unfortunate development.<sup>30</sup> Problems arose partly because of the exaggerated reactions of many humanists to the admittedly flawed tunnel vision of high medieval logicians, Aristotelians, and legalists. There is no doubt that such men’s militant narrowness had indeed done much to weaken that western cultivation of literary culture that was still very strong in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Alas, humanist rage grew to the point of turning an understandable campaign for the proper appreciation of ancient rhetorical culture into a real historical vendetta against a stylistically barren and therefore supposedly totally barbaric medieval civilization.

Systematic, speculative theology, the kind of theology that leaned heavily upon logic and other philosophical tools

---

<sup>30</sup> On these negative features in general, see Hughes, III, 361-385; von Pastor, I, 1-56, II, 165-214, and I-VII, *passim*; Dawson, pp. 42-63; Oakley, pp. 251-259; Swanson, pp. 175-177; Mayeur, VII, 507-513, 617-673; Plumb, P. Partner, *Renaissance Rome* (U. of California, 1971), especially pp. 201-226; E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Norton, 1968); E. Cassirer, ed., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (U. of Chicago, 1948); J. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, 1987).

## AGAINST ALL?

to build the grand cathedrals of Christian thought characteristic of medieval scholasticism, was among the prime targets of their barbs. The theme of a blind Dark Age, guided by overblown and drably expressed dogmatic and canonical visions out of touch with natural human life, was created. Such a thesis could not help but appeal to varied representatives of that wide swath of the population outraged by the financial grasping of the Avignon Papacy, the two and three courts of the Great Western Schism, and the political, military, and social disasters of the fourteenth century in general. It also attracted those followers of the *devotio moderna* who felt that medieval Christianity had chained the Faith in soul-killing theological, philosophical, and legalist fetters, thereby drying up the literary sources of past religious inspiration, which would have provided a healthy stimulus to the intuitive and more solid spiritual sense of the simple human heart.

An anti-medieval vendetta was accompanied by an unquestioning cult of the ancient world, an adulation of *its* founders and *their* will, and a desire to return to a life shaped by the choices outlined by them in the past. In short, a passion was awakened on the part of certain humanists and kindred spirits for a Second Childhood, whose heroic interpreters and standard bearers the man of letters now became. All of the talent, wit, and literary feel for "turning an argument" that lay at the disposal of the rhetorician committed to such a Second Childhood was put to the work of praising the genius of the Fathers of Antiquity as an infallible given. Similarly, those who suggested any need for prudence and criticism of the distant past were mocked as impassioned but obscurantist cave dwellers.

It was to this preferential option for the ancient that later historians awarded the positive title of the Renaissance. Rediscovery and imitation of ancient man, its cultists insisted, would inevitably create a better world in all regards, spiritual as well as natural. On the one hand, a less intellectual, less structured, less legalistic, more scriptural, and more patristic-minded Christianity would thereby be fashioned. On the other, Greco-Roman philosophical, political, and social wisdom, expressed in that accessible literary form that the aesthetic spirit of classical culture considered to be the best way of spreading knowledge, would guide men to a more ordered and fulfilling secular life. Both, together, as the Neo-Platonist, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) indicated, would permit "man the microcosm" to put all the wisdom of the universe at his service to complete his emergence from the darkness of the cave into the fullness of the light, there to fulfill his superhuman potential. The discovery of a literal New World at the very end of the fifteenth century seemed to confirm the validity of a fresh hope for the dawn of a bright and better morn, built ever more firmly upon the wisdom of the ancient founders of Greco-Roman-Christian civilization.

Although the attack on the past was noticeable everywhere that the influence of the Renaissance penetrated, the bitterness of the battle of the cult of Second Childhood against medieval obscurantism was perhaps most harsh in the Lowlands and the German world. It was here that the satirical writings of the greatest of the proponents of a happier, more intuitive, ancient Christianity, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), had their most powerful impact. It was here also that that famous struggle of contemporary scholarly demands against criticism of the possible accompanying

## AGAINST ALL?

dangers known as the *Reuchlinstreit* burst out, firing up the passion for the religious revolution that was to follow literally hot upon its heels.<sup>31</sup>

This conflict pitted Renaissance Humanism in the person of Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) and his supporters against the forces marshaled behind the Catholic theologian, Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469-1523). Reuchlin, a Hebrew scholar among his many other accomplishments, argued that a familiarity with the books of the Cabbala was essential to mastering a complete knowledge of the structure of that language and the proper meaning of its words. Pfefferkorn, a Jewish convert, was horrified by the anti-Christian, anti-Creationist, and pronounced magical spirit of the cabbalistic writings, along with the discernable impact reading them had on believers in both the New and the Old Covenants. Brilliantly satirized by men like Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523) in the *Letters of Obscure Men* (1515-1517), Pfefferkorn was enraged by the flippancy with which many humanists, whether sincerely or cynically, were treating the dangers that playing with false ideas could pose to Christian Faith and morality. And it is indeed with his well-grounded rage and fear for Catholic Truth that we arrive at the central problem of the low road followers of the Renaissance.

That there was an immense value to Renaissance critiques of the hidebound character of the universities, the gross superstitions of many individual clerics and monks, and the

---

<sup>31</sup> On Erasmus, see L. Halkin, *Erasmus* (Blackwell, 1994); on the *Reuchlinstreit*, see Mayeur, VII, 619, 845-846; E.M. Jones, pp. 225-255; E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 105-106; von Pastor, VII, 319-325.

sterile use of speculative logic in the hands of mediocre disciples of the great thinkers of both the *via antiqua* as well as the *via moderna* is undeniable. But much Renaissance cultivation of a Second Childhood mentality amounted to little more than a simplistic promotion of yet another depressing form of tunnel vision: one that adulated the ancient literary past and its sophist non-speculative elements. Many Renaissance men of tunnel vision insisted that the literary approach was *the* guide of man through earthly life to eternal union with God, and that *only* literati could lead this pilgrim enterprise. The rhetorician became the heroic key to an elevated temporal existence and to eternity as well. He was both political and social orator as well as theologian, philosopher, and preacher, all at one and the same time. Should the Church remain closed to his rhetorical preoccupations and endeavors, such blindness would signify that the Mystical Body of Christ was herself an enemy of man and God. In short, the spirit of Isocrates had returned with a vengeance.

Alas, the Church was all too *open* to the Second Childhood mentality in the era of the Rut Triumphant, when whatever "worked" to gain political and financial security seemed best for the cause of the Word Incarnate. She, like the State, quickly learned that the employment of a talented humanist as a spokesman was, as Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402) of Milan ruefully noted, worth a great deal more than a well-outfitted army for protecting the demands of "business as usual". The blessings of "nature as is" that the humanist was capable of enumerating were legion; the noble sounding "appropriate explanations of the satisfaction of passion" that he could provide were inimitable. Active in Church service from the days of Poggio

## AGAINST ALL?

Bracciolini (1380-1459) onwards, humanist invasion of the papal court was especially assured when two of their number, Nicholas V (1447-1455) and Pius II (1458-1464), ascended to the throne of Peter.

An outline of all the specific problems born through abandonment to the Second Childhood tunnel vision of certain Renaissance humanists would be a Herculean task. Still, its general profoundly negative effect must be emphasized. Rather than a salutary liberation of Christianity from the deadening fetters of speculative scholastic and legal thought, all that such abandonment achieved was to tighten the grip upon the Church of the academic sophist, the unthinking pedant, the lover of words for words' sake, and the murderer of a living Tradition that had actually been maturing in wisdom and in pilgrim spirit since its infancy. In the name of the blessings offered by Seeds of the Logos and the childhood of the Faith, this new parochialism worked to stifle the present existence offered by a pilgrim-minded Church that had corrected, transformed, and matured these ancient germs and that early youth more fully than any primitive Christian could have imagined.

Sad to say, such frivolous playing with words for words' sake had more disastrous effects still. On the one hand, the supporter of a Second Childhood mentality ridiculed the brilliant achievements of medieval speculative theology, philosophy, and mystical thought, and mocked the canonical and administrative backbone of the Church—once again, her whole living Tradition and Body. On the other, he blithely presumed that nothing around him could ever undermine his simple, intuitive Christian Faith and behavior. But this was all too far from the truth. Even if the amount of humbug in

the commentaries on the glosses of the tomes of the great speculative philosophers and theologians equaled their solid meat for the mind, a total destruction of the work of the intellect was no way to end the influence of truly obscurantist and secularizing dross. With substantive thought denigrated, the average priest, noble, merchant, or peasant buried in the routine of the era of the Rut Triumphant would not know what to say to defend Catholic Faith and morals should the day come that they would be subject to serious attack. At best, he would be able to point to his personal sentiments and passionate emotions, or call up the prettiest words he could string together from Scripture or pious, mystical writers to emphasize his intuitive feelings. At worst, the pressure finally to think through the rut of his daily routine might cause him to see that this, for him, was indeed based on sand; that the logic of a life that really required little or nothing in the way of any sacrificial change, perhaps actually demanded a frank acceptance of the vision of “nature as is”. All that was then needed was the opening of a full-fledged recruitment center for the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo to entice him to fly the Catholic coop and join in the open warfare of the “old time words” against the Eternal Word.

Once again, there is no better commentator on the dangers of this anti-intellectual Second Childhood approach than the great twentieth century English historian of the Roman Catholic Church, Philip Hughes. It is worth quoting at some length his joint critique of the work of the *devotio moderna* and of Desiderius Erasmus—much of which he quite rightly appreciates—in order to get a complete sense of the



## AGAINST ALL?

suicidal disarmament their deconstruction of the medieval speculative achievement ensured:<sup>32</sup>

That goodness matters more than learning, that it is the mistake of mistakes 'to prefer intellectual excellence to moral' no one will ever contest; nor that the learned may need, even frequently, to be reminded of this. But of all forms of goodness truth is the most fundamental, and yet, while learning is the pursuit of truth, it is hardly deniable that the author of the *Imitation*—and others of this school with him—do continually suggest, at least, an opposition between advance in virtue and devotion to learning, even to sacred learning; and certainly the tone of such admonitions is far removed from the teaching of St. Thomas that learning—even the study of letters—is a most suitable ascetic discipline for religious.

The facts are, however, that to all but a very select few, knowledge, even of truths about supernatural reality, only comes through the ordinary natural channels—faith is by hearing. It is the natural human intelligence that must lay hold of the truths of faith and make the judgment that these are things it must believe. It is no part of Christian perfection to neglect the ordinary means of making contact with these truths—namely the teaching of those already learned in them—and to trust for a knowledge of them to the possibility of the extraordinary favor of a special

---

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, III, 221, 222-224, 227.

personal revelation. And although it is most certainly true that theological learning is by no means a prerequisite for sanctity, such learning remains, nevertheless, a necessary instrument for those whose lot it is to journey towards sanctity by guiding others thither. Hence, when good men begin to suggest that the world of piety can manage very well—if not, indeed, very much better—without the presence of theologians acting upon it, there is surely something wrong; and when priests write books about holy living which suggest that the theologians are more likely to go to the bad through learned vanity than to save their souls through the deeper knowledge of divine truth that is theirs, there is something very wrong indeed. Once more, we are brought up against the all-important role of theological learning as the salt that keeps Christian life healthy. And what theology is to piety, metaphysical truth is to theology; for it is the natural condition, the *sine qua non* of healthy intellectual certitude in the mind of the theologian. Once the direction of so delicate a thing as the *devotio moderna* passes into the hands of those unlearned in theology, all manner of deviation is possible. It can become a cult of what is merely naturally good, a thing no worse—but no more spiritual—than, say, the cult of kindness, courtesy, tidiness and the like. And what the master, unwittingly, is soon really teaching is himself; he is the hero his disciples are worshipping; there are, in the end, as many Christianities as there are masters, and chaos begins its reign.

## AGAINST ALL?

Once it ceases to be recognized that there must exist an objective rule by which to judge the whole business—theory and practice, maxims, counsels, exhortations, ideals, and criticism of other ways—of the inner life and the business of the director with the directed, and that this objective rule is the science of the theologian, substitute rules will be devised to fill the absent place, rules which, there is every chance, will be no more than the rationalization of a man's chosen and preferred activities. Someone, somewhere, must be interested in compunction's definition, or it will soon cease to be understood that there can be, and is, a certainty about what compunction is and what it is not; and if that certainty goes, very strange things indeed will begin to wander about, claiming the name of compunction in the lost land that once was Christendom.

The Christian mind, then, unable to think itself out of the impasse to which 'thought' has brought it, and mortally uneasy at the now unresolved fundamental contradiction that the teachings of Faith and the findings of reason may be incompatible, is bidden for its salvation resolutely to ignore the contradiction, to stifle reason, and to seek God in the interior life; again, to seek Him with what? With a mind accepting on Faith what it knows may be impossible? The eternal lesson recurs, that we cannot manage our religious affairs without true philosophy, however elemental; that the true religion does not survive healthily unless philosophy flourishes. For without

philosophy, or with a philosophy that is false, the educated mind turns to skepticism—theoretical or practical; and assents to religious truth made by a mind that is skeptical about natural truth, produce in the end superstition; and from the educated mind the poison seeps down, until in time it corrupts the faith of the whole community.

Further gruesome developments accompanied the savaging of the medieval Catholic achievement, digging paralyzed Christendom's grave still deeper. As unilateral Christian disarmament in the intellectual realm proceeded, the full character of the ancient world began more and more to manifest itself. This fullness had been hidden by the long centuries of Catholic effort to work only with the Seeds of the Logos to be found therein, to eliminate their inevitable errors, and to destroy their exaggerations by harmonizing them all within the proper hierarchy of values. A general adulation of the unadulterated achievement of antiquity meant that everything that was at worst unacceptable and at best disordered came back with a clean bill of approval. For the Second Childhood mentality insisted that the will of the founders of western civilization, as revealed through their great literary works and historical accomplishments, had to be obeyed lest the blindness of obscure men continue to darken Christian Europe.

The result was the same as if children, hearing a long lost relative with the gift of the gab praised by their parents for his unquestionable grandeur, were suddenly to meet him and discover that in addition to being a good storyteller he was also a committed and openly self-proclaimed pederast. Interestingly enough, the cult of Second Childhood actually

## AGAINST ALL?

did end by convincing a number of Renaissance humanists that this particular vice should be rehabilitated along with many others. But to my mind, symbolically at least, the worst of its rehabilitations stemmed directly from the games that it played as a consequence of its tunnel vision love affair with Plato.

As a man who himself prefers reading Plato to Aristotle, and believes that the rediscovery and cultivation of Platonic studies was an unquestionable blessing for Catholic culture, this development is a particularly painful one to discuss. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the cult of Second Childhood ended by adulating not only the real wisdom of Plato—the Seeds of the Logos to be found in his writings—but also the willingness of his careless followers to enter into the most far-ranging and ultimately anti-Christian speculations. Its chance to accomplish this unhappy labor came along with the teaching of the deeply interesting but clearly pagan Gemisthos Plethon, the translations of Plato produced by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), and the enthusiasm for Platonic and Neo-Platonic studies unleashed both at the Florentine Academy Ficino presided over, as well as elsewhere throughout Europe.<sup>33</sup>

In their efforts to probe every aspect of nature and thereby bring light into the darkest recesses of mankind's cave, some ancient Platonic thinkers---Neo-Platonists in particular---had joined with the devotees of "nature as is" in the pursuit of magical studies. Many of their Renaissance

---

<sup>33</sup> On Plethon, see Vasiliev, pp. 637-639, 699-700; on Ficino and the Academy, Mayeur, VII, 623-624; Hale, pp. 581-582; Copleston, III, 207-216; also, 248-291.

admirers therefore did the same. They thus helped mightily to give to a magical tradition passed down only through the medieval underworld, in the books of the Jewish Cabbala and as the wisdom attributed to the mythical Hermes Trismegistus, a seemingly valid philosophical pedigree. This was then combined together by them in a syncretist hunt for a basic, perennial wisdom, a *prisca teologia*, that could conceivably reduce Christianity to merely one idiosyncratic expression of deeper truth among many.

Humanists who wished to remain Christian defended this study of magic and its naturalist bag of tricks as a tool provided man by the Holy Spirit in order to understand a universe that was indeed a highly mysterious Mirror of God. But the whole ethos of magic is based not upon an attempt to appreciate nature as an integral part of the divine plan but as a means of achieving an irrational manipulation of the cosmos for the satisfaction of uncorrected human passion. It was for this reason that the Church had publically and properly chastised it through the ages. Recourse to speculative logic would have been able to identify in the magical trade an abuse rather than a proper use of God's Creation; an unhealthy "power game". But, alas, such a scholastic tool was ridiculed as "ugly" and "obscurantist". And therefore it was dismissed by wise men whose knowledge of life came through a return to a Second Childhood.

All those ready to encourage the rebirth of the willful totalitarian State that the founders of the ancient polis appeared to have taken as a "given" welcomed manipulative magical wisdom and the power over nature that it promised. Nominalists who had lost their Faith, sought "closure" with Christianity, and were ready to "move on" to impose their

## AGAINST ALL?

own whims on a universe that no longer had a loving God in charge of it were equally open to its charms. Hence, one of the great ironies of the Renaissance is the fact that some of its misled Platonist representatives cultivated "Seeds of the words" more representative of the central error of Isocrates than their master's own truly liberating doctrine. And the two greatest consequences of this error were the fact that: 1) it helped to replace the hunt to know, love, and serve the Truth with a pursuit of the knowledge of the most effective path to the triumph of the will; and, 2) that it aided and abetted the handing over of the teaching of man's end to those offering uncorrected and merely appropriate explanations of the willful and passionate manipulation of nature. The long-term effects of both, as Plato himself would have recognized, would be to silence the literary muse of man along with his Faith and Reason. Unfortunately, few humanists of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries chose to believe that such an outcome was in any way possible.

Moreover, the danger that the new world in the making would become a laboratory for cultivating a willfulness that could also mock the very past that Renaissance man now unguardedly adored was also threatening. In fact, a number of the rabid opponents of the medieval Dark Ages were already actively pointing out this possible disdain. Their passion for imitating the ways of the ancients was leading them so to abandon all concern for the correction and transformation of fallen man that even many of the teachings of their own classicizing heroes might happily be rejected. What then remained to guide them was a pure pagan naturalism. And this, in turn, was sharpened by an individualism fueled by a Christian exaltation of the glory of

the human person now cut off from a sense of its dependency upon supernatural revelation and grace for its perfection. Hence, the career of Pietro Aretino (1492-1556), born in the year of Columbus' first voyage to that truly "New World" that would one day see itself as the playground of the unchained individual. Let us hear him praised by an admirer of his spirit of total independence:<sup>34</sup>

Untrammelled by convention, dominated by instinct, swept along by his nature, fulfilling his fate with the agility of an acrobat, yet true to his inner essence, his mysterious *virtù*—this was the compulsive image which Renaissance man created for himself. Instead of the stage being the mirror of life, it seemed rather as if the characters of melodrama had usurped the true characters of men. In no other man of this age is the image more sharply mirrored than in Pietro Aretino—the first Bohemian.

'I am a free man', Aretino wrote, 'I do not need to copy Petrarch or Boccaccio. My own genius is enough. Let others worry themselves about style and so cease to be themselves. Without a master, without a model, without a guide, without artifice, I go to work and earn my living, my well-being, and my fame. What do I need more? With a good quill and a few sheets of paper I mock the universe.' And he did, riotously, splendidly, until in his vigorous sixties, he roared too vehemently at a bawdy joke, had

---

<sup>34</sup> Plumb, *The Italian Renaissance*, pp. 115-116. For literal New World problems, see the Epilogue to the present work.



## AGAINST ALL?

apoplexy, and died. But what a life he had lived—shameless, selfish, magnificently free from humbug and splendidly creative.

*D. Total Depravity Macht Frei*

Where might a combination of revulsion over the Rut Triumphant, influence of the Seeds of the words, and cultivation of the cult of Second Childhood lead? To begin with, it was to lead to the convulsion of Western Christendom by a man with an innovative doctrine whose results he himself certainly did not completely foresee or really even fully want to unfold. The man was Martin Luther (1483-1546), the doctrine was that of total depravity, and its immediate consequence was the passage that it opened for the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo finally to emerge from its underworld and “take flesh” in the historic life of Christendom.

In the long-run, Luther’s doctrine has proven to be crucial to the construction of that death camp ruled by willful passion that now extends throughout the globe. Its open and comprehensive assault on the message of the Word in history began with reference to noble sounding words from the Bible. What made this biblical rhetoric all the more treacherous was that its summons to treat the world as a living hell was quickly identified as the arrival of a new age of freedom for all. For those who bring themselves to believe such an extraordinary claim, the entrance into the death camp of modernity should be topped with a luminous sign engraved with the motto *Total Depravity Macht Frei*. A greater self-deception concerning the individual, society, nature, and God

is hardly imaginable. How could this have come about in the heartland of the venerable and Catholic Holy Roman Empire?<sup>35</sup>

Despite Germany's brilliant Catholic past, the fact that the first solid political and social incarnation of a Grand Coalition built around Word-destroying words emerged here is not surprising. The Triumph of the Rut was in many respects a quite thorough one in Central Europe, with all of its pathetic effects on catechesis and the administration of the Mystical Body of Christ. Moreover, regardless of the efforts of the Emperor Maximilian (1486-1519), progress towards creation of a "new monarchy" in Germany was very slow compared to that in England, France, and Spain. The German world remained badly splintered. This made it a much more tempting target for papal efforts to milk its pious peoples for funds that could not be obtained as effectively in other lands. It also made it a cauldron bubbling with as many different critiques of exploitation—or mutually profitable negotiated settlements to keep it going—as there were princes and municipal councils of varying strength, will, and anticlerical feeling to give clout to them.

Luther himself became a monk and a priest in a typically confused late medieval fashion, after a hasty oath in time of danger, and without philosophical and theological preparation, all of which came only after his ordination.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> For the situation in Germany, politically, spiritually, and intellectually, see Rapp, pp. 252-354; Cohn, pp. 223-234; Mayeur, VII, 309-328; Cameron, pp. 9-93.

<sup>36</sup> For Luther, see Mayeur, VII, 681-721; Hughes, III, 497-530; Cameron, pp. 99-110, 268-174; R. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (Abingdon, 1950); M. Edwards, Jr., *Luther's Last Battles* (Cornell,

## AGAINST ALL?

Having been given the standard anti-speculative Nominalist university education of the day, he was then won over to the humanist approach to learning. Humanist methodology focused his attention on Scripture and the Church Fathers, St. Augustine in particular. Repeating unceasingly his commitment to the Gospels—hence, the birth of the term Evangelical Christianity—Luther brought to the reading of those bible and patristic texts his own deeply-felt and willful choice of themes—exactly what one would have expected, given his Nominalist training. This choice was based upon his own personal spiritual problem—his profound sense of inescapable guilt—and an “obvious” message from the Holy Spirit regarding how to deal with it that his character already predisposed him to hear.

Like many a “simple”, pious, but learned man emerging from a Nominalist environment, Luther was psychologically prepared to equate his personal feelings with the will of God, and thus, as he himself admitted, to “force” the Scriptures to say what they *really wanted* to say---even to the point of tossing out those parts of Holy Writ that did not support his “Spirit-inspired” vision. That same Nominalist background prepared him to argue that Faith in God and the Scriptures demanded unqualified acceptance of this personal and willful doctrine---even though it was contrary to everything that councils and popes had historically taught and that a speculative, rational, and logical believing mind might conclude to be valid. In short, a deeply felt passion, negative and self-reproaching, was molded into the anti-natural, anti-

speculative, and anti-Catholic doctrine of total depravity. And this became the grounds for Luther's efforts to understand everything relating to God, man, and the pilgrim dance of life.

Luther's conviction that human beings were completely corrupted and incapable of pleasing God after Original Sin was thus the centerpiece of his entire theological edifice. It was only because of his insistence that men could never be purified, either in this world or the next, that the concept of justification by Faith alone became necessary for him. For if man could not please God through good works, the sacraments, and sanctifying grace, then his only hope lay in complete abandonment to Divine Will. Moreover, it was only due to the total depravity doctrine that the "words" of Scripture, interpreted through the voice of the Holy Spirit, as deeply felt by Luther, became the sole possible teacher of individual Christians. For if the Church, supposedly the Word Incarnate continued in time, could be shown to have definitively opposed this teaching throughout her history, she thereby demonstrated the horrible impact of total depravity upon even the most revered of social institutions—in her case, that of wickedly rejecting the "obvious" Christian foundation Truth. The faithful individual could not trust her, and was forced to rely on the word of God---with the aid of the Holy Spirit and Luther---on his own. It was through this Lutheran doctrinal discovery that all of the Seeds of the words of the last few hundred years were finally joined together in an enduring compact. What was thereby created was a seemingly "Gospel-friendly" tool permitting the underground GCSQ to plant the banner of opposition to all notion of a corrective and transforming mission of the Word Incarnate openly and firmly in a Catholic land. Let us allow

## AGAINST ALL?

Philip Hughes once again to summarize the attendant horror:<sup>37</sup>

It is the surrender to despair—in the name of greater simplicity, which ‘simplicity’ is presented as the road back to primitive truth and the good life; to despair: as though true religion was incompatible with the two great natural necessities, the ownership of material goods and the activity of the speculative intelligence; as though material destitution and contented, uncritical ignorance were conditions sine quibus non for the preservation on earth of the work of that Incarnate Wisdom through Whom the Creator called the earth into being.

All those anti-intellectualist, anti-institutional forces that had plagued and hindered the medieval Church for centuries, whose chronic maleficent activity had, in fact, been the main cause why—as we are often tempted to say—so little was done effectively to maintain a generally higher standard of Christian life; all the forces that were the chronic distraction of the medieval papacy, were now stabilized, institutionalized in the new reformed Christian Church. Enthronement of the will as the supreme human faculty; hostility to the activity of the intelligence in spiritual matters and in doctrine; the ideal of a Christian perfection that is independent of sacraments and independent of the authoritative

---

<sup>37</sup> Hughes, III, 529.

teaching of clerics; of sanctity attainable through one's own self-sufficing spiritual activities; denial of the truth that Christianity, like man, is a social thing;—all the crude, backwoods, obscurantist theories bred of the degrading pride that comes with chosen ignorance, the pride of men ignorant because unable to be wise except through the wisdom of others, now have their fling. Luther's own special contribution—over and above the key doctrines that set all this mischief loose—is the notion of life as radically evil.

Propagating his message with superb literary ability and bitter satire in a divided Germany angered by papal financial exactions and prepared by the *Reuchlinstreit* to view the critics of humanism as nothing but obscurantist fools, Luther was able to overwhelm his opponents. Yes, early enemies, such as Johann Eck (1486-1543), did respond to him with the proper tools, but they were not the dominant Catholic teachers of the day, and so they found themselves to be but voices crying in the wilderness. They were, in effect, the equivalent of present-day intellectuals contesting the dicta of well-constructed blogs offering ever more titillating though dubious information to those tuned into them. What was needed to fight Luther was not just consistent support from religious and political authorities but also a hard-hitting, theological and spiritual counterattack rooted in the use of all of the tools of the Mystical Body of Christ. And it was precisely this that was lacking in the era of the *Rut Triumphant*.

Thus, that which took place in the decades after 1517, the year that Luther's doctrine "went public" through its application to the German Indulgence Controversy, was what

## AGAINST ALL?

*had* to take place: a full-scale rout.<sup>38</sup> The condemnation of the Edict of Worms in 1521 was not enforced, partly due to anti-Hapsburg politics and partly because the King-Emperor Charles V (1519-1556) was too busy in his non-German domains to back its threat up personally. Sometime repression gave way to uncomprehending concessions, and both together to a justified impression of weakness and illogic. Princes and municipal councils were baffled as to what to do but sensed that that the attack on the structure of the Church in the name of the foundation Words of God might be useful to them. Perceiving that it could rid them of many obstacles to fulfillment of their own willful desires and save them a great deal of tax money in the bargain, they opted to take advantage of Luther's destruction of ecclesiastical institutions. Both a clergy thirsty for reform of abuses, as well as corrupt bishops and priests who had always seen their positions merely as a means of obtaining three square meals a day, joined in the abandonment of the old order out of a mixture of sincere and totally self-interested motives. Since everyone agreed that the Word of God in Scripture was a holy thing, and since Luther hammered at the argument that he and he alone was concerned for what this was and what it meant, an improperly catechized population tended to decide that it should follow his "clear" path until things were finally "put right". Local princely and municipal churches had long been

---

<sup>38</sup> On the development and politicization of the Early Reformation, see Cameron, pp. 197- 422; Mayeur, VII, 723-841; VIII, 281-322, 353-663; Dawson, pp. 64-118; L. Abray, *The People's Reformation* (Cornell, 1985).

prepared to make the decisions necessary to effect the change. Bishops themselves could not explain why they should oppose them. Tinder lay all around and Luther merely lit the match, throwing new and unexpected fireworks onto the flammable materials whenever his opponents thought they finally had him cornered.

Erasmus was the chief example of the impotence of most Catholic-minded voices in the face of the Lutheran explosion. His humanist “word games” could not match the energy unleashed by this bull in the vineyard of the Lord, as the papal encyclical excommunicating Luther labeled the heresiarch. Like many humanists, Reuchlin among them, Erasmus turned against the reformer when the direction of his ideas became clear in pamphlets such as the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, the *Appeal to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, and the *Freedom of a Christian Man*. There was simply no way that admirers of the ancients, inspired by the Renaissance vision of the dignity of man as microcosm, could accept the fatalist notion of the total enslavement of the human will to sin. Luther was *willfully* promoting a doctrine about the pointlessness of the human will. Nevertheless, uncovering this precise flaw in his teaching required the use of serious theology and philosophy. These were tools that Erasmus was incapable of employing. For, as the ever-perceptive Philip Hughes notes, Erasmus’ approach had always been one of an anti-intellectual, pious simplicity that was falsely supposed to be up to the task of conquering every obstacle in its path.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Hughes, III, 471-472; see Halkin, pp. 146-159, and Mayeur, VII, 857-865, on the debate of Erasmus and Luther.



## AGAINST ALL?

Under all the varied activity of this most industrious scholar, the single persisting aim is always evident, namely to bring men back to Christ; and this, Erasmus is persuaded, can best be done by setting before men Christianity as it first existed. His method is that of the humanist who would reconstruct Cicero's Rome or Plato's Athens, namely the critical use of the oldest literary monuments of the time that have survived. The one way back to Christ, in fact, is through study of the New Testament, and if our idea of Christ's doctrine gains in simplicity the more we read, this is a sure indication that we are on the right way. Here, in this craving for simplification, in a violent impatience with whatever is not grammatically self-evident, we have one leading motif of Erasmus's theological activity. He posits, in fact, of the inexhaustible content of revelation, the simplicity which belongs to the assent of faith through which the content is made accessible. This simplicity of statement for which Erasmus yearns, he does not find in the theologians. What has destroyed it there, so he thinks, is the theologians' use of philosophy, of metaphysics, in their task of exposition. With the theologians as they face their eternal problem—the need to determine what doctrines actually mean, to solve the apparent contradictions, to resolve the seeming opposition between them and what is reasonably known—Erasmus has no sympathy at all. From such problems he shrinks; and he has a marked antipathy for those who face them, and immense scorn for their

barbarous, unclassical Latinity, their carefully devised technical terminology, and their methods of logical analysis, and of strict definition.

His own method will not give any doctrinal precision, and he does not desire it from any other method. Doctrinal precision is, in fact, not necessary; zeal for it is a mark of Christian decadence, not of progress in knowledge of God. In the hands of Erasmus, Catholic dogma thins out until it vanishes to nothing; and he would meet the problem of the real need, of even the most ordinary of mankind, for knowledge of the mysteries appropriate to the level of their intelligence, by scrapping technical language on all sides. Precision in these matters, he thought, was not worth what it cost; and even, for example, such a vitally necessary tool as the term *homoousion* ought to go, ought never to have been devised. It is not surprising if, in his theology, there are mistakes, inexactitudes, contradictions, and this especially in the matters then so violently controverted, doctrines about marriage, confession, the monastic life, the Roman primacy.

Deficient in theological and philosophical instruments, Erasmus' toolbox did include satirical commentaries lambasting medieval religious thought and practices. Many contemporaries understandably felt that these had paved the way for Luther's focus on the importance of Scripture alone as a guide to the Christian life:<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Hughes, III, 468-469.

## AGAINST ALL?

...the moral is continuously pointed out that true religion is far different from all this, that what now obtains needs to be purified and simplified, and that what a man needs is to know Christ as the Bible speaks of Him and to follow His way. On its positive side the spiritual direction is that of the *Devotio Moderna*; but, allied now with the hostile critique of so many Catholic practices and institutions, and lacking the needed reference to man's need of sacraments and of Church-taught doctrine, and with the seeming theory that private study of the Bible is all-sufficient, and given to the world under the author's name barely two years after Luther's condemnation and with all northern Europe now in convulsion, the book {The Colloquies}, henceforward, lined up Erasmus as Luther's ally in the minds of a host of the Catholic partisans. Erasmus crying 'Back to Christ in the Bible' was too like Luther crying 'The Bible only'. (Colloquies, 152.)

No wonder then, that his foray into anti-Lutheran polemics, in his work in defense of the freedom of the will, could not plug the Catholic dike punctured everywhere by the power of the Protestant *tsunami*:<sup>41</sup>

For his theological insufficiency, and his own unawareness of it, he paid again and again. Luther's theories of the will as enslaved, for example, filled him with horror. Erasmus attacked the German

---

<sup>41</sup> Hughes, 470-471.

unsparingly, but with what weapons? Here was a philosophical question, and the humanist had done nothing about philosophy all his life but ridicule the miserable philosophers of his experience.

‘Caught unprovided with any such technical formation’, says a theological historian of the controversy about Free Will, ‘{these humanists} had only their personal tastes to trust to, and their own powers of initiative, seeking shelter, for good or ill, behind such Greek writers as Origen and St. John Chrysostom, whose scattered views had never been formed into a systematic theory about these problems, nor enjoyed any appreciable prestige in the Church. The intervention of such improvised theologians had the effect of creating, inside the theological system of Catholicism, a new antithesis, whose consequences were to be far reaching indeed...’. And Mandonnet instances Erasmus who, ‘without any study of the classical theology of the Church, improvises solutions, and despite his circumspection...comes to affirm such enormities as this: ‘That nothing comes about without the will of God, I readily allow; but, generally, the will of God depends on our will.’”

Let us pause for a moment to reiterate that this Protestant *tsunami* only inundated the western Christian landscape through a contradictory mix of heretical reformist zeal, bewildered reaction to it, and self-interested manipulation on the part of perceptive proponents of “nature as is”. The contradictions began with Luther himself, for the father of

## AGAINST ALL?

Evangelical Christianity had a decidedly split personality and does not appear himself to have been logical in the development of his own teaching. How could he be? Once again, few men of his day and his background were trained to treat speculation on immediately and strongly felt principles seriously in the first place; logic was a weapon used simply for denigrating the value and pretensions of philosophically grounded theological meditation. Instead, one has the clear impression that Luther simply stumbled onto only a few of the consequences of his own thought, and these gradually and almost against his choice.

Moreover, despite his role as a new kind of humanist preaching authority, his early dependence for survival upon anti-Hapsburg princely and communal political support quickly limited the development of so-called Evangelical Christianity in any direction other than one that would be permitted by more traditional public Defenders of the Peace. After having given an appropriate explanation for the failures of medieval Christianity through a doctrine of total depravity that he attributed to the founding principles of the Faith; after having denigrated speculative reason, individual human freedom, society, and nature as a whole; after having posited his will as the divine will and thereby raised up the preacher as the hero defending the original intent of the founders of Christianity against the wicked machinations of the true friends of the Incarnate Word in history; after all of this, he shrank back in horror over the "enthusiastic" madmen who utilized his teachings to baptize their own much more radical beliefs and actions. And the consequence was that he willfully handed the arbitrary power to shape the religious world around him back to the State authorities and the

“business as usual” considerations that their more conservative vision of nature represented. Luther openly proclaimed these authorities to be the “necessity bishops” of the Church that he had intellectually obliterated. The either-or option that he enunciated was one of accepting religious guidance from the State on the one hand or from either the papal Whore of Babylon or radical “enthusiasts” on the other. Very swiftly, kings, princes, and municipal councils throughout all of Europe heard his message and acted upon it. In the name of Gospel religion, they openly became the arbiters of the faith and morality that they had “pragmatically” been guiding in the name of Christian order and reform since the latter days of the Avignon Papacy and the Great Western Schism. Hence, the example of Zürich, “reformed” by Ulrich Zwingli, where the Mass was abolished on April 11, 1525, and obligatory Protestant worship was introduced four years later, in ways that Marsilius of Padua would have appreciated. “The last Mass was celebrated before a crowd of people”, Jedin notes. “Therefore something that was still entirely alive was abolished by official decree.”<sup>42</sup>

With the introduction in 1529 of the obligation of attending worship and the prohibition of attendance

---

<sup>42</sup> Jedin and Dolan, V, 168, 169; Cameron, pp. 197-423, and on municipal government tyranny, pp. 210-263; Dawson, pp. 79-92; on spread and radicalization, see A. Friesen, *Thomas Muentzer* (U. of California, 1990); Mayeur, VII, 723-841, VIII, pp. 15-53, 119-221; M. Powicke, *The Reformation in England* (Oxford, 1961); D. Loades, *Mary Tudor* (Blackwell, 1989); J. Hurstfield, *Elizabeth and the Unity of England* (Harper & Row, 1960); E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale, 1992).

## AGAINST ALL?

at Catholic Masses outside the territory, the city congregation completely controlled the lives of the citizens. In opposition to Zwingli's spiritualism and to his thesis of the inherent power of the Gospel, but at the same time also in consequence of it, the secular authority had seized control of ecclesiastical government. The church congregation had been absorbed into the civil community.

Mention of the situation in Zürich calls attention to the fact that anyone looking for more consistent speculative development of the doctrine of total depravity has to turn away from Luther: to Ulrich Zwingli first, but, much more importantly still, to Jean Calvin (1509-1564), the founder of Reformed Christianity.<sup>43</sup> Frenchman, lawyer, writer, and zealot, Calvin—and those following in his path—squeezed from the concept of total depravity almost everything that a man could eek from it while still believing in Christ. Calvin may not have seen how his own beliefs gave succor to the developing Unitarian Movement, but he was painfully aware of the dangers of entrapment in the Lutheran political labyrinth and determined that his own reform would, if anything, subject the State to religious controls rather than the other way around. This he sought to accomplish by creating a new kind of "Church", built upon base communities of believers—congregations—guided by their

---

<sup>43</sup> On Zwingli, see G. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge, 1984); on Calvin, A. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin* (Blackwell, 1990); W. Bouwsma, *John Calvin* (Oxford, 1988); Also, Mayeur, VII, 723-841, VIII, 55-117.

preachers and capable of being elaborated on city, provincial, and nation-wide levels. His prestige thus rose among independent-minded men, and Reformed Christianity became the form of Protestantism that penetrated most of Europe. The charismatic preacher and the triumph of his will as God's will were thus secured a heroic role for the future. Calvin's option for Christians was to be centered round a choice either for the inspired Preacher of the Words or for the wickedness of nature—whether this latter evil was represented by the world-changing Word guided by a “satanic” Papacy or by some secular tyrant closed to the godly message of divine word merchants like himself.

### *E. A Renaissance in Black Legends*

Persistent and enthusiastic work on the part of the many Evangelical and Reformed Christians conversant with humanist methodology transformed their literary talents into potent weapons in the anti-Roman arsenal. Labeled innovators by their Catholic opponents, and yet convinced, as they were, that the Church had introduced changes disastrous to the true message of the words of God in Scripture, these Protestants hammered at arguments drawn from positive theology to drive home their apologetic points. They knew how to uncover scriptural, patristic, legal and liturgical problems embarrassing to the Church of the era of the Rut Triumphant. They also learned how to weave these into broad historical assaults calling her whole mission as Christ-continued into question. Their feel for language, extended, by Luther, to an often inflammatory and obscene vernacular in addition to the ancient tongues, enabled them to present their accusations in gripping, often rude, but



## AGAINST ALL?

always crystal-clear ways to wide audiences. Publishing houses exploiting the new technology of printing and smelling a profit in such works aided mightily in their dissemination. Hence, with a sense of purpose, science, and style, they fixed the theme of medieval Catholic corruption and obscurantism ever more firmly in the minds of both the intellectual elite and the masses. And it was for this reason that they were also able to drill into the minds and spirits of the

inmates of their new death camp the notion that its prison guards were actually their liberators.<sup>44</sup>

Martyrology was one field of study of Christian behavior that Protestants used to build up black legends concerning the Catholic enterprise from a very early date. What they did was to link up the suffering of Christian heroes from the past with those of "Gospel Christians" of their own day, so as to show that the persecution of true believers was a specialty of the Roman Church from time immemorial. Catholics through the ages had prepared the way for them in this regard, claiming each new heretical appearance as a revival of an older one rather than attempting to discuss its own fresh substantive principles. Martyrologies of this new type

---

<sup>44</sup> For the growth of the anti-Roman argument, see Halkin, pp. 64-296; Peters, pp. 122-154; H. Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* (Yale, 1997), pp. 305-320; J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 161, 185, 210; Edwards, *passim*; G. Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning. Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Books Demand, 1978); Bouwsma, pp. 60, 215; Jedin & Dolan, V, 546-566; Mayeur, VIII, 15-221-322, 353-518.

appeared in many languages. Prominent among them were Martin Luther's *The Burning of Brother Henry in Dithmarschen* (1525), William Tyndale's *Examination of Thorpe and Oldcastle* (1535), Ludwig Rabus' *Stories of God's Martyrs* (1552), Jean Crespin's *The History of Martyrs* (1554), Matthias Flacius Illyricus' *Catalogue of Witnesses to the Truth* (1556), Adriaen van Haemstede's *History and Death of the Pious Martyrs* (1559), both the Latin and English editions of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1559/1563), Agrippa d'Aubigne's poem, *Les Tragiques* (1580), and Simon Goulard's more ambitious *History of the Reformed Churches of the Kingdom of France* (1580).

A sub-category of such literature involved a specific attack on the Inquisition. This was especially useful in places where it was at first difficult openly to condemn the Roman Church and where one might also tap into anti-Hapsburg and anti-Spanish sentiment. In this line were the anonymous *On the Unchristian Tyrannical Inquisition that Persecutes Belief, Written from the Netherlands* (1548), Francesco de'Enzinas' *History of the State of the Low Countries and the Religion of Spain* (1558), and *A Discovery and Plaine Declaration of Sundry Subtill Practices of the Holy Inquisition* (1567) by "Montanus" (Antonio del Correo), translated into English by Thomas Skinner (1568). Though not a Protestant, the Venetian Servite Paolo Sarpi's *On the Office of the Inquisition* (1615/1638) was a further addition to the genre. It was out of these and related attacks that the narrower use of the term "Black Legend" was born, through which figures like Philip II could be dehumanized, and people spared the—by definition—impossible task of finding serious reasons behind any action undertaken by a Catholic prelate or prince.

Again, as some of the titles noted above demonstrate, Protestant efforts went beyond using and drawing

## AGAINST ALL?

conclusions from merely one field of study of Christian behavior in the assault on Catholicism. A complete anti-Catholic history had to be written, with respect to individual nations as well as with regard to the life of Christendom as a whole. Martin Luther and Jean Calvin were both involved in this sketching-out of the broad Romaphobic landscape, the former tracing the roots of Catholic error to an ever earlier date, the latter adding the Carolingian Family and its insatiable ambition to the list of villains responsible for the deviation of the Church from its proper purely spiritual constitution.

But the most impressive Reformation-inspired Church History, because of the universal vision it offers, was the mainline Lutheran work produced by Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520-1575) and his associates at the city of Magdeburg. This text was referred to as *The Centuries* (Eight Volumes, 1559-1574), its name clearly following from its manner of dividing up the material presented. Here one finds many of those spicy but erroneous tales, such as the story of Pope Joan, which still figure into the average "educated" man's anti-Catholic repertoire. Here, one also finds praise of virulent anti-papists like Marsilius of Padua, despite their manifest secularism.

Hence, by the end of the sixteenth century, homelands where those opposed to the effort to correct and transform nature could openly go about their labors had been founded in various sections of Europe. Black legends and alternative good stories tearing to pieces the history of Christ's Church and finding ample material for their libels in battles of previous centuries were being regularly broadcast about. They were being presented in the name of the "words of

God” and in the name of the “primitive Christian foundation vision”. Through such legends and stories, the picture of a ceaseless Catholic assault on Reason and Freedom was being painted as well. The special irony of this secondary attack, was that the artists providing such a tableau were Christians who believed, as Luther said, that Reason was a “whore” and that human freedom was an absurdity.

It ought not to have been difficult for an awakened Body of Christ to respond to the contradictory “words” of what really amounted to an egregious, erroneous foundation myth. Still, to do so, it needed the energy that comes from the strength of the Word in history. It ought not to have been difficult for the Church to demonstrate that the Protestant obsession with the omnipresence of sin could itself, in the long run, totally deprave a world that was not, in fact, essentially entirely corrupted by evil; that it could *unnecessarily* construct a death camp ruled by arbitrary will. But in order to undertake this project, the Body of Christ had, precisely, to be so awakened. The power of the Rut Triumphant had proven to be very strong indeed. Catholic awakening, first and foremost, required that the Church be shaken free from its deadly, self-destructive, and self-blinding grip.

### *F. Liberation From the Rut Triumphant*

We have already seen that many orthodox groups and individuals throughout Europe were outraged over the state of the Church Universal and had deeply wished for a major reform of Head and Members before the birth of Evangelical and Reformed Christianity. Unfortunately, as they were the first to admit, the bad angels seemed to be triumphing over

## AGAINST ALL?

the good in the life of Renaissance Catholicism. What this meant was what we have outlined above: that the explosion that took place in the Reformation found the Mystical Body of Christ unprepared to deal with a full-fledged attack on her *raison d'être*. She had nothing but insubstantial words, slogans, and "business as usual" methods to handle the revolution before her. What she needed, instead, was the arsenal of divine and divinely transformed weapons that *would* be available if she really trusted the full message of the Incarnation. Her self-limitation to the earthly and parochial realm prescribed by the proponents of "nature as is" had enabled her opponents to seize and run with the vision of an ancient Gospel Christianity more pure than that existing in Europe in the 1500's – to the detriment of *all* truth, both supernatural and temporal.

One might have hoped for an immediate effective response to the devastating Protestant revolt. The sad history of the Sack of Rome of 1527 proves that this was not to be the case. That history has its origins in the French-Spanish struggle for hegemony in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its proximate cause was the clash between the political program of the harried Medici pope, Clement VII (1523-1534), and the ambitions of Charles V (1516-1558), King of Spain, King of Germany, and Holy Roman Emperor. If its agents were actually mutinous, unpaid, imperial soldiers, these nevertheless could say that they were merely following the examples of their more illustrious clerical ally, the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna (1479-1532), who had already plundered the Vatican side of the Tiber some eight months earlier.

Whatever the specific responsibilities of pope, Catholic king-emperor, and prince of the Church might have been, the end result was indeed a nightmare. On May 6, 1527, Rome suffered the worst assault that she had ever known, far more serious than anything befalling her at the time of the barbarian migrations. Nothing was spared, sacred or profane. Clement VII's escape to and confinement within the walls of Castel Sant'Angelo until December, listening to the taunting of German mercenaries calling for his death and replacement by "Pope Luther", were the least of the indignities. Various cardinals and prelates, including one future pope, Julius III (1550-1555), were humiliated and tortured, altars were ransacked, the Sistine Chapel used as a stable, riches confiscated, patients in hospitals and children in orphanages gratuitously butchered. Rape and rapine, exacerbated by raids of hoodlums under the direction of the abbot of the nearby monastery of Farfa, were followed by the onset of plague. Rome and the stench of death became one.<sup>45</sup>

Often, and with seemingly good reason, the Sack of Rome has been looked upon as a symbol of the boundary between the Renaissance and Catholic Reformation eras in Church History. Before this chastisement, the argument runs, control of Church affairs lay in the hands of the proponents of "business as usual", men obsessed with politics, tied to corrupt and ineffective administrative methods, and insensitive to the significance of the Protestant revolt in Germany. After its visitation, however, the Great Awakening had definitively begun.

---

<sup>45</sup> Partner, *Renaissance Rome*, pp. 29-33; Von Pastor, IX, 306-467; X, 1-31.

## AGAINST ALL?

I, too, once took it for granted that the Sack of Rome was an eye-opener. Still, the more work that I did on the period in question, the more it became clear to me that this was not the case. Those whose eyes were open before the Sack may have had them opened wider still, but those with clear vision were still relatively few in number. With rare exceptions, men who were blind remained blind. An event of such magnitude, whose mere possibility in the abstract might have seemed apocalyptic beforehand, was digested when it finally did occur in reality as though it were simply another move on the chessboard of ordinary political life. Indeed, most Catholics, clerics and laymen alike, afterwards as before, went about their daily affairs, changing nothing, watching the collapse of the Church's position in Germany, uninspired to lift a finger to arrest it, even when possessing the authority to do so.

One thing that united many of the proponents of "business as usual" was the conviction that they represented the "Tradition" of the Roman Church, by which, of course, they meant merely the standard operating procedures of papal and diocesan courts and curias. These "traditions" were under attack at the time, but not only by the men who, after the Diet of Speyer of 1529, would be referred to as Protestants. As noted earlier in this chapter, there were a limited number of fervent Catholics from reform circles, inspired by saints like Catherine of Genova, who also demanded a root and branch revamping of standard operating procedures and the canonical justifications for them. This they wanted in order more effectively to fight the brutal war for the souls of men and the health of secular society that they feared the Reformation portended.

In the minds of the defenders of "Tradition", such Catholic critics of papal and episcopal courts and curias were, at the very least, the sort of deluded, destructive zealots that centuries of bureaucratic prudence and pragmatism had sought to tame. At worst, they themselves were seen to be the true problem of the day, unnecessarily aggravating that Protestant tempest-in-a-teapot that could be quelled through the tried laws and methods of practical professionals. This latter line of argument, which so rejected a closer examination of Catholic failings that it literally verged on the point of treating the Protestant revolt as a non-event, was particularly deadly. One can easily see from Herbert Jedin's magisterial history of the Council of Trent that nothing favored the Reformation more than this widespread delusion regarding its lack of any real ultimate significance.<sup>46</sup>

Fortunately for the survival of the Church, these "conservatives" suffered at least a partial defeat, the "traditions" which they supported being exposed for what they were. These "traditions" were something that readers by now will readily recognize---namely, abuses fortified by many spurious, self-deceptive arguments, so old and familiar as to have taken on a sacred aura; crimes and betrayals covered by good stories that unfortunately bore no relation to the truth. Fortunately for Rome, an effort was made to rebuild its walls with something more suitable and more sturdy than whatever happened to be merely familiar: a reaffirmation of the authentic and eternal Catholic Tradition and its call for correction and transformation in Christ, a

---

<sup>46</sup> H. Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient* (Herder, Four Volumes, 1977), I (*Der Kampf um das Konzil*), *passim*.



## AGAINST ALL?

deeper understanding of which revealed the flaws of the immediate past and indicated a surer path to a better future.

It is instructive to investigate for a moment one major reason for this partial victory of real Tradition over false customs masquerading as an essential element of the Christian heritage. Successful Catholic reformers realized that they could not deal with problems facing the Church merely by a legalist cataloguing of the endless abuses to be noted practically everywhere in Christendom and precise remedies for the correction of each. Almost nothing could shake most authorities' commitment to their standard operating procedures, corrupt and ineffective though these might be. Prelates had to be awakened to another and qualitatively different means of viewing their responsibilities, that advocated by St. Catherine of Genova. If churchmen could not endure a direct attack on the flawed practices to which they were devoted, or if they could always find inventive techniques for legally circumventing attempts to change them, then the path to improvement must be opened by trying to focus them on a second, more spiritual framework in which to judge their activities. This high road could, perhaps, "seduce" them to reform by the innate strength of its truth and beauty and avoid more predictable, customary, time-wasting, and ultimately futile efforts to refute them in the process.

In short, Catholic reformers understood that they could not fight their opponents on their own turf. Naïve as this approach might seem, rather than discussing in exaggerated and all too familiar legal detail the minutiae of episcopal duties and their innumerable violations, all of which would be met by the interminable counter-quibbles of the bishops'

own canonical experts, they thought that it was more fruitful to address prelates forthrightly on the plane of conscience alone. One needed openly to emphasize the mortal sin of an Ordinary who failed to be a good shepherd. A bishop who could be won over to a realization of what he was obliged to do by directing him to a vision of the day that he had to justify his behavior before the throne of Almighty God would eventually become a new man. He would contrast remarkably with one whose decisions were made on the grounds of whether or not the papal court in the course of the previous four hundred years had visited this or that immoral practice with the precise penalties prescribed under one or the other of fifteen extenuating circumstances. Bishops reformed in a qualitatively higher sense would see and use even a flawed law in a purer light. In contrast, even those who sought to correct themselves from a narrow, legalist perspective, and honestly did close the door to several wrong or inadequate practices in consequence, would nevertheless miss the higher spiritual meaning of ecclesiastical laws that were intrinsically good. It was the spiritual break with a corrupt past that was crucial. The legal change was secondary.<sup>47</sup>

There is no better way to discuss this summons “back to Christ” than to return to the extraordinarily illuminating history of the Theatines.<sup>48</sup> Its earliest stages were not without their drama. Many members of the rut-bound Curia doubted

---

<sup>47</sup> For the hope of the reformers, see W. Hudson, *Marcello Cervini and Ecclesiastical Government in Tridentine Italy* (Northern Illinois, 1992); also, von Pastor, Volumes VIII-XVII, especially XI, 133-181; Mayeur, VII, 332-333.

<sup>48</sup> J. Rao, “The Theatines”, *passim*.

## AGAINST ALL?

the success of their rigorous insistence upon evangelical poverty. Apparently only the intervention of Giberti, a man of great influence at the papal court and a loyal friend, saved Thiene's idea. Whatever the truth of the matter may be, the bull *Exponi nobis* approved the creation of the Order of Clerks Regular on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1524. It was given some brief guidelines by Carafa, who became its first head, in 1526, and a more formal structure only later. A certain initial ridicule on the part of the cynical Roman population did not trouble its early life as much as did the 1527 Sack, which forced its members to flee, along with those of other religious foundations, to the security of the Venetian Republic. The Neapolitan Church of San Niccolo da Tolentino in Venice, beginning in 1533, and San Andrea della Valle in Rome later in the century became the first main foci for the Theatines' activity.

It might be wise, at this point, to mention something about the two most important figures in early Theatine history, San Gaetano da Thiene and Gian Pietro Carafa. Although both came from noble families and were animated by extraordinary religious fervor, their resemblance ends there. Thiene was a northerner from Vicenza; Carafa was a Neapolitan. The former led a somewhat irregular life before his ordination in 1516. Carafa, on the other hand, shared a childhood vocation with his sister, who became a religious, and with whom he remained in constant, affectionate contact. Thiene, the man of more harmonious virtues, the officially canonized saint, was by far the more tranquil of the pair. His writings are almost all letters on spiritual topics. Carafa, the passionate, extroverted, active foil to the almost invisible Thiene, has left a mass of historical evidence behind him. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that Thiene upheld the

soul of the Theatine movement but that Carafa was its driving force. Their combination was by no means an unfortunate one, as historians of the Order have contended.<sup>49</sup>

But it is indeed just to recognize that without the diplomatic ability of Carafa, and without his audacity, Gaetano would not have succeeded in giving life to and then maintaining his new institution. Providence paired the talents of the one with those of the other, and availed itself of the defects of Carafa, counterbalanced by the greater interior virtues of Gaetano, to give vigor to the new institution, which was to be then the model of many others.

So concerned for the cause of renewal was the Order of Clerks Regular that contemporaries are said to have applied the name Theatine indiscriminately to clerical reformers as a whole. "Renewal", in the minds of men like Thiene and Carafa, meant primarily internal revivification, the attainment of sanctity. Nevertheless, the Theatines, like their Clunaic predecessors from the age of the new ascent of Mount Tabor, did not believe that they could fulfill their mission through prayer alone. Instead, they displayed a passionate interest in those admittedly secondary measures that still must be adopted to put the Body of Christ in better working order. This interest was founded upon the assumption that institutional order, like regularity in one's good habits, is the mundane basis for the flight of the spirit.

---

<sup>49</sup> P. Paschini, P., *San Gaetano Thiene, Gian Pietro Carafa, e le origini dei chierici regolari teatini* (Rome, 1926) p. 40.

## AGAINST ALL?

Reference should be made to four specific sources in detailing the Theatine program for institutional reform. None of these sources involve Thiene, who again in this regard proves to be a somewhat elusive historical figure. One is a document, undated and unsigned, entitled *Ricordi richiesti da Marcello II di santa memoria*. This commentary on the initial phase of Church reform in the first half of the sixteenth century emanated from a Theatine pen in Naples, clearly sometime during or after the brief reign of Pope Marcellus in 1555.

The other three sources all concern Carafa. Carafa left behind him as an indication of the Theatine attitude his actions upon being raised to the See of Peter as Paul IV (1555-1559) and his many letters, but first of all a document addressed to Pope Clement VII on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1532. This memorial, inspired by Carafa's dismay over the inadequate treatment of the heterodox opinions and irregular behavior of several Venetian friars, was given by the Theatine to Fra Bonaventura da Venetia to relate personally to the Holy Father. The pope accorded Fra Bonaventura a polite but very brief audience. Clement was too preoccupied with really significant "business as usual", particularly an impending meeting with Charles V at Bologna, to become involved with the Venetian issue. Carafa's memorial, though without immediate impact, was of sufficiently broad a nature to live on as a model for the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, the first real effort to tackle Church reform, under Paul III in 1537. This latter report was prepared by a commission under the presidency of Cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1483-1532) including Carafa, Giberti, and a number of other men---

several former members of the Roman *Compagnia* among them.

Three deeply-rooted evils aided and abetted by a mentality subverting the proper hierarchy of Catholic values were brought to light by all the written sources noted above: the confused and corrupt behavior of clerics, particularly religious; the venality of the Roman Court; and, finally, the unacceptably moderate approach towards dealing with heterodoxy and rebellion adopted by the Papacy. Religious life, especially that of friars, Carafa notes, "is already deformed and collapsed".<sup>50</sup> It was not unusual, he claims, to find lay friars hearing confessions, tempted by the prospect of monetary compensation for their absolutions. Priests were abandoning their habits and religious were apostatizing. An added difficulty was the fact that such men nevertheless often continued with their preaching in lay clothing. Indeed, some "wandering" religious and apostates had obtained positions as substitutes for absentee priests. Believers were being told that papal excommunications were of little importance, and that restrictions on their conduct were so few that many "excuse themselves by saying that their confessors gave them the license to do certain things which must not be done by good Christians".<sup>51</sup>

The Pope's conscience will surely allow him no rest, Carafa argues, when he grasps the fact that these confused and corrupted religious exercise great influence over the Christian population. Such "rogues" had long held the care of souls, been in charge of convent and noble chaplaincies, and

---

<sup>50</sup> G.M. Monti, ed., *Ricerche su Papa Paolo IV Carafa* (Benevento, 1923). p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62

## AGAINST ALL?

run schools for children, everywhere disseminating pastoral poison. Even now, even after their clear abandonment of either their habits or their entire life as religious, their preaching still has an effect on all classes. Why? Due to the fact that such preachers retain the aura and mannerisms of religious, because their arguments have the appeal of novelty, and since they give to everyone, high and low born, the chance to justify his own specific form of licentious behavior.<sup>52</sup> In short, they had learned how to use some remaining prestigious Catholic characteristics to tell a titillating alternative good story, presented as being “new”, but actually as old as the hills.

It is interesting to note here a certain educated irritation with the spread of error and confusion. One ought to mention that many of the men connected with the various *Compagnie* and their offspring were themselves tied to Christian Humanist circles. Vernazza had contacts with a number of those representative of the movement. Dati produced works on the American discoveries, Scipio Africanus, and mathematical tables useful for calculating the times of eclipses. Big scholarly guns like Giacomo Sadoletto (1477-1547) were fellow travelers. The Theatines applied scholarly rigor to the special task of revising the breviary entrusted to them by Rome, Carafa brutally attacking the “many foolish statements and dreams of apocryphal books” found in abundance in the older volumes. Such Catholic reformers, therefore, often depicted the struggle against their enemies as one of Christian enlightenment versus self-deluding ignorance, “considering that the heresies of these rogues are

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64, 68.

all old things already confuted and extinct from Holy Church for a long time...". The spread of error, as already indicated above, was thus frequently attributed not to the intellectual strength of the concepts that were being propagated but, rather, simply to the fact that friars and others "are badly disposed and immediately receive that doctrine which conforms to their customs and their life..."<sup>53</sup> Everyone was merely on the hunt for an "appropriate justification" for his particular passion.

The second enormous problem facing the Church was the venality of the Roman Court. This evil was said to be particularly blatant in the Datary and the Penitentiary. Both offices were potentially lucrative for those working within them, responsible as they were not only for the confirmation of many and varied petitions but also for the granting of dispensations and the lifting of penalties, all of which involved payment of certain fees. Weak or vicious clerics succumbed all too readily to the many temptations around them. Carafa, in a letter to Giberti, bemoans the evil impression left by:<sup>54</sup>

those most rapacious Cerberi that surround that poor prince, selling, at base price, the soul and the honor of His Holiness without his hearing one case out of a thousand. It is from this source that the immoderate favor comes which so many—not merely the most pernicious and criminal, but also those most heretical and hostile to Christ, His Holiness, and the whole of

---

<sup>53</sup> Monti, p. 69.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.



## AGAINST ALL?

Holy Church—find and enjoy in that Court to the great dishonor and offense of God and His Church.

This brings us to the third problem, that of the Holy See's moderation in the face of heterodoxy and rebellion. "Accidental" kindness, as a given method in a particular case, is one thing, Carafa explains, but leniency in principle is definitely another. The treatment accorded heretical and rebellious Venetian friars practically amounted to a passionate embrace, so much so that dissidents were wandering about claiming that acceptance of heresy was just the tactic required in order to be "honored and named and rewarded by His Holiness". It was a notorious fact, he insists, that dispensations from sacred vows could easily be obtained in Rome, simply through payment of the requisite fees. When questioned regarding their status, laicized friars, for example, merely display the bulls that they have received, arguing that they were "forcibly placed in the monastery as a minor", or that they no longer had "the spirit to stay there", or that they have "contracted an incurable illness, and other lies".<sup>55</sup>

Friars refused to purge their own order by arguing that the pope had not yet shown any concern for heresy and, hence, that they should not exceed his zeal. How could the rest of the Christian world be expected to move against error within the Church, Carafa and his fellow Theatines lamented, when the Eternal City was filled with heretics and nothing was being done to dislodge them? The lack of movement, the "unnecessary marks of respect and pusillanimity" justified by the fear that a harsh stance would drive the restless into

---

<sup>55</sup> Monti, pp. 59, 64.

outright rebellion, depriving the Church of sufficient ministers, was the “greatest favor” that heresy could expect. It made the heretic “more crafty and insidious”, harmed the reputation of the papacy, and “saddened the souls of faithful Christians who see themselves offended by these scoundrels...under the title of the authority of the Apostolic See”. Is it not a scandal, the Neapolitan document asks, that the papal power, supreme in the Church, is frequently utilized to relax discipline, but never to enforce it?<sup>56</sup> In short, a bored, blasé, business as usual mentality totally unconcerned with Divine Truth was destroying the Body of Christ.

A two-fold approach to that institutional reform absolutely essential to the cause of renewal is suggested in these sources. On the one hand, as the *Consilium* later openly indicated, it is necessary to admit the false attribution of certain privileges to the Holy See; to recognize that “the fundamental cause of the ills of the Church is the immense exaggeration of the pontifical power occasioned by the refined adulation of canonists without conscience”.<sup>57</sup> Carafa begs that the Papacy not interfere in the day-to-day operations of sound religious communities, such as those of Spain and Portugal, and, most importantly, that the traffic in apostolic dispensations be brought within some proper bounds. “And for the love of God”, he writes in his instructions to Fra Bonaventura, “entreat His Holiness to put a brake upon His Ministers, that such an abundance of

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 61, 65, 163-164, 327.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

## AGAINST ALL?

Apostolic Bulls not be released for every most vile and alien thing".<sup>58</sup>

On the other hand, the Theatines, and particularly Carafa, had the most exalted notions of that which the Papacy, acting in its *proper* sphere, might be capable of accomplishing. The future Paul IV writes that an active pontiff would have the ability to "make the giant mountains tremble down into the abyss".<sup>59</sup> What was required was simply vigorous, uncompromising application of reform measures. This insistence upon the futility of half-hearted reform was axiomatic in Theatine circles. The Neapolitan document, for example, notes that the decades-long commitment to the cause of reform on the part of popes, along with Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) and the first sessions of the Council of Trent (1545-1547, 1551-1552), had still, by the 1550's, achieved practically nothing. This was because such reform had always remained within the realm of abstract discussion rather than leading directly to action. Escape routes were regularly left open by councils and the Holy See in that great care was exercised in delineating the conditions under which abuses might continue to flourish. These "where licit" clauses of reform constitutions demonstrated that problems were being treated not "according to what they are in fact and in practice, but by way of theory and in abstract". Sanctity was the least of their concerns. They simply encouraged, or at least publicly tolerated, the practice of obtaining dispensations. Moreover, given the nature of men, the exception was

---

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 65, 70-72.

<sup>59</sup> Monti, pp. 163-164.

inevitably elevated into the rule and then despoiled of its limited “justifying” conditions:<sup>60</sup>

Then, when they are put into practice, they are despoiled by men of those ‘legalizing’ circumstances and dressed, most often, in a totally different fashion; thus, if one wishes to end usury, it is not enough to say ‘such a contract made with such a condition is licit’, but it is necessary to see if it is made with that condition, or true that the disease is inflicted by the law. Therefore, I believe that things similar in themselves, even under certain licit conditions, when it is discovered that in fact and in practice they have for a long time been badly used, must be reformed by means of total prohibition, because it is not enough to say: ‘I have written a good law’; but it is necessary to see if it is used as well as it is written, the prudence required being almost impossible given the quantity of evil that reigns in the world.

The Church needed no more ecumenical councils, no more decrees, and no more pious sermons. *Action* alone could deal with the problem. Action was itself the best argument—action based on the strength that came from the life of Christ.

Carafa himself offered many specific suggestions for exactly how the Mystical Body should proceed. Preachers and confessors, he explained, must be examined carefully with regard to their orthodoxy, an office that he himself performed for a time in Rome. Permission to read heretical books ought to be restricted—once again, due to their appeal to the

---

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

## AGAINST ALL?

licentious, ever anxious to justify their wicked behavior on the basis of something “new”. A reformed, restructured, and strengthened Inquisition must be established under papal control. Creation of a military-religious order, directly subject to the Holy See and founded upon a Venetian fragment of the secularized order of Teutonic Knights, was also commended. It was only with regard to the religious orders that “half measures” were urged, “by reason of the great number of the worst types that are found therein, who so oppress the good that they can prevail in nothing”.<sup>61</sup> Here, he claims, it would be best simply to set aside houses for observant religious, in order that they might possess some safe havens in which to fulfill their vows without hindrance. All useful steps, moreover, must first be taken in Rome, in the pope’s own garden. Only then, with a proper example given by the successor of St. Peter, could the movement for correction and transformation in Christ be expected to spread throughout Italy and the remainder of the Christian world.

Carafa was certainly true to his word upon obtaining the tiara in 1555.<sup>62</sup> Proponents of a new session of the Council of Trent, which had first met under Paul III ten years earlier, were not surprised to see that it was not re-convoked during his reign. Instead, Paul IV sought to reform by means of unilateral actions, his ferocity in this regard becoming legendary. The Theatine Pope fell down upon the Datary with a sincerity that no man could question, cutting his own revenues in half when the “common sense” of the business as

---

<sup>61</sup> Monti, p. 72.

<sup>62</sup> von Pastor, Volumes XIV and XV on Carafa as Paul IV; Mayeur, VIII, 227-279, 519- 560; Jedin and Dolan, V, 431-488.

usual mentality told him that he could least afford to do so. "Wandering monks", having failed to respond to his call to return to their monasteries, were rounded up and shipped off to the galleys. So certain was he of the importance of the work of the Inquisition that he attended its sessions even on the verge of his death. Paul's discovery, after years of blindness, of the corruption of the Carafa family members that he himself had placed in positions of authority, led to so swift and complete a punishment that the whole of Italy, reformers included, were taken aback. Indeed, his greatest failure, his war with Spain, stemmed from his uncompromising desire to free the Church from the secularizing forces covering themselves with a Catholic cloak that he felt to be active in the court of a Philip II. It was ironic, however, as Paul himself may have realized by the last year of his reign, that he, of all men, should have been guilty of placing what many perceived to be a political issue above the cause of reform in more clearly Church-related matters.

What reformers of the Theatine variety were arguing was the general need for the Church to "get out of her rut", and to do so by seeking freedom from the *Zeitgeist* or "spirit of the times". We have repeatedly seen that attainment of this independence is not an easy task, for the *Zeitgeist* always maintains certain advantages in its struggle with Christian Truth for control over man's mind and will. The spirit of the times is always taken for granted, and its erroneous axioms are a man's daily bread. So strong is it, so omnipresent its guiding hand, that it uses the average Catholic to penetrate the Church herself. It bends the theologian to its will by attacking him on two fronts. His need to oppose secularism is satisfied by directing his wrath against the dead *Zeitgeist* of yesteryear, while his acceptance of the present, living spirit of

## AGAINST ALL?

the age is encouraged by its convincing him that its embrace is dictated solely by intelligent reasoning. He, of course, could not be influenced by the purely atmospheric conditions around him! Once firmly ensconced in an ecclesiastical setting, it determines, to its own advantage, the battleground on which the Church may fight, the weapons that she may use, and the time that the conflict may begin. Counsel is given against taking the very measures most useful in freeing the Church from its grip, the work of the *Zeitgeist* being praised as the movement of the spirit of God. That which is easy to correct is depicted as being difficult and even impossible; that which is wise is ridiculed as the handiwork of the foolish.

Independence of the *Zeitgeist* is essential to the successful completion of the Church's supernatural mission, and such independence the Theatines, to a large degree, possessed. What did they do to attain this freedom? Little more than devote themselves to the proper goals of Catholic priests, and call things by their proper names. For, despite the difficulty of avoiding the influence of the spirit of the times, the means of effectively battling it are always immediately available at the believer's fingertips: honest dedication to the corrective and transforming character of the Christian life and straightforwardness in one's dealings with society on the basis of Catholic teachings. The perspective won by the Theatines through their break with "accepted" clerical patterns of the day demonstrated to them the complete insignificance of and unwarranted importance granted to the cautions of time-serving prelates, the demands of well-entrenched bureaucrats, and the wishes of powerful laymen. No one was in a position to strike more boldly at the ways of the world and the petty illusions of daily existence than the

single Catholic saint (or group of men struggling towards sanctity) plainly stating the simple Christian truths and the requirements of Christian morality. St. Catherine of Genova had understood this clearly. Renaissance popes had not.

Some have claimed that such freedom from the *Zeitgeist* did the Clerks Regular little good; that the Theatines, and especially Carafa as their most famous historical spokesman, were, like most reformers, too intense, and ultimately self-defeating. Was it really necessary, such critics ask, for the Order to go so far as to live in stables to demonstrate its embrace of Apostolic Poverty? Did Carafa truly have to send monks to the galleys? Could not his reaction to his own family's corruption—for whose flowering his own blindness was chiefly responsible—have been a bit more balanced? And what, in the end, did his zeal for the independence and reform of the Church achieve? Defeated in a most unfortunate war with Spain, reviled by the Roman population, which entertained itself after his death by attacking symbols of his reign, treated by many subsequent historians as an obscurantist fanatic, Carafa's pontificate is said to have been a double proof of both exaggerated Theatine rigor as well as its ultimate uselessness.

One does gain the impression that the Theatine attitude towards institutional reform, as represented by Carafa and some of his colleagues, lacked the prudence required to govern the Church over a long period of time. It may, however, be the case that a blood-letting, in the form of rigorous and even brutal house-cleaning, was, given the general enslavement to the Rut Triumphant, the corruption of the Church of the day, and the cynicism of much of the reform-minded Christian population, temporarily demanded to end Catholic torpor. It is certainly the case that once



## AGAINST ALL?

Carafa's scythe had cut through the papal court and papal Rome, the props of the Renaissance Church were gone forever. Long-hallowed corruption was no longer sacrosanct. Old legends crumbled, as the Papal States did not collapse along with the powers of the Datary. Open abuses were obliged, to a certain degree, to go underground. And the next papal nephew to hold a position of great authority in the Church after Carafa's reign was a saint: Charles Borromeo (1538-1584).

If Paul IV and the Theatines were not necessarily the best instruments for directing a long-term reform of the universal Church, they were nevertheless crucial as vanguards destroying the age-old barriers blocking the pathway of surgeons carrying the medicine of Trent. As travel guides indicating the route to that personal Christian renewal for which institutional reform was but a means to an end, their importance was lasting and unmatched. They showed that what Catholics need to do in order to fulfill the mission of the Word Incarnate is not to follow the "pragmatic" suggestions of enemies whose true wish is to destroy them but to be nothing other than what they really are.

*G. Tridentine Reform, the Advance of the Word,  
and the Catholic Fight for Human Freedom*

Despite torturous delays in responding to an increasingly bleak situation; despite continuous temptations to rely on "appropriate explanations of reality" to avoid dealing with it, the Catholic Church finally turned back to her one absolutely solid source of strength: the full doctrinal message of the Incarnation and the consequences to be garnered from it. She

did so partly out of love for the truth in and of itself, and partly due to her recognition of the unhappy practical consequences of allowing erroneous belief to spread uncontested. Most importantly, however, she did so because nothing else was effective in combating the proponents of "nature as is".<sup>63</sup>

It is interesting to note that the work of a return to the roots began underneath the guidance of Alessandro Farnese, Pope Paul III (1534-1549), a corrupt member of a self-seeking family that no one would ever have expected to lead a pilgrim march back to a Catholicism firmly based upon the Word. And yet it was he who set up the above-mentioned Reform Commission that courageously identified the chief source of the problem in the rut-drenched "traditions" of the Roman curia, and whose official report was so devastating that the Protestants themselves used it as a propaganda tool. It was he who was to approve the pilgrim work of St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) and the Society of Jesus. It was he who convened an ecumenical council that finally did have some serious impact on the Catholic world at large.

For despite the disdain of Paul IV, the Catholic return to sanity is most popularly associated with the work of the Council of Trent, which met in three stages between 1545 and

---

<sup>63</sup> On the Catholic Reformation, see Mayeur, VIII, 223-279, 353-1183; IX, 209-349, 615-1088; Jedin and Dolan, V, 431-645; Dawson, *Dividing*, pp. 119-134, 156, 165; R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770* (Cambridge, 1998); von Pastor, Volumes XVI-XXVIII; Jedin, *Das Konzil von Trient*. For insights into the missionary experience, see L. D'Olwer, *Fray Bernardino de Sahagun* (U. of Utah, 1987).

## AGAINST ALL?

1563. This synod did more than simply reiterate the teachings of the past; it also developed their doctrinal significance much further. In doing so, it gave to the word "Tridentine" a broader two-fold significance: first of all, as a symbol for every aspect of the Catholic vision most detested by that Grand Coalition of the Status Quo; and, secondly, as a real badge of honor for believers in the Incarnation and its corrective and transformative effects on man and nature.

Tridentine Catholicism's Christ-centeredness was reflected in a joint concern both for authoritative doctrinal teaching as well as the more mundane specifics of daily pastoral activity. The spirit of the council informing this new era in the Church's history was one that saw that ideas and action must work cohesively. Its pilgrimage fervor generated the development of innovative practical strategies for the application of objective Catholic truths to the diverse parochial conditions tossed up by the complex dance of life. These strategies involved strenuous efforts to harmonize the unchangeable, universal demands of the Christian vision with legitimate, changeable, local and individual human problems. Fresh clerical training and catechesis programs were initiated, speedily demonstrating their superiority to many of those of previous centuries. Critical assaults on past practices deemed openly harmful accompanied all such changes.

Diverse pastoral strategies were implemented with that militant sense of urgency always demanded of the faithful. Prompt mobilization of all social forces on every level of European life, aimed at the attainment of quick and palpable results, was recognized as absolutely crucial given the initial strength and scope of the Protestant assault. Fast, clear

success was especially required to distinguish Trent from previous synods whose mountains of ineffective decrees appeared to masquerade that cynical commitment to "business as usual" which was so disturbing to Theatines like Carafa.

By the end of the 1620's, this authoritative, pastoral, pilgrim-minded, and militant Tridentine Catholicism had indeed obtained many very positive results. A worldwide missionary expansion, begun with the discovery of the Americas and the opening of more extensive contact with the Orient, progressed ever more vigorously. This growth involved truly remarkable illustrations of the continued strength of a Catholic pilgrim spirit ready to accept new steps in the dance of life, especially notable in Jesuit recognition of the splendors of Chinese civilization and openness to the Seeds of the Logos that could be found therein. Calls to external crusade in a more traditional sense once again stirred Christian hearts, first in order to stop the advances of the Ottoman Turks in Europe, and then, by the late 1600's and early 1700's, to reverse them and regain lands once feared lost forever. Closer to home, much territory that had temporarily gone over to the Protestants in central and eastern Europe was won back for the Church, while a number of Eastern Christian communities in the same regions accepted papal authority and were reunited with Rome.

One major reason for these impressive Catholic results, already alluded to above, was that the model of the Roman prelate and priest was reinvigorated, nourished by roots grounded in the full, authentic Tradition, and aimed away from the merely customary, legalist, political, secularist obsessions of the late medieval period. That model was more powerful as a deterrent to abuse than more rigorously

## AGAINST ALL?

defined and enforced canonical penalties. Positive example trumped negative sanction. The fact that it had this impact is revealed somewhat by the difficulty historians now have in explaining to contemporary Catholics the failure of early sixteenth century bishops and priests to live in their own dioceses and parishes. Raised in a Church that has at least partly digested the spirit of the Tridentine reform, they automatically presume that residence is an obvious clerical duty, regardless of the existence of any canonical loopholes through which an escape from its demands might legitimately be upheld.

The Society of Jesus remains uppermost in people's minds as a symbol of the change that had overtaken the Church, and with good reason. Ignatius of Loyola represents acceptance of everything that the Word Incarnate would have men respect to spread His message. He appreciated speculative theology, humanism, the devotional practices and methodology of the Brethren of the Common Life, sound doctrine, and good pastoral work at one and the same time. And there is no better example of someone literally picking up his pallet, walking, and then throwing himself into the hands of God, than Ignatius and, along with him, the men of the University of Paris who ended up everywhere from the rocks along the coast of China to the chopping blocks of Britain.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> W. Bangert, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù* (Marietti, 1990); J. Lacouture, *Jésuites* (Seuil, Two Volumes, 1991); J. Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola, The Pilgrim Saint* (Loyola, 1994); A. Lynn Martin, *The Jesuit Mind* (Cornell, 1988); Jedin and Dolan, V, 446-456.

Although the achievements of the Society of Jesus are justifiably cited as classic manifestations of the Tridentine spirit responsible for Catholic gains, it remains true that popes, nuncios, other international religious orders, national episcopacies, monarchs, and the laity of each of the three Estates can all be shown to have played their role in obtaining them as well. Numerous men and women, lay as well as cleric, in every sphere of activity, from architecture to mysticism, were involved in raising the sights of Catholics to a deeper sense both of how the "natural" individual achieved union with God, through Christ, His Church, and Creation as a whole, as well as what it was that that union ultimately entailed.

Aside from pointing to the global accomplishments of the Jesuits, historians generally look to Spain and Italy for examples of the practical application of the Tridentine spirit. It is more suitable, in this work, to turn our attention to France, and not only because of her importance in terms of numbers of Catholic faithful, her illustration of the nuances required by local conditions, and her significance for future revolutionary developments. Tridentine France should also be studied because nothing can better illustrate a contrast to our contemporary world's vision of a society of formless openness dominated by word merchants serving the interests of the willful than the educated, systematic, Word-drenched alternative nurtured by many seventeenth century Catholics on her soil. The breeze wafting in from a tradition-soaked Gaul nudged people into that kind of pilgrimage towards a

## AGAINST ALL?

distinct, splendid, and, hence, "divisive" goal that our own pluralist culture regularly condemns.<sup>65</sup>

A kaleidoscope of diverse and very committed *Tridentini* were at the forefront of the reformed French pilgrimage to God. What came to be called the *dévo*t party in seventeenth-century France included bishops such as Cardinal François de la Rochefoucauld (1558-1645) of Clermont/Senlis and priests such as Adrien Bourdoise (1584-1665), active at the Parisian Church of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet. Religious from reformed Benedictine, Carmelite, Cistercian, and Dominican houses, especially in or near Paris, added their fervor to the cause. Members of the new Capuchin, Discalced Carmelite, Fatebenefratelli, and Ursuline orders originating in Italy and Spain were also active, not to speak of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, who provided such *dévo*t leaders as Nicolas Caussin (1583 -1651), confessor to Louis XIII (1610-1643).

---

<sup>65</sup> On the whole French experience, see J. Neale, *The Age of Catherine de Medici* (Harper, 1962); D. Nugent, *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation: The Colloquy of Poissy* (Harvard, 1974); M. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion* (Cambridge, 1995); F. Baumgartner, *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopacy* (Duke, 1986); H. Phillips, *Church and Culture in Seventh Century France* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 1-99; J. Bergin, *Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld* (Yale, 1987); J. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu* (Yale, 1985); A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII: The Just* (U. of California, 1989), pp. 45, 116-272; G. Treasure, *Mazarin* (Routledge, 1995), pp. 10-21, 38, 77. 90-96, 128, 175,187, 218-219, 285-300; Mayeur, VIII, 403-474, IX, 113-138, 837-1033; Philips, pp. 9-99; D. Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution* (Yale, 1996), pp. 40, 51-53; Jedin and Dolan, V, 535-574, VI, 3-24, 75-106.

Orders founded by French-speakers, including St. Vincent de Paul's (1581-1662) Congregation of the Mission and the Visitandines of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and St. Jeanne de Chantal (1572-1641), played a significant role as well. Moreover, organizations of secular priests, ranging from the network of Aa (*Association d'amis*) to Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle's (1575-1629) French Oratory, Jean-Jacques Olier's (1608-1657) Company of Saint Sulpice, and St. Jean Eudes' (1601-1680) Congregation of Jesus and Mary offered many zealous foot soldiers for the movement.

All these prelates, priests, and religious were aided immeasurably in making their influence felt by an army of laywomen, among them Madame Barbara Acarie (1566-1618), who eventually entered religious life as the Carmelite Marie de l'Incarnation, and Louise de Marillac (1591-1660), whose work with St. Vincent de Paul led to the creation of the Daughters of Charity. Louise's uncle, Michel de Marillac (1563-1632), was one of the most important political figures from the large pool of laymen in the *dévo*t camp. While Jesuit Marian congregations, along with sodalities sponsored by other priests and religious, were often the locus for lay involvement, private homes also became *dévo*t foyers. Nobles such as Henri de Lévis (1596-1680), Duke of Ventadour, created and fueled the lay Company of the Blessed Sacrament, which operated in France on behalf of a variety of different causes.

If one thing could be said to unite all these diverse elements, that cement, as indicated above, would have to be found in their joint concern for an education that taught, corrected, and transformed the human mind and spirit: education of the clergy, the average man, and society at large to the fullness of the message of the Word Incarnate in



## AGAINST ALL?

history. Education of the clergy to a sense of its dignity and its lofty responsibilities was the theme set by de la Rouchefoucauld in his *De la perfection de l'état ecclésiastique* (1597). From 1612 onwards, Bourdoise used his church to provide unofficial seminary training in a Paris still lacking clerical preparatory institutions. Creation of a new secular clergy, almost *da capo*, was the special mission of de Bérulle's Oratory, and this spirit lay behind the work of Olier and Eudes as well. St. Vincent de Paul sought to instruct Parisian priests by means of a continuing series of Wednesday conferences. Meanwhile, colleges of Jesuits and Oratorians, the circles around the Cistercians of Port Royal, and, a bit later, the Brothers of the Christian Schools of St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle (1651-1719), sought the elevation of laymen. Laywomen, whose education was more and more considered to be crucial to the improvement of family life, were formed, to begin with, by Ursulines and Visitandines, and later, with the encouragement of Louis XIV's (1643-1715) second wife, Madam de Maintenon (1635-1719), and the great François de Salignac Le Mothe Fénelon (1651-1715), Bishop of Cambrai. General education was continued through the development of the episcopal pastoral letter and the perfection of the preaching art, which reached its apex by the end of the century with Fénelon, Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet of Meaux (1627-1704), and the Jesuit Louis Bourdaloue (1632-1704). The Jesuits made innovative use of the theater as a teaching tool, while the period also saw the widespread dissemination of devotional and catechetical works. Jesuits, Eudes, and the Congregation of the Mission, convinced that France itself was a mission country in need of evangelization, organized highly sophisticated sweeps of the countryside to

teach, preach, and firm up commitment to practice of the faith. Each *sortie* was repeated at regular intervals to make sure the good seed had not fallen by the wayside.

In the long run, of course, this was education of the soul in its approach to union with God, and mystical in its flavor. The mystical character of the movement was indeed aided by stimuli from Italy and Spain, but also by the rediscovery or republication of works of the early Christian centuries, such as those of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. A rich French strain of mystical writing soon emerged, including the Capuchin Benoit de Canfield's (1562-1660) *Règle de perfection* (1609), Pierre de Bérulle's *Discours de l'état et des grandeurs de Jesus* (1623), Olier's *Journée chrétienne* (1670), and the posthumous (1694) compilation of the teachings of the Jesuit Louis Lallemont (1588-1635), the *Doctrine spirituelle*. Marie Guyard (1599-1672), an Ursuline active in Canada under the name Marie de l'Incarnation, and many others, taught mystical concerns by example. Different in their specific approaches, all urged some form of meditation on Christ's Sacred Heart and His love for mankind, self-abasement before His majesty, grace, and goodness, imitation of the Holy Family, friendship with Mary, and specific penitential and Eucharistic practices. One type of devotion to the Sacred Heart received especially powerful support from the revelations to Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) and the writings of her Jesuit confessor, Charles de la Colombière (1641-1682).

But were personal and corporate prayer life alone sufficient for education and elevation of the soul to union with God? A resounding "no" came from different *dévot* circles. What was referred to as "devout humanism", as found in the Jesuit Pierre Coton's (1564-1626) *Interieure*

## AGAINST ALL?

*occupation d'une âme dévote* (1608), or the spirituality of Saint Francis de Sales' *Introduction à la vie dévote* (1609) and *Traite de l'amour de Dieu* (1616), spoke volumes about the need for active individuals to raise themselves to God through their particular vocations in the world and their specific duties. Everything, from the theater to the State, had to be called upon, as any ancient Platonic proponent of *paideia* understood, in order to aid the passage of souls to God. All Christians, St. Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, and their friends argued, had charitable responsibilities to perform for the sick and the poor. Social sins ranging from dueling to the neglect of agriculture and the peasantry to the disturbance of the peace of Europe in general were problems that *dévots*--from the time of St. Vincent and the Company of the Blessed Sacrament to Fénelon in his great work, *Télémaque* (1699)--believed that the Christian on pilgrimage to God had to tackle. In sum, social and political action figured into the *dévo*t agenda perhaps as much as catechesis and direction of individuals.

Such successes were exuberantly expressed in the many faces of that culture which we call the Baroque. Tridentine, Baroque civilization, symbolized by the work of the Jesuits and directed by their devotion to the greater glory of God, lay particular stress on the grandeur to be found in the Creation. It did this to answer the Protestant disdain for the universe. Hence, it filled everything from dress to architecture with vibrancy, color, gold, and majestic beauty. Who could not think of the glory of God and of the possibility of Heaven when in a Baroque Church in the Baroque sections of Rome? Any visit to a Baroque city from the seventeenth century Catholic world yields a clear insight, even today, into the

spirit of Tridentine Christendom, along with the varied means employed to urge believers on to accept and fulfill its promise.

That spirit, in its public manifestation, was nothing more than a further elaboration of the basic truth that all previous explosions of zealous Catholic spirituality and activity had emphasized, each in its own particular way: the conviction that nature had been mishandled by sinful man; that a Creation true to its God-given mission and responsibilities had more surprises to offer us than the naked faithless eye wished to admit; that it was intended to be an icon of its Maker; that the flawed world could be raised to the greater glory of God; and that through its redemption, it could give inestimable assistance to the individual in his central task of seeking transformation in Christ. But the Drama of Truth, as always, was that individual and nature had to be sanctified in tandem and that this joint sanctification regularly tossed up new challenges to add to perennial, unchanging, and therefore all too familiar dilemmas. And another and highly difficult act in that Drama of Truth was now about to begin.

## **The Global Battle for Nature: The Grand Coalition of the Status Quo and Naturalism**

### *A. A War to Define the Meaning of “Nature” and “Natural”*

Tridentine Catholicism was threatened from the outset along a variety of fronts, denying it sufficient time and strength to fulfill its Word-centered program for man and society. Threats external to Christendom played a certain role in limiting the global expansion of the vision it inspired. But these external threats pale in significance compared to the continued Christian religious divisions and reactions to them that threatened Christendom from within. Most importantly, however, the Tridentine movement was brought to bay by the final ascent of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo to dominance over the western world and the brilliance of the “words” used to disguise the true meaning of its triumph.

Discussing the rise to power of the GCSQ entails examination of three contributing factors, none of which can be ignored if a clear picture of its strengths and long-term weaknesses is to be obtained. The first of these is the broad internal Protestant development of the central principle of Reformation theology—the doctrine of total depravity. A second element is the movement referred to by historians as the Enlightenment, which emerged by the latter part of the seventeenth century and the beginning decades of the 1700's. Its proponents were to argue that the means needed for attaining individual and social perfection could only be obtained by lessening or entirely eliminating guidance of the natural world by either the Protestant or the Catholic understanding of God and Faith. Finally, we shall have to turn our attention to the tragic stimulus to the growth of the GCSQ afforded by various battles over unresolved doctrinal and pastoral problems inside the Roman camp.

In the years following the end of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, first incarnated in Christendom through the Reformation after centuries of hidden existence, finally came to term. Mobilizing arguments coming from Protestant, Enlightenment, and even Roman Catholic sources themselves, its word merchants “seized” control of the concept of “nature” with that “appropriate explanation of reality” we call “naturalism”. Global battle was then joined with the remaining defenders of a vision of life obedient to the message of the Incarnation. Both camps hoisted hostile banners bearing two opposing definitions of what was “natural” and “unnatural” inscribed upon them.

Alas, many believers once again abandoned their best weapons—the weapons of the Word Incarnate—in this global

## STATUS QUO

battle for nature. Once again, as so often in the past, they tried to defend their Faith on the grounds provided by enemies who wished to destroy it. Yes, it is true that some contemporary Catholics did awaken to the danger posed by *radical* members of the GCSQ who openly and violently persecuted them. Unfortunately, however, many others became so bewildered by the way the *moderate* faction active within the Grand Coalition used familiar Christian terms and themes to propagate its message that they began to think that its more subtle approach to accepting “nature as is” actually represented “the Catholic vision”. They viewed the moderate strategy as though it were the true Catholic alternative to the violent silencing of the message of the Faith. But whether through brutal or gentle means, the ascendancy of the GCSQ was equally assured. And with that victory came the inevitable deliverance of “nature” over to the triumph of the will—and the ever more bloody combats of the increasingly divided and battling ranks of the willful.

*B. External Obstacles to the Expansion of the Tridentine Spirit*

When one speaks of external obstacles to the Tridentine spirit in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the first thing that comes to mind is the seemingly invincible military might of the Ottoman Empire. And the threat of the inexorable march into central Europe of this Moslem representative of the divinization of willful power was indeed all too real at the start of the period under consideration. Concern for assuring a unified response to that threat was itself a powerful force both aiding the growth of

Protestantism and also explaining the many painful delays in convening the Council of Trent. Armed Ottoman incursions into the Christian world continued down till the 1683 siege of Vienna, affecting the religious and political situation of Catholic Europe in a myriad of often disturbing ways.<sup>1</sup>

Two additional powerful external threats to the Tridentine Catholic advance were the new Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan (1600) and the Manchu Dynasty in China (1644). Both these forces were suspicious of the foreign Christian influence that had penetrated the lands come recently under their control, and ultimately acted strenuously against them. This was particularly true in the case of a Japan that looked, for a moment, as though its conversion to Catholicism were imminent. The Tokugawa closing of the Japanese homeland to Catholic proselytizing proved to be almost airtight in the centuries to come, cheering to the hearts of the parochial minded in both Asia as well as Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, such threats were by no means decisive in and of themselves in curtailing the external progress of the Tridentine program of correction and transformation in Christ. We have already noted the eventual Ottoman reduction to the defensive and the re-conquest of wide swaths of former Christian territory under Turkish control by the 1700's, all of which was accompanied by an impressive revival of the old crusading spirit. Tragic events in Japan and China were not reversed, but this was really chiefly due to the complicity of "Christian" forces with nefarious European purposes in mind. Protestant states like Britain and the Dutch Republic were of some significance in frightening the

---

<sup>1</sup> Riley-Smith, pp. 241-251; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 109-160.

<sup>2</sup> Mayeur, VIII, 787-853; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 279-325.



## STATUS QUO

shoguns into opposing what were presented as overbearing papal political pretensions in Japan, but for commercial as much as religious reasons. Even more importantly, it was the bitter, European-wide discussion of questions concerning Jesuit missionary work in China that was to prove to be of greatest significance in the simultaneous weakening of the Church's expansion in Asia and the strengthening of the GCSQ at home. But that particularly sad tale may only be told in the next chapter, after first introducing internal Christian and Enlightenment developments into our story.

*C. Christian Disunity and the Limitation  
of the Effects of the Incarnation*

Let us begin our discussion of internal problems leading to the global war over the relationship of God with nature with the most basic scandal of all—the continued failure to maintain Christian unity. Sadly, Christian divisions became even more entrenched, organized, and complex in the Tridentine Era. The final effect of the seemingly endless debates among groups all calling themselves Christian was to encourage the contempt of the enemies of the Word and to aid them as they disparaged thinking and acting upon the basis of any faith-filled concepts whatsoever. Even believers were badly affected by these demoralizing developments. More and more people began to wonder how anyone could take seriously the teachings of a religion whose many denominations all pointed to the same Christ as the one saving force in human life, but whose adherents could in no way agree regarding the character of His message. An either-or choice against the forces of disbelief simply could not be

offered under such circumstances, for the “either” alternative was a house divided against itself that perhaps could not stand on its own very much longer. Worse still, the sight of the proponents of the religion of love butchering one another in the name of Christ did considerably more than any theological, philosophical, or scientific argument to facilitate the claim that Christian Faith endangered not only belief in the “real” God but natural life and the satisfaction of legitimate natural individual and communal desires as well.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the several Acts of Union noted briefly in the previous chapter, Western and Eastern Christianity remained almost entirely separated. Moreover, almost every one of the older centers of the Eastern Christian world lay under Moslem domination, with the energies of their clergy and laity generally dedicated to questions of basic survival. The already powerful temptation of Eastern Christianity to “freeze” the development of the Word, expressing its teachings in magnificent ritual but avoiding discussion of their theological meaning and thereby hiding real divisions regarding doctrine and practice behind a deceptive liturgical unity, was further encouraged. Under these circumstances, almost any belief could gain an influence over the Orthodox population, so long as the substantive and potentially dangerous teaching contained therein were masqueraded by the proper ritual gestures.

But Church leaders, forced to answer for their flocks’ loyalty, in some respects became yet more politically important than ever before. This was certainly true of the Patriarch of Constantinople, responsible as he became for the

---

<sup>3</sup> J. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 63-93; Dawson, *Dividing of Christendom*, pp. 200-207.

## STATUS QUO

good behavior of the Christian population or “millet”. Political importance then tempted ambitious lay families and individuals from among the believing population to deeper involvement in Church affairs. Trapped inside second-class, ethnic hot houses, Eastern Christian flocks tended—most especially among the older, heretical denominations—to indulgence in the ever more intense parochial battles that losing factions are historically wont to cultivate. Ossification, secularizing political obsessions, and parochialism then rendered the hope of contemporary theological discussions fruitful to reunion an even more utopian project than in the past.<sup>4</sup>

Adding to Eastern Christian problems was the fact that its one major center that was free—Tsarist Russia—struggled under a variety of Word-limiting tendencies of its own. Aside from those inevitably connected with its great size and isolation, it was home to a peculiar mixture of traditional Orthodoxy and exaggerated monastic and lay influences. Moreover, it also nurtured a messianic parochialism that unjustifiably privileged the position of Russia in salvation history. When efforts were made by Patriarch Nikon (1605-1681) of Moscow to awaken the Russian Church to its need to reconnect with the broader Eastern Christian tradition, a predictable, narrow-minded schism resulted. This Old Believers Schism, while in some respects appealing because of the great courage displayed by many of its leaders in the face of persecution, was ultimately responsible for weakening ecclesiastical unity and social influence permanently

---

<sup>4</sup> Mayeur, VIII, 323-350; IX, 539-612; Jedin and Dolan, V, 615-645; VI, 135-136, 329- 342.

throughout the land. Schism, in turn, made the Church more vulnerable to an intense political manipulation by the “sacred” Tsarist state. And that manipulation was especially dangerous because, from the time of Peter the Great (1689-1725) onwards, it was further corrupted by Romanov acceptance of the power-enhancing secularism characterizing political and social life in the outside Protestant world.<sup>5</sup>

Secularism as such was certainly not the aim of the original Protestant Reformers. We have seen that most of them argued that this was precisely the effect brought about by an arrogant, blasphemous, worldly Catholic Church that had strayed from the Christian foundation vision, arrogated to herself the prerogatives that belonged only to the supernatural God, and dangerously exaggerated the value of human works to the detriment of divine grace. Protestant reformers did not wish to destroy God’s law and an order of things in which that law was honored and obeyed. They simply sought to disabuse individual men of any belief that personal success or failure in following that law aided in the work of their own salvation. Only God’s will, expressed through his free offer of divine grace, could bring them to safe port. Recognition of all these truths would follow a Christian return to the original intent of the Apostolic Church as expressed in those fundamental documents of the Faith known as Holy Scriptures.

Moreover, one must also remember that the reformers operated in a world formed by centuries of Catholic efforts to

---

<sup>5</sup> Mayeur, VIII, 341-348; IX, 501-537; J. Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (Stanford, 1971), especially, pp. 1-62; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 183-207; N. Zernov, *The Russians and their Church* (S.P.C.K., 1968), 93-133.

## STATUS QUO

transform nature in Christ. The power of custom, habit, and pure inertia over many of them was very strong, indeed. Certainly Luther, despite his vulgarity, obscenity, and pompous boasting, cannot personally be charged with wanting all the secularizing developments that will be catalogued below. Like Maxim Litvinov, the Jewish Soviet Foreign Minister of the 1930's, who crossed himself while boarding airplanes "because he was a Russian", we have seen that Luther often contradicted the consequences of his own notions "because he was still in many respects a Catholic". Jeremy Bentham is said to have blunted suggestions that utilitarian, democratic rule might give birth to atrocities with the comment: "Englishmen do not act that way". Luther could have attributed my little shop of Protestant horrors to a vivid papist imagination. "Reformers", he might have said, "simply do not act that way". He could not necessarily foresee the practical long-term historical outcome of those applications of his basic concepts that he himself did not wish to be made. His "choice" regarding what would happen through his Church of Original Intent was in many respects as Catholic as he still remained. And this was even more true of some of his followers, starting with his closest associate, the systematic thinker Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560).<sup>6</sup>

While absolving *Protestants*, one must nevertheless anathematize *Protestantism* as such. Protestantism's foundation doctrines stand on their own two feet, and they are in no way friendly to or compatible with that full message

---

<sup>6</sup> On Lutheran developments, see Mayeur, VIII, 15-53; IX, 409-419; on the other Protestant denominations, IX, 419-499; on religious thought, and practice, IX, 875-894, 931-1157.

of the Word that was taught by Catholicism. They were unacceptable in 1517 and they grew even more so as their significance unfolded over the course of time. When one meditates upon the foundations of Catholicism, he irons out the dangerous human kinks corrupting its divine machinery. When one meditates upon the foundations of Protestantism, he ensures that its consequences contradict the continued good desires of its practitioners.

One of these good desires was that of avoiding secularization. And yet Protestantism made a secularization that was conducive to the triumph of the will logically inevitable. It did this for two specific reasons. First of all, it reduced the human person to his individual atomist state and thereby deprived him of his crucial, authoritative, social dimension. And, secondly, Protestantism destroyed everything natural that remained to man in this badly truncated and therefore inhuman condition.

Let us remember that Catholicism taught men that they were part of a community, the Mystical Body of Christ, guided by the Savior through the Church authorities and made capable of aiding one another in their path to God. Community and authority were thereby shown to be absolutely essential to man's happiness and end. This Mystical Body was seen to be forever vital, death in Christ being no obstacle to valuable assistance from and to the living. Its cult of the saints encouraged daily contact with immortals and ensured a constant recognition of the existence and efficacious power of the supernatural. The world beyond was made a palpable reality in the world here and now. All legitimate communities and authorities were told that they, too, in their own fashion, could aid in the perfection of their individual members. They gave flesh to their goals and the

## STATUS QUO

virtues required to achieve them in the same concrete way that the Church gave flesh to the Christian message and the Christian way of life.

But with Protestantism, Christianity logically became a purely individual phenomenon. This is true even for Reformed Protestantism, whose congregations and national synods often wielded a practical power, but with no substantive spiritual or intellectual foundation. Communities and authorities like the Church and her bishops were, after all, no less depraved than man was himself. They were incapable of tempering the evils that their sinful character merely helped to encourage. Atomistic Christianity, founded solely on the Bible, became a lonely, individual, bookish religion, a religion of words alone, a phenomenon that lost its vibrancy on the date that the last scriptural passage was written. Reduced to this lifeless state, Protestantism ceased to be a sociological force of great importance. Human beings need to see things draped in flesh and blood if their nature is to be accommodated, and if they cannot observe a visible Church engaged in a flesh and blood pre-announcement of an invisible world, then they will not take Christianity and the God that it worships seriously. Protestantism could not be seen, and it thereby left its practitioners easy targets for secularists eager to wean them away from interest in all things divine.

Moreover, a logical Protestantism had to apply the same atomistic principles that had been used to destroy the Church to *all* authorities and communities. If the Church were pretentious in its claims to aid and perfect the individual, so were states, municipal governments, universities, guilds, and families. All such communal authorities had to be tamed in

order that the individual might face existence alone, as he was meant to do. But since real men could not successfully face existence alone, and since they positively required communities and authorities to embody in manifold fashion the purpose of human life and the moral behavior demanded to achieve it, the results of this general dismantling of the western communal structure were to prove to be horrendous. All of that social assistance that aimed men towards correction of their purely material, fallen nature and might possibly even guide them back to God was removed. A downward, secularizing spiral was rendered logically inevitable.

Even if the individual, left to his own devices, might still meditate on the world and how he should act while living within it, Protestantism left him precious little to lean upon for help in reaching solid conclusions. For social institutions and authorities were not the sole natural forces presenting problems for the believer according to the Protestant vision. His Faith taught him that the whole environment in which he operated was totally depraved.

We have spoken of the religion of the Word Incarnate as one that understands life to be a dance to sanctity, involving a combination of firm commitment to unchangeable truth and pilgrim openness to the reality of historical change. But the vision of Catholicism can also be said to be one that sees the universe to be an Unfinished Symphony. It calls an orchestra together under the vaulted hall of the heavens and explains to its musicians that a composer has given them parts of a magnificent piece that he has prepared and now wishes to test their ability to play. It notes that the entire symphony will be given to them only after successful performance of the first movement. The musicians realize that this is a fraternal



## STATUS QUO

project, and they develop an ever more powerful *esprit de corps* as they grasp the quality of the composition that they are playing. They begin to polish their instruments more carefully, put on their finest clothing, and walk with individual and fraternal confidence and pride in their labor. They wait for the day that they will be given access to the rest of the piece with patient humility, but also with great joy. For they know that they can finish the Unfinished Symphony.

Protestantism shuns the dance to sanctity because it views the ballroom of nature as something wicked. It never permits a hope for the completion of the symphony of the universe because it never allows it to begin. The musicians who arrive to audition for it are told that there has been a dreadful misunderstanding. They are assured that men can never play the music of the spheres; that, even if they could do so, it could not be in union with one another, as a social group possessing its own unique *esprit de corps*, but only as lonely, isolated individuals; that they, even as individuals, are hopelessly incapable of sprucing themselves up to undertake such an impossible project, and that the instruments necessary for its execution are not available anyway. And even though they are then told that someday, a great orchestra will play whatever part of the symphony it might be given to appreciate, the immediate disappointment that the musicians feel is so great that they file out of the hall, and the heavens fall silent forever. In short, the downward spiral of outright secularization is accompanied by a rising appreciation of the inescapability of ugliness leading to the same result: abandonment of all higher vision.

Yes, the believer was told that he had to obey God's law in this valley of tears, but as a schizophrenic, knowing that

his doing so was of no practical significance for his eternal destiny. And what if he lost his Faith? What tools would be left available to him to judge how he was to act without it? He would have none. A Catholic who lost his Faith might still look to the help of natural beauty to steer his heart and soul upwards, but a faithless Protestant had no guidelines for discerning beauty in a depraved universe. Without Faith, he was left with no sense of balance and harmony to teach him. A Catholic who lost his Faith might still use his Reason, but the doctrine of total depravity disdained this along with the rest of Creation. The result was that the individual thinking Protestant who lost his Faith had no Reason left to guide him either. Abandoned on his own in a realm deprived of both Faith and Reason, he could play carelessly with his mind. Nothing—not balance, not harmony, nor Aristotelian logic nor Platonic vision—was there to bind him. A Catholic who lost his Faith might still find guidance in natural love, but for the Protestant love also lay outside the divine scope of things. Man remained unlovable even in Heaven, where he was granted *droit de cité* only through an extrinsic grace. How could nature enter where even God's will did not tread?

In sum, human meditation and effort made of an untruth—the unrelenting evil of the fallen world—a “self-fulfilling prophesy”. A natural order that was not totally depraved seemingly became so. An atomized, secularized Protestant society would, indeed, be the abomination of desolation, and, ironically, the free human will of men loyal to the doctrine of total depravity would bring this into being. With nature turned into a savage free for all, a war of all against all, man's environment was transformed from a music hall designed for the dance of life into one, boundless death camp, fit only for a *danse macabre*. And what made this hellish

## STATUS QUO

death camp more horrible still was the fact that its pathetic inmates continued to praise its willful architects and prison guards as though they were liberating angels.

At this point, however, we must return to the historical reality of the difference between Protestantism and Protestants. Yes, all of the consequences discussed above do, indeed, flow logically from *Protestantism* and the doctrine of total depravity. Nevertheless, a remaining Catholic spirit allowed a number of *Protestants* to return to solid theological and philosophical principles that had nothing to do with what was truly distinct about their own original religious position. These believers---and they are many---are not the targets of our discussion here.

Meanwhile, there were other Protestants who fled from all belief in a God who could allow for the existence of such a natural hell. When they did so, they had two possible directions to take. They could either continue to see nature as totally depraved, although now godless as well as hopeless. Or, like many rebellious children, they could insist that the universe was exactly the opposite of what their parents told them, and therefore spotlessly good. But regardless of whether their faithlessness led them into a natural jungle or a spotless universe, both were left free to deal with life as they willed, without reference to any rules of God or man. This victory of the triumph of the will, whether arising from an exaggeratedly hopeless or an absurdly hopeful starting point, does concern us a great deal.

Most important to our present theme is that large number of Protestants who opted to continue to live in a schizophrenic universe, theoretically retaining their basic religious principles, language, and attendant Bible-centered

Faith while more and more actually ignoring their horrible meaning and unpleasant life-changing teachings in practice. For what this produced was a hybrid monster that lent itself, bit by bit, to manipulation by outside anti-Christian forces, so as to become one of the chief workhorses for recruitment directly into the ranks of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo. And when it did so, it eventually became a tool for channeling Catholic volunteers into its blithe acceptance of "nature as is" as well.

Pietism is the most important phenomenon to mention in presenting this development. The path of Pietism moved from Britain, through the work of Englishmen like William Ames (1576-1633), author of *The Marrow of Theology* (1627), over to the Dutch Republic, with that of William Teelinck (1579-1629), Gisbertius Voetius (1589-1679), and Jadocus Lodensteyn (1620-1677), and into the German Lutheran world with Johann Arndt (1555-1621), Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1725), and Nicolaus Graf von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). Spener's book, *Pia desideria* (1675), gave the movement its lasting name.<sup>7</sup>

Pietism's essential concern was commitment to a Christianity that could visibly be recognized as a truly vibrant force in the lives of men. Such a Christianity, its supporters lamented, was lamed or even totally smothered by the highly creedal denominations, dogmatic theologies, and

---

<sup>7</sup> Mayeur, IX, 415-419, 875-894, 1121-1133; R. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth Century Prussia* (Cambridge, 1993); Jedin and Dolan, VI, 509-546; J. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 136-137, 168, 176, 309, 654, 656; H.M. Scott, ed., *Enlightened Absolutism* (U. of Michigan, 1990), pp. 150, 175, 270.

## STATUS QUO

ceremonial practices of a politicized Europe, Protestant as well as Catholic. Hence, Pietism stressed the need to hunt for a “real” as opposed to a stultified and artificial faith, born of the experience of each individual’s soul and judged with reference to that faith’s obvious external fruits—a highly ironic conclusion, given the original Protestant disdain for human “works”.

Such guidelines could, given circumstances, end in very traditional territory. They influenced men like John Wesley (1703-1791), who gained from Pietism a general concern for an internal conversion active in the love for neighbor without shunning ordinary organized Church teachings, ceremonies, and structures. A Pietism of the Wesleyan Methodist variety could easily open a man to the practice of good works on a natural level while still retaining a central goal of mystical union with God that tapped into the mainline of Christian contemplative history. It was, in effect, on the road back to the full message of the Word Incarnate; in some respects, a Protestant “Seed of the Logos”.

Nevertheless, Pietism was a double-edged sword. Its abandonment of the corrective weapon of theological and philosophical thought for all intents and purposes continued the work of Erasmus, and, with it, his inability to respond effectively to strong willed men intent on changing what people “obviously” believe and how they “clearly” behave. It thus provided a disguised and seemingly Christian entry into the acceptance of “nature as is”. Along with this, it provided membership in a Grand Coalition of the Status Quo in which all of the worst consequences of the doctrine of total depravity would still prove capable of running riot. We can

see this best by first turning our attention to important developments in the Kingdom of Prussia.<sup>8</sup>

Prussia, rather poor and insignificant in comparison with the major nations on the European scene, desperately needed an ironclad unity in order to survive. It feared religious controversy as an obstacle to this essential cohesion. Unfortunately, its population at the time of the proclamation of the kingdom in 1701 was divided, with its majority of Evangelical believers split in feuding factions and its ruling House of Hohenzollern Calvinist, and thus Reformed Christian in its faith. Unity under these circumstances could only be obtained by deemphasizing doctrine and insisting that “common sense” and “natural virtues” conducive to procuring the kingdom’s secular power and wealth were the sole true means of knowing, loving, and serving the Christian God in our world of sin.

Such a task would best be accomplished if religious leaders themselves could be enlisted in support of the redirection of man’s primary attention towards the attainment of natural goods; if a Christian blessing upon a central change of focus could be obtained, thereby providing a sign of supernatural approval for a secular project. Pietism, a movement that was already powerful within the Evangelical camp, thus became attractive to the Hohenzollerns as a valuable tool in the work of Prussian unification. Its continued ritual attachment to the customary themes of Gospel Christianity meant that scriptural “words” would be readily available to back up the “all for one and one

---

<sup>8</sup> Mayeur, IX, 415-499, 882-887; Scott, pp. 265-288; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 439-443, 509-546; Gawthorpe, *passim*.

## STATUS QUO

for all" secular spirit needed to keep the Kingdom of Prussia not just alive but politically thriving.

It was not John Wesley's approach that worked here but, rather, the quite distinct Pietism of Francke, the chief protégé of Spener. Francke was appointed Professor of Near Eastern Languages at the University of Halle in Prussia in 1692. Francke's Pietism, unlike Wesley's, and, for that matter, unlike Spener's as well, was very much tied in with the need to overcome a personal experience of despair and disbelief which struck with particular fury at one moment in his life and threatened constantly to return. He became convinced that God would give him the sense of His presence and the peace that indicates forgiveness of sin only if he developed an intensely disciplined and constant activity on behalf of the good of his neighbor. He would know that he was persevering on the right track if his labors were crowned with success. Success could not help but witness to God's blessing. Lack of success, inactivity, and failure to maintain the inner personal discipline needed to sustain one's enterprise promised a return of existential anxiety.

Francke's Pietist labors, which he wished to serve as a model for a worldwide Christian renewal, involved the creation at Halle of what are referred to as the *Anstalten* or *Frankesche Stiftungen*, various institutions at whose core lay clearly charitable ventures, such as well-structured orphanages. Since, however, charitable endeavors required money to survive, Francke's foundations also encompassed commercial organizations designed to procure needed funds. Educational projects intended to form men with the iron-like inner discipline that could sustain constant commitment to enterprise and the service of one's neighbor also played a

crucial role in his labor at Halle. Francke provided *Lebens-Regeln* to guide them, rules that emphasized the task of breaking the individual's self-will and rebuilding it for social-minded tasks in the way that his own conversion experience demonstrated God unquestionably wanted.

Charitable, commercial, and educational *Anstalten* moved forward vigorously under Francke's direction from the 1690's onwards. They were fortunate in finding favor with King Frederick William I, who had himself undergone a similar conversion experience, independently of Francke. He, like his father Frederick I (1688/1701-1713) before him, sought some means of unifying religiously divided Prussians. Instead of attempting this through Lutheran-Calvinist creedal or ceremonial union, he thus began to place his hope in a Pietist-inspired commitment to common, practical Christian activism. By the 1720's, the king was eagerly promoting the *Anstalten* and incorporating Francke's educational ideals into his own plans for the general instruction of the entire Prussian population.

For Frederick William, as for Francke, a self-disciplined, constantly active citizenry, alert to the good of one's neighbors in society-at-large, needed to be successful to demonstrate its retention of God's favor. A man in Frederick William's position, and with his responsibilities, perforce needed to see this success reflected in the growth and benefit of the Kingdom of Prussia. Christian action on behalf of one's neighbor in society must, to him, to a large and indeed primary degree, mean the co-operation of all individuals and groups in the development of the Prussian State, whose every victory would mean a further confirmation of divine approval.



## STATUS QUO

Prussia, like other German states, was already familiar with what was called “cameralism”—a set of studies designed to form administrators who could better manage governmental resources and performance. Halle Pietism taught the cameralist the divinely ordained duty urging him on to perform his task, while simultaneously passing down to all Prussians in their various stations in life an inner sense of personal responsibility for sharing in the bureaucrat’s labor. Pietism bestowed the blessings of heaven upon all the manifold endeavors undertaken by the active citizen in the City of Man, with its highest approbation for work on behalf of the State. This could now be baptized as eminently *Christian* work for a God-fearing *Christian State*. Francke’s educational methodology, with its complex system of surveillance of pupils and insight into their psychology, insured that the lesson of the moral importance of such labors would stick for life. Mobilization of the clergy as a teacher of morals and a morals police seemed to Frederick William to be the most suitable means of drilling the Pietist message into the population-at-large. The clergy, too, had to learn and utilize the Francke spirit and method systematically, turning away from unproductive and immoral theological dispute that would sinfully weaken the State in the process.

Helpful to the day-to-day demands of Prussian survival and expansion all this undeniably was. But was Pietism able to stand in judgment of the successes achieved? Could it in any way admit that some of these triumphs might actually be unjustifiable and therefore desperately in need of correction with reference to the higher message of the Word? Was the Kingdom of Prussia open to a transformation in Christ? On what grounds could the Pietist even begin to suggest that

such correction and transformation were possible? None whatsoever. Whatever “worked” was Christian. Open proponents of “nature as is” from the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo could not help but smile if they joined in this game and said their Sunday prayers with Prussian piety. All such pious paraphernalia provided a solid, traditional-sounding “appropriate explanation” for “business as usual” of a particular State-centered character.

#### *D. Enlightenment Naturalism*

It is now time to turn our attention to the second element contributing to the rise of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo to a position of dominance in the West. This was the so-called Enlightenment, which proved, in practice, to provide a one-way ticket back into the darkness of Plato’s cave, together with a sack filled with still more arguments useful in convincing its prisoners to praise their guards as liberating angels. For our purposes, it is best to discuss that deceptive movement of ideas with reference to the division between what historians refer to as the Radical Enlightenment and its contrasting Moderate or Whig counterpart.

The Radical Enlightenment emerged directly out of the teaching of Renée Descartes (1596-1650), a man who, like Luther, would almost certainly have been horrified by the consequences followers drew from his philosophical labors.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> On the birth of the Enlightenment, its radical variant, and its first opposition, see Mayeur, IX, 931- 1033, 1089-1169; Also,

## STATUS QUO

Descartes always professed himself to be a believing Catholic. His work was welcomed by many of his fellow believers because of the value it seemed to possess in weakening the invasion of a murky and dangerous magical outlook into both spiritual and natural life. This, the reader will remember, had been launched as a result of Renaissance flirtations with the Cabbala, Hermes Trismegistus, and occult subjects in general. Such studies were designed to uncover “hidden qualities” of nature that were then subtly confused with forces truly supernatural in character. The hunt for such occult hidden qualities seemed by the early 1600’s to be threatening a magical takeover of theology, philosophy, and natural science as a whole, with far-reaching, nefarious ecclesiastical, political, and social consequences.

Descartes was deeply troubled by magical intrusion into natural studies, but, as a man who had himself been a soldier in the Thirty Years War, even more disturbed by the entire ensemble of contemporary spiritual and intellectual divisions. His answer to such division was to question the basis of knowledge until he could find an absolutely sure ground in mathematically “clear and distinct ideas” that could unite all minds. This led him to a methodological separation of the approach to gaining knowledge of the realms of spirit and matter. All material substances had to be dealt with solely in a mechanical fashion. Occult or magical qualities could not be

---

Philips, pp. 189-235; Jedin, VII, 399-440; Copleston, Volume 4; P. Gay, *The Enlightenment* (Norton, Two Volumes, 1996); U. Im Hof, *The Enlightenment* (Blackwell, 1994); J. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 3-443; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 3-42.

mechanically weighed and measured, and were therefore altogether excluded from the natural scientist's calculations. The magician and the alchemist had to retreat to their murky underworlds. Faith and Reason could breathe purer air in consequence. And both would be reunited in the end.

New problems immediately arose, however, especially over the question of how to relate the human body, which had been approached mechanically, with the non-mechanical mind and soul that Descartes firmly believed that a man possessed. These difficulties were examined by Catholic followers of Descartes in France such as Fr. Marin Mersenne (1588-1648), Fr. Nicholas Malebranche (1638-1715), and many others. Nevertheless, it was the Protestant Dutch Republic, where the French thinker spent much of his career, which became the most important center for developing Cartesian ideas and confronting the quarrels that would surround them. Judgments regarding Descartes' methodology entered into those bitter religious battles of the Reformed Christian Church that pitted the Pietist Gisbertius Voetius at Utrecht versus Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669) at Leiden and led many Dutchmen to run in horror from all future doctrinal disputes. But the Frenchman's approach was also employed by Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), the chief figure responsible for the radicalization of the Cartesian methodology and, with it, the development of modern atheism.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic, 889-933; Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 159-443; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 43-51, 225-263, 436-470, 545-696; Phillips, pp. 135- 170; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 329-380; Copleston, Vols. IV and V, *passim*.

## STATUS QUO

For Spinoza, the problem of the relationship of mechanical matter to a non-mechanical mind and spirit was ultimately no difficulty at all. What *was* a difficulty was the fact that Descartes had not carried the labor of thinking with mathematically clear and distinct ideas far enough. When a more logical approach led a man to realize that “one realm”, that of the world of matter operating by mechanical principles alone, was more clear and distinct than “two realms”, involving an imaginative spiritual order that no human could actually see, weigh, and measure, the painful enterprise of relating the duality entirely disappeared. There was no need to harmonize what was actually already unified. For Spinoza, everything was in some way a part of physical nature and therefore mechanically explicable, whether one might be speaking of the kind of matter we call bodies or of the kind of matter we call spirit.

It is easy to envisage a receptive and historically awakened reader of Spinoza placing his works on a bookshelf next to a copy of Marsilius of Padua’s *Defensor Pacis*. One unified civil order had finally gained one unified, mechanical philosophy to guide it, thereby giving still more encouragement to those eager to fight the conviction that nature should or even could be corrected and transformed through aid from “another world”. And yet just as Marsilius was wrongly praised as a Christian hero by Protestant creators of the black legends, Spinoza was going to find fervent admirers within the rapidly secularizing Reformed Christian world to spread his teachings as though they were actually God-fearing ones.

Balthasar Bekker (1634-1698), in his book of 1691 entitled *De Betovorde Welt (The World Bewitched)*, contributed to

Spinoza's simplifying materialist tendencies in a way that captured both the popular reading public's imagination as well as its growing irritation with witch hunting. Many others accompanied him on this path, although the most influential to do so was Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), author of the *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1695 onwards). Bayle was crucially important in his own right as the proponent of the concept of a co-operative international work of enlightenment to be undertaken through an intelligentsia that inhabited its own distinct polis: its own "Republic of Letters". He had the success that he did because he masqueraded as an opponent of Spinoza while effectively endorsing the Dutchman's interpretation of a mechanical methodology applicable to all aspects of life.

In short, Spinoza and his followers "seized the image" of "clear and distinct ideas". They then worked assiduously at making anyone who would not draw the absolutely necessary conclusion of an all-encompassing mechanist vision of reality to appear to be an undetected mental incompetent. Accepting nature "as is" was the first article of the Constitution of the Republic of Letters. Interference with "business as usual" was thereby excoriated as the work of an obscurantist religious mentality. And Bayle knew how to tell a "good story" regarding these constitutional principles better than anyone up until his own day.

Spinoza's disguised atheism, and the highly radical movement for intellectual and political change that it inspired, engendered many varied, shocked responses in both the Protestant and Catholic worlds. Most such responses were based solely on the hope that the evil wind blowing in from Holland could be calmed by means of censorship and other legal penalties alone. They did, however, also include

## STATUS QUO

the unique but ultimately not particularly effective one presented by Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), a noble supporter of the significance of all aspects of nature in the spirit of the full message of the Word, and a man as deeply troubled by the spiritual and intellectual divisions of the western world as was Descartes.<sup>11</sup>

Unquestionably, however, the answer that made the greatest impact was that provided by the so-called Moderate or Whig Enlightenment.<sup>12</sup> The intellectual component of this reaction was first popularized through the renowned series of lectures endowed by Robert Boyle (1627-1691) and begun in 1692. These conferences had an enormous impact on the development of institutions like the Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge, which had already been founded some decades earlier, in 1660. The Royal Society and its most famous guide, Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727), were then associated in men's minds with the entire outlook, which was to be treated by many as the sole truly thoughtful and effective response to Spinoza's atheism.

Boyle was indeed a believing Protestant. Like the Pietists who were emerging in Britain as well as in other splintered Protestant countries about the same time, he also was horrified by divisions among reformers that he believed

---

<sup>11</sup> Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 447-562; *Enlightenment Contested*, 9, pp. 61-93, 436-470, 663-696.

<sup>12</sup> Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 447-501, 515-561; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 201-222, 344-405; Mayeur, IX, 157-206, 488-499, 931-1033, 1089-1169; M. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment* (U. of California, 2006), pp. 1-57; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 329-380.

could not help but aid the Catholic cause. More than this, however, he was desperate to calm debilitating theological dispute in order to “save” a supernatural God from Spinoza’s vision of a purely natural universe where everything unfolded from a spiritless mechanical necessity. Boyle was therefore ready to make the same kind of retreat from doctrinal controversy that Pietists in general were to urge, and Newton joined in the same project. But, in addition to finding religious unity in commitment to a system of Christian morality that everyone “obviously” still accepted, they both sought to aim the scientific mind towards God as well.

This they did by focusing on the “mystery” of the contemporary growth in knowledge of the splendor of the universe. For, unlike Spinoza, Boyle and Newton saw God’s hand in the workings of a nature that believers were confronting and putting to human use in ever more successful ways. A concentration on understanding the universe, developing its natural uses, obtaining successes in this realm, and yet accepting the mysterious grandeur of the entire enterprise seemed to them simultaneously to demonstrate the glory of God’s Creation and man’s ability to share, successfully, in fulfilling its plan.

Although mathematics certainly was to play a major role in the expanding knowledge of Creation, the real key to putting it to effective use was to be the experimental method taught by Francis Bacon (1561-1626). This, in one sense, was more respectable to the believing Christian from the very outset, precisely because it was not tainted by any mathematically engendered atheism. Attention to the dictates of experimental science and the wonders emerging from its exploitation, combined with a similar acceptance of the



## STATUS QUO

“obvious” truths of a Christian morality recognized by “common sense” and human experience, and then driven home by pious Bible reading and attendance at traditional Church services, were the keys to a healthy, holistic outlook on life. All, together, would emphasize the glory of God and God’s Creation along with the dignity of human effort, thereby serving as secure bulwarks against the deadening mechanical fatalism of Spinoza.

Did this “Protestant” Baconian vision logically fit together with the original doctrine of total depravity? It certainly seemed too hopeful regarding the uses of nature to do so. But did it not, in another sense, as Leibniz feared, actually deprave Reason, common sense, and science by reintroducing the concept of “hidden occult qualities” in nature, through its labeling of everything “mysterious” in the universe as the obvious work of the hand of God? Besides, equating “mystery” with “God’s hand” could ultimately be corrosive to the faith of the believer, given that what is mysterious today might prove to be explicable tomorrow. A gradual “filling in of the gaps” could therefore create the impression that God’s hand in the universe might progressively disappear as a force to be reckoned with by the rational mind. And this, in fact, was one of Spinoza’s chief arguments.

Then again, there was another difficulty at work here. Bacon himself had openly praised the labors of the magicians and their efforts to accomplish marvels with an environment that did not, on the surface, appear to wish peacefully to comply with their desires. Did he not merely substitute experimentation for esoteric spells in order to obtain the same, magical, utopian, and, perhaps, sinful goals? Had not Bacon envisaged the creation of “Royal Societies” dedicated

to experimentation as, in effect, nothing other than a more secure pathway to the construction of a fabulous *New Atlantis* (1627) than anything that could be produced in the laboratories of the alchemists and magicians?<sup>13</sup>

Who could say what might finally come out of their labors? How could one know whether the consequences were acceptable if the theological and philosophical tools for investigating such questions were to be abandoned as divisive and dangerous to that Protestant ecumenism needed to “fight atheism”? How could one avoid becoming a mere cheerleader for the demands of “nature as is” if he insisted on seeing God’s glory through successful achievements arising from experiments with microscopes and forceps that previous generations might have condemned as being evil? How could *any* potential flaws of nature be admitted and corrected if the Christian moral code were equated fully with what was deemed “obvious” in the thought and the behavior of the world around us? And would the problem not become worse as the perhaps unacceptable successes of science rapidly changed that environment and our perceptions regarding how it worked and where it was headed? Hidden, convinced proponents of “business as usual” might happily recite their Books of Common Prayer if strange powers over nature attributed to “the glory of God” were given to them in exchange, and if unquestioning acceptance of the value of their labors shaped the next generation’s “common sense” judgments regarding their morality—whatever the actual

---

<sup>13</sup> Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 1-79; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 511, 521-522; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 205-210, 363, 453, 752, 762, 769; C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (Viking, 1972).

## STATUS QUO

words of the Sunday hymns might praise or chastise regarding them.

What is *truly* obvious in all this is that a general retreat from open religious controversy and an attempt to approach God through common sense morality and the successful development of His Creation alone were very attractive to the eighteenth century British mind. Memories of nearly two hundred years of unpleasant political and social consequences stemming from religious disputes remained painfully vivid to Englishmen, while the unifying wonders produced through practical, experimental science were more and more impressive to the naked eye. Dogmatic disputes had proven to be fruitless disasters, while any "sensible" man could see that a religious fervor aimed at correcting daily and shocking failures to live up to a code of behavior that "everyone" theoretically and publicly accepted would be a praiseworthy activity. Clearly, what was needed, above all else, "common sense Christians" of this kind argued, was a campaign for the reformation and uplifting of basic morals that were contested by no one of sound mind; a reform which, while teaching the need to avoid intellectual and spiritual conflict, would focus attention upon helping oneself and one's fellow man through "practical" and therefore truly "godly" improvements in personal behavior and the natural sciences.

The emergence of the Press in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) gave to this medium a crucial role in aiming attention from scriptural and sacramental quarrels to practical morals, manners, and "charitable" labors for the application of natural scientific improvements. Nowhere was the connection of the quieting of religious controversy, the

interest in a reform of behavior, and the importance of the Press more clear than in the work of the two periodicals, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, brought out by the joint effort of Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) in the years between 1709 and 1714. Readers of these journals were exposed, week after week, to social and behavioral commentaries, in the latter through representatives of the worlds of commerce, the army, the town, and the country gentry, presented by one Mr. Spectator, an observer of the London scene. Both periodicals served as models for manifold imitators on the European Continent, such as the Hamburg *Patriot* and *Il Caffè* of Milan.

What one finds in *The Tatler*, and even more in *The Spectator*, is the insistence upon the need for men of "common sense" to gather together without religious rancor and cooperatively undertake the truly gentlemanly---and therefore *ipso facto* "Christian"---business of bettering themselves and their surrounding societies. The fact that such journals would generally be read in public places like coffee houses emphasized still further the need for moral men to develop friendly manners, keep passions down, avoid grating on one another's nerves, and thereby allow the very establishment in which one was thinking and speaking peacefully to survive and prosper.

A similar emphasis upon the prevention of divisive controversy and dedication to good-mannered cooperative ventures of obvious personal and social value could be found in the varied reading clubs and scientific-agricultural-commercial "patriotic" societies founded in Britain and Ireland in the late seventeenth century. Already promoted by Sir Francis Bacon, as noted above, these included the aforementioned Royal Society of London for the

## STATUS QUO

Improvement of Natural Knowledge, the Society for the Improvement of Husbandry, Agriculture, and Other Useful Arts of Dublin (1731), and, one might add, the Freemasons (1717) also.

Here, just as in cafés, the class distinctions operative outside such circles could temporarily be suspended for the good of all. Here, then, were truly God-blessed confraternities and sodalities, “religious orders” with a purpose. In such communities swords were beaten into plowshares through practical achievement. In such an environment, men could begin an honest and truly practical ascent of Mount Tabor. For, if the scientist and the practical entrepreneur whose discernible fruits could be weighed and measured and imitated with mathematical exactitude were not in union with God and His plan for the world, who was? Certainly not squabbling Protestant and Catholic polemicists! Did not Sir Isaac Newton, head of the Royal Society from 1703, and humble student of the laws of motion and their practical consequences, point the way to true service of the God who presided over nature’s mysteries and the men He commands us to love infinitely better than quibblers battling over the nature of the Eucharist?

Hence, in addition to a Prussian Pietist Christianity, we now have before us a similar British Christianity, shorn of doctrinal clarity, centered round practical moral achievement and friendly manners, and aimed at a common action of immediate, obvious, successful benefit to one’s neighbor. But, once again, both these forms of Christianity proved to be

more susceptible to powerful secularizing tendencies than many of its original proponents had perhaps expected.<sup>14</sup>

Prussian thinkers such as Christian Wolff (1679-1754) are instructive in tracing the path from a Christian-sounding discussion of life truly rooted in the supernatural to one that in fact draws its inspiration from nature and natural tools almost exclusively.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, the more the world of God was shunned as the realm of the controversial, the more that the world of nature taught what was pleasing to the Almighty and deemed to be successful in His eyes on its terms alone. Moreover, as briefly indicated above, the reading of the meaning of nature and the teachings of natural experiences changed once Christian doctrine began to lose its hold on people. What was taken as common sense and natural law and virtue by a first generation that still knew Christian teaching but simply ceased to engage in theological dispute over its significance was no longer the same as that of a second generation lacking doctrinal formation and prohibited from seeking it under the penalty of being “divisive” and therefore “ungodly”. The commands of God that were learned from nature alone were then registered and carried out by groups or individuals who retained a strong conviction of divine guidance in their secular activities, regardless of whether or not these fit together with traditional

---

<sup>14</sup> R. van Dülmen, *The Society of the Enlightenment* (St. Martin's, 1992); Im Hof, pp. 105-167.

<sup>15</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, xix, 266f, 364, 369, 371, 482f. 527, 541; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 541-562; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 164-222; Copleston, VI, 101-134.

## STATUS QUO

Christian considerations of what was socially acceptable and good.

No appeal could readily be made in either case to any supernatural force transcending such powers, since God had already been consulted in a nature liberated from metaphysical considerations. Recourse to a divine message coming from beyond nature could, once again, axiomatically be dismissed as “divisive” and, hence, immoral—even un-Christian. The initial work of naturalizing the supernatural having been undertaken within a Christian idiom and in Christian circles, this bridge to the Enlightenment and its concerns could be completed without the sharp anti-clericalism emerging in circles influenced by the atheism of Spinoza. Besides, who, under its soothing influence, would know what traditional Christian considerations were anyway? For history, alongside doctrinal disputation, would also have been discarded or reinterpreted to rid the world of its potentially dangerous effects on the success-and-unity oriented personality and society.

In such an environment, whoever had the strongest feelings and the most powerful will to enforce them would become the voice of heaven in nature and of true “tradition” themselves. In Prussia, this led, in the first instance, to the victory of the will of the leaders of a bureaucratic State. But in Britain, it led to the dominance of another, quite different, but equally naturalist force. Why was this the case? The first necessary step to answering that question is to note that the already *potentially* naturalist outlook of men like Boyle and Newton did not win its influence over British opinion on its

own. Its progress was undertaken in alliance with two other powerful and ultimately quite secularizing forces.<sup>16</sup>

One of these was a group of fellow Protestants primarily stimulated by a loathing both of the Catholicizing measures of the Stuart Dynasty as well as Stuart admiration for Louis XIV and Bourbon Absolutism. A second, intersecting source of strength came from men of property who had begun their ascent to power with the massive transfer of lands that the “pragmatic” and highly political English Reformation had brought about in Britain. These men of property saw Catholicism and the stronger government that both the Stuarts and the Bourbons desired as a danger to their wealth and their freedom to use it as they deemed fit.

It was all three of these forces—the anti-Spinoza Boyle and Newton faction, the fervently anti-Catholic-Stuart-Bourbon cabal, and the self-interested economic elite—that converged to form that Whig oligarchy that made the triumph of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Protestant Succession of the Eighteenth Century possible. The philosophical and political underpinnings of this tripartite Whig Revolution were then elaborated through the work of John Locke (1632-1704). It was the entire “package” that gave substance to the Moderate, Enlightenment vision. And it is this outlook that would, in centuries to come, have the greatest success in contesting the concept of correction of nature and transformation in Christ. It is this outlook that would have the greatest success in inventing an “alternative good story” relating an “appropriate explanation” of dedication to “business as usual” that gave to such

---

<sup>16</sup> Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 80-232; Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 51-60, 135-163, 225-239, 295-405.



## STATUS QUO

naturalism the seeming blessing of God as well as of man. Isocrates had been reincarnated in Britain.

Two crucial conduits for transmitting the outlook of this victorious Whig oligarchy outside of Britain were François-Marie Arouet (1694 -1778), better known by his pen name of Voltaire, and James Madison (1751-1836), the father of the American Constitution. Both men grasped the two central political dogmas supporting the oligarchs' system: avoidance of spiritual conflict through the principle of religious tolerance, and the "checks and balances" that came along with a division of governmental powers designed to prevent the victory of an absolute monarchy.<sup>17</sup>

Although Madison's precise religious beliefs, if any, are unclear to me, and Voltaire was definitely not a Christian, the first had no interest in a frontal assault on faith, and the latter was a firm enemy of atheism. The principle of religious tolerance, openly defined by Locke not just as politically useful teaching but even as the most important doctrine of Christianity in and of itself, was easily presented as a dogma that was friendly to pious people. Did it not allow an enormous space for public expression of belief? Perhaps. But that which made it attractive to an indifferent Madison and a Deist Voltaire was the effect that it had, in practice, on organized religion in countries like Britain and the United

---

<sup>17</sup> On Voltaire and Anglomania, Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 60, 84-85, 344-345, 360-364, 369, 683-684 735, 751-780; *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 85, 400, 515-527; on Madison, see Gay, II, *The Science of Freedom*, 558-568.

States, where there were many Christian denominations that could all become openly active under its aegis.<sup>18</sup>

Religious tolerance in these two lands made it impossible for any single Faith to take effective charge of the central public authority and guide it according to its wishes. In other words, while being seemingly faith-friendly, it promised the reduction of organized Christian religion to public impotence in a nation of many denominations. Madison, in discussing the benefits of the American Constitution in the *Federalist Papers*, also notes what the new federal machinery was designed to do should some “imbalance” in the system appear. At that point, it worked to “multiply factions”—i.e., to take a contemporary example, to encourage the formation of male and female, black and white, straight and gay Christian sects—and thus prevent the threatening domination of any given group—religious or otherwise. Under these conditions, the more materialist members of the oligarchy, along with those concerned primarily about peace and quiet rather than truth, could continue to thrive without worry about the future. A more Machiavellian anti-Catholic political principle presented under the guise of promoting free religious practice can hardly be imagined.<sup>19</sup>

Division of governmental powers providing checks and balances against arbitrary acts emerged as an historical reality out of the English experience of the sixteenth through

---

<sup>18</sup> On Britain, her colonies, Locke, and the new United States, Mayeur, IX, 157-206, 438-466; X, 216-298, 479-538; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 117, 265-270, 356, 372, 619; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 52-53, 137-163; Jedin and Dolan, VII, 171-177; Gay, I, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, pp. 168-171.

<sup>19</sup> *Federalist* n. 10.

## STATUS QUO

eighteenth centuries. Any effort to rule the kingdom without sufficient respect for the executive, legislative, or judicial “branches” of the government had repeatedly led to civil war and disaster. But a side effect of this English fact of life was a semi-paralysis of government necessarily requiring the limitation of the public sphere of activity. This created something of a vacuum in which strong-minded private groups and individuals could thrive more freely—and, ironically, act more arbitrarily—than under the system envisaged either by the Stuarts or the Bourbons. Hence, its value in the eyes of anti-Catholic Protestants and men concerned chiefly for the protection of their property. Hence, also, its merits in the minds of all the many more radical Enlightenment thinkers whom police in other parts of Europe were vigorously persecuting at the very moment of the Whig triumph.<sup>20</sup>

In order to introduce the Radical Enlightenment back into the picture, let us begin by remembering that the Whig oligarchy responsible for the Glorious Revolution felt very shaky in its power and deeply threatened by the might of the Bourbon Family and its Stuart allies. These latter were living in exile in France, waiting for an opportunity to regain the throne in Britain. Fears that they might succeed help to explain Whig support for Dutch efforts to create a Grand Coalition against Louis XIV, as well as British willingness to revive this alliance whenever it was deemed necessary to do so in the future. Anxiety over the survival of the Whig experiment also underlay a readiness to contemplate the use

---

<sup>20</sup> On radicalization of the moderate Enlightenment, see Mayeur, IX, 956-1169; X, 179-298.

of all tools and all allies in what was not just a military contest but a cultural war as well.

Foreign policy goals thus dictated the British government's encouragement of the spread of freemasonic lodges on the Continent.<sup>21</sup> Yes, early modern Freemasonry held out an appeal to a variety of groups, Stuart supporters included. Nevertheless, the Whig oligarchy managed to dominate it, ultimately using the lodges for everything from anti-French propaganda to outright spying. Unfortunately, from the Whig standpoint, they attracted to membership therein not simply anti-Catholic Protestants and men of property worried about Bourbon absolutism. They also drew proponents of the Radical Enlightenment into their ranks as well. For perhaps the most passionate anti-Catholic and anti-absolutist continental adversaries of Louis XIV were those atheist followers of Spinoza most detested by the Protestant ecumenists of the coalition that made the Glorious Revolution. And the political vision of these atheists was one that also called for a naturalist and democratic transformation of the whole of European society that would go far beyond anything to be found in the Whig program.

Under the cover of lodges, such radicals, highly useful for British Whig anti-Bourbon purposes, propagated their full religious and political beliefs, whether their moderate comrades were aware of it or not. The same, by the way, was true of radicals operating under other "covers", such as that of the Encyclopedia, whose editors, Denis Diderot (1713-1784) in particular, paid lip service to the glory of Newton and Locke while relentlessly spreading substantive atheist and anti-oligarchic democratic arguments. In doing so, they not

---

<sup>21</sup> Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 80-232.

## STATUS QUO

only worked against the initial Whig spirit but also actually drew a number of the moderates themselves down their own radical pathway.<sup>22</sup>

There were many purely logical reasons why they could be successful in this latter enterprise. The “moderate” John Locke’s direct association with radicals in Holland before the Glorious Revolution is well documented, and his philosophy openly posits a Christianity possessing the most modest of doctrinal contents. In fact, it provides clear tools for the dismantling of all doctrine whatsoever. Also, one cannot help but feel that Locke’s natural universe is merely a slightly cleaned up version of the “war of all against all” posited by Thomas Hobbes; a basically similar, totally depraved battlefield that nevertheless seeks to avoid ending its jungle chaos by submission to the kind of absolute ruler that was detested by the Whig Oligarchy. In secularized Protestant fashion, Locke, too, carries out the work of reducing man to the individual, the individual to his freedom, his freedom to lack of obstacles to fulfilling his passions, and his only hope for keeping his life and property under these circumstances to the check and balance or interests as reflected in the Whig Constitution. Moreover, a Newtonian universe did not really need a personal God to function, as the next generation of Newtonians, Voltaire prominent among them, realized. Deism was sufficient to make the same argument for that

---

<sup>22</sup> Im Hof, pp. 139-145, 257-269; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 468-469, 563-720; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 51-60, 699-871.

“pinch” of mystery indicating the dependency of nature on some sort of Creator.<sup>23</sup>

In any case, attacks on the Enlightenment after the 1750’s often failed to make any distinction between moderates and radicals, leading the former to a defense of the latter even if only as a tactical strategy. This defense was carried out in the urban salon society that the defenders of the Moderate Enlightenment, the so-called *philosophes*, made their second home. It was also conducted through satirical journals, by means of which “public opinion” might be created and then “obeyed”; through the capture, by some of the chief Enlightenment representatives, of control of the prestigious French Academy; and, last but not least, by seizing and embellishing the image of Progress and Hope coming from the New World through the success of the American Revolution. In sum, the upshot was that radicals in the Republic of Letters learned how to use the Moderate Enlightenment even as the Moderate Enlightenment continued using them. A price in disillusionment and bitterness was soon to be paid in blood by the members of both factions for their real but often unwitting cooperation. But, then again, heads must roll in the construction of any truly solid death camp worthy of the name anyway.<sup>24</sup>

A Moderate Enlightenment vision, frozen according to the desires of the initial Whig alliance, was threatened from another direction as well as that taken by the “mainstream” radicals—one that worked to dismiss the intellectual solidity

---

<sup>23</sup> Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 565-720; *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 344-405, 699-871.

<sup>24</sup> Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 699-871; D. Goodman, *The Republic of Letters* (Cornell, 1994).

## STATUS QUO

of the practical guidance gained from experimental knowledge of the world around us. The chief figures responsible for announcing this threat to the moderate world were the Scottish historian and philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776), and the multifaceted French-speaking Swiss, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), both of whom were well acquainted with one another's devastatingly critical labors.<sup>25</sup>

Hume demonstrated that experimental knowledge coming from the outside universe was unreliable as a source of intellectual certainty of all kinds, including scientific laws, as they were popularly understood, such as Newtonian "laws of motion". Why? Because that knowledge could only really be knowledge of what had been observed to happen historically. Once a man proceeded from the data of an experiment or an outside observation to the formulation of a law, applicable everywhere and at all times, he made a connection between data and universal result that he had in no way tested through experimentation and thereby proven to be true. In fact, the only reason he thought he could make such a law was that faith, habit, and custom told him that he could do so. Hume concluded that we operate, "scientifically"—and morally—only on the basis of such customary, faith-filled, historically explicable habits. Their supposedly universal, God-rooted truth is non-existent. Rousseau, in effect, agreed with him, to the degree that he considered any "truth" built upon an individual's acceptance of what was taught to him "from the outside looking in" to be

---

<sup>25</sup> For this and all the following, see Copleston, VI, *passim*; also, Blum, pp. 27-152.

totally unnatural and insincere in character, about which much more anon.

Hume's vision placed the scientific and moral universe in danger of total dissolution. What could be done to prevent this? The answer came from two sources once again, the first being the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Lack of moral certainty for a man of Kant's Pietist heritage would be an especially abhorrent condition, given that he had already jettisoned the hunt for security through doctrinal agreement. With traditional theological and philosophical tools taken out of the hands of the law and order loving man, and the ground of moral action in the common sense behavior of one's peaceable kingdom dismissed as the product of mere habit and custom, what would be left to block existential *Angst* and disorder?

Kant's answer was to turn inward for absolute certainty. What a man needed to do to deal with Hume's critique was to undertake a kind of internal retreat through which he stripped himself free of every "law" regarding the world outside him that he could not see binding him, personally, along with all other human persons, to the same line of conduct. Solely those principles and laws that he admitted applied equally to him as well as to everyone else were to be retained as solid. This labor, which could only be accomplished through a determined cultivation of the most honest and persistent sincerity, free of all hypocritical self-interested considerations, would yield unshakeable knowledge of how God and nature demand that we must act with reference to our environment. That knowledge would be accurate, even if the honest, inward scrutiny that forged it might not be able to tell us precisely what the "logos" of our environment really and essentially was all about. In other



## STATUS QUO

words, Kant provided as a basis for certainty a kind of Spinoza-like vision in reverse. Instead of turning things spiritual into another form of matter, he offered the possibility of dissolving the world of matter into a function of our "sincere", internal, spiritual conviction.

Kant's method could end simply with the enslavement of all of nature and all of our fellow men to the honestly and sincerely perceived will of any given, strong, individual personality who had convinced himself that he had done everything he possibly could do to avoid mere custom or outright hypocrisy in reaching his bedrock conclusions concerning life. This possibility can readily be seen in the writings of the second thinker who tried to deal with the disorder caused by uncertainties regarding "outside" knowledge. Our second "law and order" man, deeply admired by Immanuel Kant---who actually kept a portrait of him in his home, the sole painting that he permitted to be hung therein---was none other than the figure who had brought up the problem alongside Hume in the first place: Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Rousseau, perhaps the most readable and influential of eighteenth century political and social theorists, followed the Enlightenment injunction to found all judgments upon an honest observation of nature and nature alone. Unlike those *philosophes* who observed in nature the reign of objective mathematical and scientific laws, however, his studies revealed a universe inhabited by energetically "feeling" individuals whose real character could never be uncovered by books or laboratory experiments detached from inner passions. Rousseau insisted that anyone wishing to join him in becoming a true observer of life had to begin by examining

himself inwardly, to see if he were honestly speaking and acting in line with his spontaneous nature, however passionate and non rational this might prove to be. Such an investigation, as with Kant, required an abandonment of all the masks, pretensions, and hypocrisies that men embraced in order to "fit with the program" dictated by tyrannical, external, passion-challenged forces operating in the name of objective Reason. Hypocrites did what they did in order to achieve what the world called "success". Once an individual broke through his chains, abandoned reference to outside standards for his personal behavior, and got in touch with his real self, he became "natural"---and, through nature's innate value, correspondingly "virtuous".

Virtue, for Rousseau, was, in consequence, not something built through the repetition of the petty, daily, "good" actions praised by the outside world. Rather, one attained it by entering into the ontological state of being a liberated "natural man". Rousseau reached this natural, virtuous condition through his *Confessions* (published posthumously, 1782). Here, he revealed to the world all his deepest, passionate, non-rational feelings and their effect on his actions, without consideration for the effect such disclosure might have upon public opinion and his own personal fame and fortune. Having thus accepted his natural self, he became virtuous, and need not be ashamed of deeds that others thought to be reprehensible; deeds that would, indeed, still be truly blameworthy if done by men seeking praise from the artificial, outside, "objective" world. Once virtuous, Rousseau could permit himself no rationalist post-mortem on the validity of his deeply felt goodness. All "looking back" amounted to a renewed embrace of the unjustifiable rules of a soul-killing artifice and duplicity.

## STATUS QUO

Moreover, natural virtue transformed Rousseau into Everyman. Nature possessed integrity. It was all of one piece, honest and good, and could not help but speak with a single voice. Therefore, others who sincerely stripped themselves of the obstacles standing in the way of expression of their spontaneous natural feeling would inevitably be indistinguishable from, and united fraternally with Rousseau. It is this indistinguishable character that ensures that the various lovers in his widely-read *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) are actually only loving themselves in other people, and the teacher in his enormously influential educational treatise, the *Emile* (1761), can be said by Rousseau to both ensure the child's self-fulfillment and yet remake him totally in the tutor's image at one and the same time.

Conversely, anyone who was not Rousseau-like, anyone who criticized Everyman's feelings and spontaneous actions, anyone who failed to pity him in his trials, revealed himself as being unnatural. He could thus be neither free, nor virtuous, nor truthful. In fact, he could not even be labeled human, and did not deserve any fraternal consideration whatsoever. Carol Blum describes the situation well in commenting on Rousseau's discussion of himself as the "spectator-animal" contemplating the suffering of one such pointless being.<sup>26</sup>

The Spectator animal was denied pleasurable pity in regarding the suffering animal because the suffering animal was evil and hence unworthy of sympathy. Since Rousseau knew that mankind was, like him,

---

<sup>26</sup> Blum, p. 99.

good, he was forced to the awful but inevitable realization that the creatures who treated him so heartlessly were not really people at all, that the key to the mystery was that 'my contemporaries were but mechanical beings in regard to me who acted only by impulsion and whose actions I could calculate only by the laws of movement'. He was now really alone, the only human being left amid a throng of automatons; the human race existed solely in him.

Rousseau was convinced that the non-virtuous and non-human world around him was stubbornly hostile to the effort to perfect it. The duty of Everyman-Rousseau was to transform that world into him himself, or cause it to disappear before it would do him any further damage. Once again, the question of a possible initial flaw undermining the value of his entire argument could not even be imagined; the sincere, virtuous, liberated Everyman was necessarily free from error. No discussion concerning the ground and justification of this underlying truth was permissible. It was self-evident—a given! Doubt regarding his position would in effect mean allowing the sham world of the hypocrite to influence him once more.

A critique of his obvious rejection of the doctrine of Original Sin and the need for correction and transformation in Christ through Faith and Reason, such as that offered by Archbishop Christophe Beaumont (1703-1781) of Paris, had no meaning whatsoever in the Rousseauian universe. It simply proved that the prelate, by belief and profession a slave of an "outside" supernatural religion, was not thinking internally and naturally. He was, in fact, not really human. Logically speaking, he was one of the suffering animals for

## STATUS QUO

whom no sympathy could be felt. He could therefore logically be eliminated, along with the whole of the corrective and transforming vision that the supporters of the full message of the Word in history “unnaturally” promoted.<sup>27</sup>

Rousseau’s vision was used to radicalize and vulgarize the polite society of the salons created by men like Voltaire, every aspect of which could be dismissed by his followers as artificial and hypocritical as well. It would develop into the cult surrounding him and his activities that became so vibrant in the 1780’s and 1790’s. This cult, open and disguised, was destined to a long history extremely detrimental to the complete teaching of the Incarnation. In the short run, it proved to be an immense boon to every failed writer, artist, and purveyor of pornography in the European world. For once one was certain of his inner sincerity and virtue, all that he did was self-evidently true, good, and beautiful, and all that stood in his way the hypocrisy of hopelessly obscene men and societies. Revolutionary France was to experience the wretched effects of the blasphemous, pornographic, and violent type of journalism the cult of Rousseau engendered in politically important and highly volatile newspapers such as Jacques Hébert’s (1757-1794) *Père Duchesne*.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Blum, pp. 57-132

<sup>28</sup> R. Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Harvard, 1982), pp. 1-40, 68-69, and *passim*; Blum p. 199; R. Darnton and D. Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print* (U. of California, 1989); S. Schama, *Citizens* (Knopf, 1989), pp. 213-214, 226, 279, 293, 298, 726-875.

One final, exceedingly important general point must be made to prefigure Rousseau's future impact upon *Catholicism*. Although totally earth-bound in his approach, his emphasis on the overriding importance of non-rational feeling and passion in human life does give his "natural world" a certain unpredictably mysterious glow. Rousseau's "nature" is indefinable and fueled by seemingly superhuman feelings that continually shock and awe. Hence, while no one, in the long run, could view the mechanical-minded naturalism of his Spinoza-inspired Radical Enlightenment comrades as being somehow "spiritual", many people have been led to see Rousseauian naturalism in precisely this light. It gives an "appropriate explanation" of things soulful and helps to tell a good story about one's spiritual self-worth. Instead of being viewed as merely a wilder version of the same earth-bound vision shared by all *philosophes*, it has therefore often been depicted as somehow open to sacral influences that the mathematician and scientist cannot allow. Many enthusiasts have even gone so far as to limit the very definition of the spiritual to the kind of phenomena that Rousseau praises, equating the presence of God and of God's blessing only with the existence of strong feelings, and the vital, energetic, conquering action they release. It was vital action of this sort that allowed Rousseau himself to storm heaven and demand from God an afterlife: since, as he said, it would personally make him terribly sad to discover that there were none.

Anyone succumbing to such a temptation actually blocks himself off entirely from access to what orthodox Catholics believe to be the real source of the spiritual: supernatural truths and supernatural grace coming from outside of limited, created nature and the human persons inhabiting it. Anyone falling victim to this kind of "spirituality" refuses to

## STATUS QUO

permit God to be what the adjective supernatural indicates that He is: *above* His handiwork. He will not allow God to be God. He thereby also loses all ability to see that his flights of deeply felt enthusiasm may be caused merely by madness or adolescent hormonal activity; and that what they require is correction and transformation in Christ rather than indulgence, praise, and unwarranted divinization.

*E. Naturalism and the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo*

Naturalism—whether in the form of varied declarations of the independence of Creation from the Creator or a definition of nature as a realm that is in and of itself godly—is essentially hostile to belief in the vital influence of a qualitatively different supernatural teaching and grace in a universe of flesh and blood. In its most radical form, it makes its hatred of the Word Incarnate obvious; in its more moderate expressions, it permits a continued life for a “god” and for a “Christianity” reformed so as to reflect what are really only natural activities, ideas, and passions. Development of the doctrine of total depravity, Pietist efforts to control doctrinal dispute among Protestants, and both the Radical as well as the Moderate, Whig Enlightenment, all, in varied ways and with varying degrees of consciousness, effectively promoted the dominance of this naturalist vision by the middle to the end of the eighteenth century.

Always anti-Catholic, the victory of any given naturalist perspective opens the door to endless further seizures of nature and redefinition of its meaning to satisfy the particular desires of whoever or whatever happens to be the strongest and most willful earthbound element of a given society at the

moment. Those who see naturalism as a hopeful tool for building a happier world are doomed to discover that it becomes the key to satisfying the arbitrary demands of the brute forces that the preachers of totally depravity unleash to wreak havoc in a world that *could* actually be corrected and transformed---in Christ.

Naturalist rhetoric drills into the western consciousness the teaching that Catholicism lacks all comprehension of that temporal order that it, in truth, has been the only force fully to understand, coordinate, exalt, and deeply love. Catholic supporters of the *Word*—who really do believe in the value of Reason, freedom, and the ordered development of a nature touched by the hand of God—are refused a hearing as obscurantist men of faith, while the worshippers of mere *words*—who build a society in which all these goods are deconstructed and destroyed—are identified as their unquestionable defenders. This twisting of reality has proven to have a bafflingly effective influence over a credulous public that actually itself suffers immensely from the naturalist project. For, even when iced in a sugary language of Progress and Goodness and Happiness and Freedom, naturalism, in practice, will always lead to that death camp ruled by willfulness and brute force constructed through the doctrine of total depravity. And this is as true in “moderate” American revolutionary hands as it was in those of their “sensible” British Whig ancestors and under the custody of the only superficially different model presented by a statist and Pietist Prussia:<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Gawthrop, p. 284; on rational Christianity, see Im Hof, pp. 168-174.



## STATUS QUO

In light of the demonstrated connections and affinities between Lutheran Pietism and Anglo-American Puritanism it should be evident that these psychocultural tensions, which have haunted German history in perhaps an archetypal way, are endemic in the very nature of modernity itself. Although the Prusso-German path toward modernization was characterized by an unusual degree of primacy given the collective state power, its deeper significance will elude us if we fail to focus on the Promethean lust for material power that serves as the deepest common drive behind all modern Western cultures. Thus, when we look upon such figures as August Hermann Francke and Frederick William I, we should not simply dismiss them as embodying something alien, but rather see them as possible reflections of ourselves.

*F. Catholic Doctrinal and Pastoral Achilles Heels*

The years of the brewing battle for control over the definition of nature were filled with as much bitter bickering over doctrine and practice inside the Catholic community as outside its walls. One can begin tackling this question of internal Catholic division by noting two crucially important points. First of all, Trent deliberated under the pressure of almost constant ecclesiastical, political, and military crises, preventing it from discussing many matters as fully as a good number of the best Council Fathers would have liked. In fact, such crises forced them to drop the treatment of certain "hot" topics entirely. Secondly, Trent was bound, both by tradition

as well as by prudential considerations of time and energy, to a general policy of focusing only upon the immediate contested issues that had led to the contemporary rebellion against the Church. In responding to them, it sought to avoid broader doctrinal disputes among different legitimate schools of theology still happily flourishing inside the anti-Protestant Catholic camp.<sup>30</sup>

It follows that much of what the Council of Trent defined dogmatically and decreed pastorally was limited and incomplete. Furthermore, some of the decrees and anathemas regarding such subjects were dependent upon introductory texts for explanation, and canonists denied these the same doctrinal weight as the rest of the document concerned. Dogmatic theologians were aware that every line of the council's decrees had to be scrutinized carefully to separate out what was *de fide* and what was as yet not. Trent's theological decisions and practical strategies were thus open to a much greater refinement and explanation. Hence, the warning of the great Jesuit papal theologian at the council, Alfonso Salmerón (1515-1585), about the need for humility in claiming dogmatic certainty in realms which were intricate and as yet unclear. Speaking specifically of the Jesuit educational program, Salmerón counseled: <sup>31</sup>

I think that we must not draw up lists of propositions that we might not be able to defend. This has been done, but it has not yielded good results. Still, if one would truly like to make a catalogue of this type, it would have to contain the smallest number of

---

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Jedin, *Konzil*, I, 138-164.

<sup>31</sup> Bangert, p. 201.

## STATUS QUO

propositions possible, so that no one could claim that we desire to condemn before the fact opinions and theses that the Church has not absolutely banned.

Unfortunately, this advice was not generally followed. Struggle after struggle characterized Catholic life in the centuries after Trent, leading to the often unedifying and uncharitable controversies and displays of bitterness noted above. Although it is very difficult to separate such disputes clinically from one another, one can identify three distinct factors at play in the poisonous conflicts that raged in the years after Trent: 1) a clash of universal and particular authorities in defining Catholic teaching and guiding daily Catholic life, reflected in the ecclesiological problem both of the relationship of the Roman Pontiff to the local bishops, clergy, laity, and State authorities of distinct nations, as well as that of all these latter authorities among themselves; 2) the quarrel over the precise role of grace, nature, and free will in the work of salvation; and, 3) the battle of speculative, positive, pastoral, and natural theology. In completing this discussion, we will easily be able to grasp the progression of internal ills from unfortunate Achilles Heels to active Catholic cooperation, alongside Protestant forces, in offering *droit de cité* inside the Christian camp to the supporters of the Radical and Whig Enlightenment and the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo—to them, to their fraudulent naturalist rhetoric, to their Black Legends regarding the supposed evils of the full message of the Word Incarnate in history, and to their alternative good stories concerning Christ's "true" meaning.

*G. Universal and Particular Tendencies, Ecclesiastical and Regal*

There can never be a sound Christendom without a sound ecclesiology. Alas, providing this firm foundation for growth has always proven to be immensely difficult, for political and sociological reasons as much as theological and philosophical ones. In any case, debate over one major aspect of ecclesiology, the relationship of pope and bishops, was lively at the Council of Trent.<sup>32</sup> Bubbling under the surface and sometimes erupting violently since its first session, this debate really reached its peak in the third sitting of 1562-1563. Discussion over the so-called "Constitution of the Church" was complex, but basically three-sided in character.

Pope Pius IV (1559-1565), pro-Roman bishops – the so-called *zelanti*, mostly Italians – and certain theologians, among whom were a number of Jesuits who represented a reform-minded militancy in union with the Holy See, wished to have Trent confirm the decrees on papal primacy passed at the fifteenth century "unification" Council of Florence. Their chief opponents were the French delegates at Trent, who did not accept the validity of Florence. Despite the abandonment by the Valois Monarchy of the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438, and its justification of royal involvement in ecclesiastical affairs on the basis of a Concordat negotiated directly with the Papacy under Leo X in 1517 instead, French bishops continued to look to the Councils of Constance and Basel for their primary inspiration. These, the reader will remember,

---

<sup>32</sup> On Trent, see Mayeur, VIII, 235-246; on problems, IX, 11-349; Jedin and Dolan, V, 462-498; Jedin, *Konzil*, especially, Vol. IV (*Dritte Tagungsperiode und Abschluss*) for the ecclesiology battle.

## STATUS QUO

affirmed the superiority of councils, weakened papal ability to guide individual churches, and thus gave support to those episcopal prerogatives and local concerns that in France were referred to as the “Gallican liberties”. A Church organized under such standard operating procedures, the Gallicans argued, was one that more closely imitated the model of Apostolic Christianity, which, they insisted, was the proper source to plumb in resolving all problems involving teaching and reform.

Meanwhile, Spanish bishops, as militant in their concern for the defense and spread of the Faith as any of the sons of St. Ignatius or St. Remy, accepted papal primacy, rejected the “divinization” of the early Church—whose description by the French they considered to be another “good story” rather than a source of real substantive knowledge—but nevertheless demanded a more precise definition of the dignity of the episcopal state as such. Thus, however much they might admit that the individual bishop owed his jurisdiction to Rome as well as a filial obedience to papal doctrinal leadership, the Spanish maintained that his role as a successor to the Apostles placed him under a personal divine obligation to carry out his responsibilities to the full. This direct grant of apostolic authority required his firm opposition to many current, corrupt, papal curial practices. Hence, a conscientious bishop would have to oppose the widespread provision of dioceses to men who worked in Rome and never actually administered their Sees. He would have to oppose the granting of so many exemptions to individuals and religious orders that governance by a resident ordinary became frustrating and almost impossible. In fact, the Spanish bishops, as an episcopal “college”

participating in the Council of Trent, felt called upon by their apostolic authority and filial responsibilities to reform the papal court itself and eliminate such abuses. From the standpoint of the *zelanti*, this meant conciliarism in reality if not in theory.

Papal-episcopal relations proved to be so divisive that Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509-1580) and a group of leaders of the various "nations" at the Council concluded that the only way to deal with the matter was, as suggested above, to drop it from consideration entirely. Still, with the outright conciliarist view somewhat muffled through the aid of the leader of the French delegation, Cardinal Charles de Guise (1524-1574), bits and pieces of all three divergent ecclesiological positions made their appearance in one specific canon/decreed or another in the months from July to December of 1563. Special prerogatives of the Holy See were alluded to, though the Council Fathers did, indeed, lay down reform guidelines for the papal court itself. Detailed reform was left for elaboration after the council's closure at the local level, but provision for the presence of papal legates at provincial synods seemed to guarantee continued guidance from an internationally minded papacy. Nevertheless, anyone studying Trent in depth can see that the papal-episcopal question had merely been calmed and not satisfactorily clarified. Hence the regular clashes involving "national" churches, individual bishops, and Rome from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, and these on issues ranging from the teaching authority of popes and councils through to purely pastoral matters.

But papal-episcopal tensions were not the only ones disturbing the ecclesiastical horizon. One also had to contend with the conflict of ordinaries and regular clergy already

## STATUS QUO

alluded to above.<sup>33</sup> Complaining of both the exaggeratedly competitive spirit and inner weaknesses of a number of religious orders, bishops secured certain conciliar statements strengthening episcopal rights to guide them. The post-conciliar regular clergy knew that local bishops who did not appreciate obstacles to the governance of their dioceses from its varied and all-too-independent *modus operandi* and goals were carefully watching it. This was true not only with respect to new orders like the Society of Jesus, which could understandably be viewed by bishops as a suspicious special agent of the Papacy, but also all the other religious societies with organization and purposes transcending diocesan boundaries.

Such religious, as we have already seen in discussing heated thirteenth century battles involving the Franciscans and Dominicans, often found themselves at loggerheads not only with the secular clergy of the dioceses in which they operated but with one another as well. Animosity arose from a number of motives, ranging from simple, sinful, human envy to solid pastoral disagreements. But the reality of secular hostility toward the regular clergy did not guarantee an alliance of the ordinary diocesan priests with their own bishops. Developments in the Kingdom of France in particular will later illustrate just how bitter the relationship of these “lower” and “higher” orders of clerks inside a given diocese could be. And, once again, that bitterness involved disputes on everything from teaching to pastoral methodology and practical daily parish routine.

---

<sup>33</sup> Jedin, *Konzil IV/1*, 4, 5, 111, 289; *IV/2*, 170, 172-175, 181-182, 207.

Many bishops simply wanted to emphasize the intrinsic dignity of the episcopal office and the necessity of nuance in local applications of universal principles without in any sense wishing to reject general ecclesiastical guidelines altogether. Whatever their desires, they gained support in their traditional quarrels regarding the plenitude of papal power from the various already existing or budding European nation-states. Their concerns therefore often reflected that long-gestating national parochialism, noted in the course of the last two chapters, which conflicted with the international vision represented by the Papacy and its closest allies. Local governments of all types supported these concerns with reference to certain "rights" that had been claimed by the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdoms of France and England since the Middle Ages: the "rights" giving clout to what was broadly referred to as "regalism".<sup>34</sup>

Regalism as a specific term may be new to the readers of this work, but the substance of its claims cannot in any way be surprising. All that the word signifies is a State's insistence on the right to exercise what are deemed to be an "obviously" legitimate royal guidance of religion and Church activity, wherever a given authority's writ might run. Despite the nominal connection of regalism with monarchy, and ultimately with the imperial powers exercised by the ancient Roman Caesars, we have already repeatedly seen that its principles were evoked not only by emperors and kings but also by powerful medieval and Renaissance republics and

---

<sup>34</sup> On Church-State problems in general, see Mayeur, VIII, 519-663, 693-853, 1122-125; IX, 11-349, 615-834; X, 25-246; Jedin and Dolan, V, 632-645; VI, 57-75, 107-172, 443-508; Jedin, *Konzil*, IV/2, 122-189.



## STATUS QUO

municipal councils. Men like Marsilius of Padua taught a regalism that invaded the entirety of the sacred sphere. Ockham's version, though more religious sounding, was close behind that of Marsilius in its secular effects. So was that of John Wycliffe. Generally speaking, its Tridentine Catholic manifestations never openly preached or reached any quite so radical vision, which ultimately resolved the struggle of Church and State by effectively obliterating the former.

The Hapsburgs were the direct heirs of the imperial Catholic regalism tradition, applying it according to the specific customs of the many and varied lands over which they ruled, making appeal to its claims in Austria, Spain, Portugal, the New World, and the Far East. In their southern Italian territories, they traced their rights back to papal concessions granted to the Norman rulers of the eleventh century by some of the greatest of the medieval reformers themselves. Valois and Bourbon Kings of France both followed Hapsburg imperial lead, and even surpassed them in their pretensions. So did the rulers of the Venetian Republic, and occasionally even with a very pronounced Marsiglian and Ockhamite verve.<sup>35</sup>

By the seventeenth century, Catholic regalism rights throughout Europe were justified with reference to a kaleidoscope of "traditional" principles: the "unquestionable" laws of republican and imperial Rome; medieval legalism; the gamut of influences, united through the heretical monism of Marsilius of Padua in the *Defensor Pacis*, but hidden under an

---

<sup>35</sup> Jedin, *Konzil*, IV/2, 122-189; Jedin and Dolan, V, 632-645; VI, 57-75, 107-172, 443-508.

exterior show of loyalty to the Primitive Apostolic Church; extorted canonical agreements; patriotism; the need to achieve and preserve “glory”; and that almost indefinable concept called “Reason of State”. “Natural theology” and “common sense” would soon be added to this impressive, intellectual, regalist arsenal. In other words, regalism was justified with reference to practically everything that could allow “nature as is” to go about satisfying its “business as usual” demands without worrying about correction and transformation in Christ. As usual, those of its supporters who nevertheless wished to be respected as Catholic once again often claimed that “true Christianity” itself opposed any invasive corrective and transforming mission, marshaling spiritual arguments to form an “appropriate explanation” of their passionately felt desire to be left entirely alone by a supernatural – but impotent – God.

While the State, *qua* State, always has to be considered as a friend of the Christian mission, regalism must unfailingly be counted among one of the unquestionable foes of the full message of the Word in history. Always strongly secularist in its practical tendencies, its Tridentine Catholic manifestation also more and more reflected a powerful parochial passion to dictate laws to universal Christendom; a desire to swallow up the religious whole in the more secular-minded part. The difficulty lay in the fact that regalist lands also still did give *legitimate* and *positive* State support to the Catholic Faith. Hence, they easily seduced many honest believers into thinking that *each and every one* of their actions was *necessarily* a Catholic-friendly one. After all, how could the Most Christian King or His Catholic Majesty possible do anything hostile to a world shaped by the Word? Was the adjective alone not proof positive of their purity of Faith and action?

## STATUS QUO

How could one call them Christian and Catholic if they were not precisely that? That, indeed, was the appropriate question to pose, but the proper spirit to answer it correctly often was lacking to the loyal Catholic subject who was a regalist patriot.

A number of bishops at Trent were clearly troubled by regalism and its claims. Some of the French, to take the most significant example, were as eager to be as free from royal controls of the episcopacy—cemented through the aforementioned Concordat—as they were to be liberated from papal domination. The fact that there were general problems here that needed to be clarified led many Council Fathers to press for discussion of a “reform of the princes”. Indeed, Cardinal Morone, who presided, as papal legate, in the council’s last nine months, actually used the threat of such a debate to convince the great powers to come to terms on whatever ecclesiological issues might yet be satisfactorily resolved.

In short, papal and conciliar awareness of the urgency of marking out the special needs and autonomy of the sacred sphere in the reform of Christendom was placed in vivid contrast to local State conviction that regalist political concerns, treated as though they were spiritual matters, should dominate religious as well as secular discussion. Nevertheless, State involvement and, with it, the broader issue of parochial, corporate, and individual lay interests in the life of a universal, clerical-guided, and much more self-aware Church, ultimately were barely examined at all. Particular interests thus remained very strong everywhere, although, by definition different according to nation and local area.

Moreover, the decision not to tread on State toes at Trent also meant that the whole question of extra-European missionary activity, and the possible subordination of the evangelization and spiritual interests of indigenous peoples to secular purposes was left untouched. This was because control over the day-to-day affairs of worldwide missions had been given to Portugal and Spain before Trent even met. What this signified was that any clash of interests involving the Papacy, religious orders, and European nations that took place in missionary lands did so under the particular conditions created by the regalist policies of Spanish and Portuguese monarchies and their potential appeal to judgments based on the “higher principle” of Reason of State. All these tensions then played their role in external battles against Islam, political relationships with China and Japan, and internal colonial religious concerns, both European and native.<sup>36</sup>

Regalist governments of all types, monarchical and republican, those that felt threatened by the Hapsburg Dynasty—the traditional defender of the idea of an international European order—and the Hapsburgs themselves, generally become more and more convinced that a Faith with international political aims was a phenomenon “too hot to handle” for the “business as usual” concerns of *any* reigning family. A dynasty that brought either Catholic or Protestant issues into international disputes seemed inevitably to risk arousing a dangerous rebelliousness from whichever opposing religious force suffered from its choice of

---

<sup>36</sup> Jedin, *Konzil*, IV/2. 143, 257, 281, 307; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 232-235. See the Epilogue to this work for further comments on the encounter with “new worlds”.

## STATUS QUO

favorites. Hence, one notices an increasing dynastic abandonment of any serious reference to religion, along with a shift to a justification of interstate policies on the basis of power political considerations alone. A secularized view of interstate relations grew ever stronger as the Thirty Years War intensified. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, and the development of European affairs in the century and a half thereafter, marked the slow but definitive withdrawal of dynasties from commitment to an international Christendom unified in faith and ultimate existential purpose.

Despite this obvious secularization of international affairs, and the theoretical abandonment of the concept of a Christendom open to the corrective and transforming influence of the Word in history that it entailed, it was in the very nature of a traditional regalist government still to seek *religious* approval of its *a-religious* international political game. In consequence, Catholic subjects of Most Christian Kings found themselves pressed to accept as religiously licit actions all manner of evils designed to raise dead reformers from their graves: State interference in papal elections for the sake of obtaining pro-regalist pontiffs; the appointment of still more regalist-friendly cardinals; and the interruption of "dangerous" communications from Rome, delivered through nuncios, papal-friendly religious orders, and the print media, that placed obstacles in the path of willful governmental activity. Moreover, the same twisted "catholicization" of secularism could be noted more and more in internal politics as well, as public religious support was demanded for the centralizing and militarist measures deemed necessary for the maintenance of a given nation's peace, prosperity, European-wide political position, and indefinable "glory".

All this was noticeable everywhere, beginning with the many lands composing what was still, anachronistically, called the Holy Roman Empire. That Empire, after the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, was divided into hundreds of what were, for all serious purposes, basically independent jurisdictions. Although the Hapsburg Emperor retained an honorary superiority over this myriad of local authorities, his power was really centered in territories directly under his control, such as Austria. The Papacy and local episcopacy had to take account of his regalist wishes there, and those of the various other princes and municipal councils elsewhere. A number of imperial bishops were, of course, princes in their own right, but these entertained regalist temptations that were often as strong as their counterparts in the laity. They were thus apt to act with respect to their local churches more with an eye to the interests of their secular crown rather than to those of their religious mitre.<sup>37</sup>

It is hard to imagine the sixteenth century French Monarchy possessing yet more power to interfere in the life of the Church while still remaining in any sense Roman Catholic. Emperor in his own land, the font of law—a truth symbolized by the ceremony of the *lit de justice*, when the king rose from the “bed of justice” to proclaim his final judgment on a given disputed subject—and possessor, since the Concordat of 1515, of all major church appointments, the King of France was viewed by some as the “Vicar of Christ in his kingdom”, “just like, in fact, a God in bodily form”, and

---

<sup>37</sup> Mayeur, IX, 11-58; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 135-160, 443-489, 558-582.

## STATUS QUO

even a “new secularized version of the hypostatic union”.<sup>38</sup> The dreams of Philip the Fair and his legalists seemed more than realized in the Catholic France of Tridentine Christendom.

Not that this vision remained unquestioned. There was a “Catholic First” position that came to the fore during the Wars of Religion and remained alive in the program of the *dévo*t party discussed in the previous chapter. *Dévots* continued to promote the subordination of the State to Catholic faith and morality, often within the context of a demand for wholehearted acceptance of the reforms of the Council of Trent and a greater respect for the power of the Papacy. Interestingly enough, even many Gallican thinkers quite openly insisted that the French Catholic community only delegated the exercise and use of its political power to the monarch, while always retaining its ultimate property and ownership. This meant that if a king abused his ministry, he could be deposed and replaced by another. Such ideas, which grew stronger in Catholic ranks with increased Valois religious vacillation, became most powerful from the beginning of the War of the Three Henriess (1584-1589)—Henry III, Henry of Guise, Henry of Navarre—and the formation of the Catholic League down to the victory of the Bourbon Family in 1589.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Van Kley, p. 20; Mayeur, IX, 113-138; Jedin and Dolan, V, 510-516; VI, 329-342.

<sup>39</sup> Van Kley, pp. 15-31.

With that victory, under Henry IV (1589-1610) and his successors, there came a new lease on life for the concept of a semi-divine kingship:<sup>40</sup>

By 1625 the Bishop of Chartres, Léonore d'Estampes, ventured the opinion that 'there is no one who does not hold and believe that {the King of France} is in no way mortal but instead something very like the Deity and similar to him'; while just a few years later the future member of the French Academy, Guez de Balzac, commended the Roman practice of emperor worship as worthy of emulation, maintaining that Louis XIII in particular was so saintly that he had never lost the innocence vouchsafed to him by baptism....Richelieu's notorious politics of 'reason of state' presupposed this divinization, and made sense in the cardinal-minister's own mind only on the assumption of France's special relation to God and the sacrosanctity of French kingship.

Revival of the vision of sacred kingship worked together with that particular interpretation of Gallicanism that subordinated the Church to the wishes of the monarchy rather than to those of local French bishops. Bourbon kings, like their Valois predecessors, possessed the right granted them by the Concordat to name practically every ordinary in the country, the pope retaining only the power of a subsequent confirmation of royal choices. Despite relying on the Concordat for this authority, however, reform measures stemming from the fifteenth-century Councils of Constance

---

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.



## STATUS QUO

and Basel continued to be considered as legally binding before the royal French courts, the *parlements*. This meant that French individuals and corporations opposed to any given Tridentine-inspired ecclesiastical action could make what was referred to as an *appel comme d'abus*, an "appeal due to an abuse", from Church to State authorities, thereby seeking a final judgment about a religious matter from the civil tribunals alone. Strong monarchs like Louis XIV (1643-1715) worked vigorously to make certain that such courts clearly understood their role as agents of the royal will and that they shaped whatever religious judgments they pronounced accordingly.<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, influence over the monarch was essential to bringing the French Church into the international Tridentine reform camp. None of the specific desires of the various *dévot* groups--reintroducing sound diocesan and monastic discipline, establishing colleges and seminaries, improving the miserable condition of the peasantry, and assuring a Catholic-friendly European harmony--could be achieved without backing from the king, along with the *parlements* judging in his name and according to his will. It was for this reason that pro-Tridentine bishops undertook a political campaign on behalf of reform, culminating in the petition of the clerical representatives at the Estates-General of 1614 to accept the decrees of the Council officially, *en bloc*, once and for all.<sup>42</sup>

Concern for the integrity of monarchical power created a regal party backed by a variety of individuals and groups

---

<sup>41</sup> Van Kley, pp. 1-74.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

that did not appreciate the *dévo*t political agenda. This included certain Huguenots, whose voices could only effectively be heard in court and judicial circles; monks receiving support for a life of prayer which they had no intention of carrying out; ordinary people opposing reform because it struck against what were actually long-entrenched superstitious practices masquerading as religious activity, such as the sacrifice of bulls to the Mother of God in times of agricultural distress; skeptics calling upon the heritage of Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592); and libertines supported by Louis XIII's brother, Gaston d'Orleans (1608-1660). Dramatists were also called upon for aid, with men like Molière (1622-1673) satirizing the *dévo*t movement and depicting the religious-minded layman shaped through its influence as a pretentious hypocrite, both in *Tartuffe* (1664) as well as in his other influential and highly entertaining works.

It was the apparent Ultramontanism of many of the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century *dévo*ts, along with the Roman-backed Tridentine reforms that they vigorously supported, which sparked most of the effective French opposition to their victory. One cannot be surprised that it was in the name of Gallicanism that the *parlements* criticized the nuncios---whom the *dévo*ts saw to be crucial links with the Holy See---as being merely "agents of a foreign court". It was also in the name of ancient local liberties that the doctrine of an indirect papal power over law, one that flowed from Innocent III's classic understanding of the need for the Church to have a palpable means of correcting error and sin, was openly reviled. Regalists attacked the Jesuit teachers promoting it as villains engaged in a subversive, educational affront to French sovereignty that could possibly even lead to regicide.

## STATUS QUO

This latter argument was particularly powerful in France, given the murder of Henry IV in 1610 by François Ravallac (1578-1610), who feared the long-term protestantizing effect of the king's toleration of the Huguenots through the Edict of Nantes. The conviction, real or alleged, that the *dévo*t cause was somehow implicated in that assassination, and thereby intrinsically dangerous to the State, is well captured in the petition of the commons at the Estates-General of 1614. That document successfully criticized the clerical call for legal sanction for the decrees of Trent and demanded an official assertion of that full independence of French political life from outside spiritual control already defended by Jean Bodin (1530-1596) in the midst of the Religious Wars in 1576.<sup>43</sup>

But {this position} did not officially surface until the Third Estate demanded that it be recognized as a 'fundamental law of the realm' by the Estates General of 1614. Drafted by a parliamentary barrister...the proposition specified that 'as {the king} is recognized as Sovereign in his State, not holding his Crown from anyone but God, there is no Power on earth, whether Spiritual or Temporal, which has the least right over his realm, such as would take it away from the sacred persons of our Kings', and went on to anathematize the admissibility of any deposition or assassination. The proposition did not become a fundamental law at

---

<sup>43</sup> Van Kley, 1-74, pp. 35-36, also 12, 32, 39-55, 81-85; Philips, pp. 31, 1-74, 100-114; Mayeur, IX, 113-138; Lloyd Moote, pp. 45-48, 61-76, 178-272.

the time due to the resistance of the nobility and the clergy. Cardinal du Perron, the main spokesman for the clergy's delegation, found it outrageous that a French king might have the right to convert, say, to Mohammedanism without fear of deposition or resistance.

Perhaps the most effective of the opponents of the *dévo*t camp were those who employed the two powerful words *bon français*—good Frenchman—in order to describe their position. While sharing the same basic vision, a *bon français* no longer claimed to try to stand above the Catholic-Huguenot battle, as Bodin's so-called *politique* faction might have done. Catholicism had re-asserted itself much too strongly for such an approach to be successful by the early 1600's. Instead, he argued that while seeking to do the right Catholic thing, he simply wished to do this without detriment to France. The problem was that such an outlook could, and did, expand to encompass the idea that the right Catholic thing to do, and the benefit of France itself, must be understood and guided not by the pope, nor even by the Gallican bishops, nor, least of all, by individual conscience, but, once again, with reference to that nebulous principle called "Reason of State", as interpreted by a monarch somehow mystically protected in his judgments through the grace of Almighty God.

In other words, in making a powerful appeal to patriotism, the *bon français* implicitly criticized a Catholic who did not accept his claims as being a *mauvais français*. He then confused the issue still further by obscuring the question of whether his opponent's lack of patriotism was ascribed merely to political miscalculation or to the desire to submit

## STATUS QUO

the State to the corrective and transforming message of the Word, as interpreted by the Papacy and *dévot* prelates. Whatever the case, a heavy dose of Gallican disdain for external papal involvement in the affairs of France was part and parcel of the whole *bon français* position, as was a dislike of independent internal Catholic influence as well.

Battle was joined between the *dévot* and *bon français* parties over the issue of French internal policy and religious war in the period from 1618-1648.<sup>44</sup> The *dévots* believed that France should dedicate whatever military energy it possessed to the elimination of Protestant fortified places still existing within the country by the terms of the Edict of Nantes, move to suppress the scandal of public Huguenot worship entirely, and turn its attention to needed internal reforms, especially in agriculture, on behalf of the wretched rural population. They also believed that France should be at least neutral, if not positively friendly towards the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs in the Thirty Years War. After all, the result of their victory would mean the definitive international triumph of Catholicism over Protestant heresy.

For a *bon français*, internal reform and the plight of the peasantry were of little interest, while the Huguenots were of concern only insofar as the fortified places they commanded did indeed continue to pose a threat to domestic security. The real question, to his mind, was whether or not the power and glory of the Hapsburg Family might surpass and eclipse that of the Bourbon Dynasty and France. The *bon français* therefore supported war against Spain and Austria and, in consequence, alliance with the very Protestant powers which

---

<sup>44</sup> Van Kley, p. 32; Lloyd Moote, pp. 178-272.

the *dévots* wished to see crushed. A pamphlet war in the 1620's saw the *dévo*t *True or Friendly Word of Messieurs the Princes* and the *Admonitio ad regem* pitted against tracts such as the *Discourse of the Princes and States of Christendom, On the Progress and Conquests of the King of Spain and House of Austria*, and the *Parallel of St. Louis and Louis XIII*. It flared up again in the middle of the 1630's with the appearance of Bishop Cornelius Jansenius' (1585-1638) *Mars Gallicus*, which vigorously attacked French aggression. This was challenged in works like *How the Piety of the French Differs from that of the Spaniards within a Profession of the Same Religion*, and *Gallican Vindications*.

After taming the internal Huguenot military threat in the 1620's, France experienced a complete *bon français* victory. Their triumph was symbolized by the defeat at the hands of Cardinal Armand-Jean de Plessis de Richelieu (1585-1642) of Michel de Marillac and his allies on what has come to be known as the Day of Dupes (November 10, 1630). As a result of this political coup, which assured the cardinal's role as the king's chief minister, France entered the war against Spain and Austria. She won the power and glory that "Reason of State" demanded. She also found herself, by the end of that conflict, racked by the internal revolt of the *Fron*des, subject to major agricultural and commercial turmoil, and prey to the kind of intense suffering so poignantly described by the *dévo*t circles around St. Vincent de Paul.

It is no surprise that the French *dévots* were bewildered by the fullness of their defeat, for the Universal Church herself had seemed to unite with the State against them. Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644), while condemning the principle of Reason of State in theory, himself frequently acted in practice during the Thirty Years War as though Protestant defeat were indeed

## STATUS QUO

secondary in importance to humbling Hapsburg power. A *dévo*t might be forgiven for wondering if politics and patriotism *did* perhaps operate by special mystical rules that were different from those applying to private individuals. And even the most vigorous member of that party had to admit that the personal piety of the French monarchs seemed assurance enough that a Catholic spirit would somehow triumph over the theoretical confusion in the long run.<sup>45</sup>

Many French sons of St. Ignatius themselves “courted the court”, so wreaking havoc with Ignatius’s central principles as to grant France a unique exemption from the basic principles of an internationally minded Jesuit Catholicism.<sup>46</sup> Much to the scandal of members of the Society outside the country, a number of their French colleagues therefore toned down their Ultramontanism in favor of the royalist manifestation of Gallicanism. Fr. François de La Chaise (1624-1709), the King’s chaplain, openly took sides with the monarchy in matters relating to everything from Bourbon claims to ecclesiastical privileges inside France to demands for extraterritoriality within the boundaries of the city of Rome. But the Jesuits were not alone in breaking *dévo*t ranks. De Bérulle of the frequently anti-Society Oratorians also willingly contributed to a *bon français* pamphlet.<sup>47</sup>

One of the main authors of the *bon français* approach, Cardinal Richelieu, illustrates the peculiar complexity of the French situation as much as anyone else. Tied early in his career with the work of de Bérulle, and always very

---

<sup>45</sup> Lloyd Moote, pp. 199-272.

<sup>46</sup> Philips, p. 114.

<sup>47</sup> Van Kley, pp. 50-55; Philips, pp. 110-114.

supportive of practical Tridentine reform on a diocesan level, he, nevertheless, was willing to ally France with Moslems against fellow Catholics and press for the creation of a French Patriarchate with quasi-papal powers. The “words” *bon français*, Reason of State, and dynastic glory always took precedence in his mind over the corrective and transforming message of the Word Incarnate—or, perhaps better stated, were totally merged together with it in one “believing” but highly politicized whole.<sup>48</sup>

As usual, however, enormous problems emerged in this particular squadron of the budding Grand Coalition of the Status Quo as well as in all the others. The Gallican Articles of 1682 claimed to defend local French Church rights but, in fact, emphasized the elevation of royal authority above that of bishops as much as it did over that of the pope. This truth was clarified by Louis XIV’s disavowal in 1693 of the more episcopal friendly aspects of the document when courting papal Rome anew. Theological propaganda aside, French bishops were viewed as being “free” only in union with the king in any possible disagreements with Rome. They were definitely *not* free to press a conciliarist argument that could *also* be turned against the monarchy. Louis sought to reconcile the bishops for their loss of real independence by compensating them with measure after measure tightening the local ordinary’s control over his diocesan clergy and depriving the latter of any deliberative voice whatsoever in running the Gallican Church. Such actions aroused a great deal of resentment that would eventually be aimed equally against both the episcopacy and the monarchy.

---

<sup>48</sup> Philips, pp. 300-302.



## STATUS QUO

Meanwhile, more troubles for the future were brewing in consequence of the exaltation of the king's power in every other realm of political and social life. Gallican institutions that cherished their mission to guard traditional prerogatives against the pretensions of both the French Monarchy and the Roman Papacy, forces ranging from the nobility to the various *parlements* and the entire judicial community that gained its living through them, were brought to heel. Meetings of the Estates General ceased. *Intendants* replaced existing officials in provincial areas. *Lits de justices*, appealing to the ultimate legal authority of the king, were used to register acts and prevent petitioning against them, two functions formerly handled and encouraged by the *parlements*. All this was presented as a crucial battle against continuing vestiges of feudal anarchy. The peace, order, and glory that it guaranteed were then celebrated in an ever more elaborate pageantry emphasizing the sacred and civil power of the Sun King at his hunting lodge of Versailles—his new governmental center, far away from the unwanted pressures of a corporate society, exerted so formidably in the former capital of Paris.<sup>49</sup>

In sum, a rather bizarre number of approaches to regalism had grown up in France by the end of the 1600's. Most truly serious Ultramontanists would always be dead set against it. Nevertheless, some, like many French Jesuits, supported regalism inside France because they felt that the king was Catholicism's best friend in that country. Principled Gallicans always approved of regalism insofar as it meant a defense of French national rights from Roman papal

---

<sup>49</sup> Van Kley, pp. 48-49.

interference. On the other hand, many members of this party were upset with a Gallican vision used to pursue purely secularizing goals, or one that involved a divinization of the monarchy that simultaneously crushed the episcopacy, the local clergy, and other national institutions. *Parlements* might be happy to see a royal defense of French rights vis-à-vis Rome but embittered by their own exclusion from effective influence over national life. All of these groups invented “appropriate theological justifications” for their particular positions, because all still believed that France was the Eldest Daughter of the Church and could not operate without a rhetorical cover story “suitable” to a Catholic vision of life—even if the final tale, whatever its particular content, were actually destructive to the corrective and transforming message of the Word Incarnate in history.

Much more openly indicative of the chilling direction down which thought regarding the independence of the State from Christ was traveling was the situation in the Republic of Venice.<sup>50</sup> Venice had always had a different history from much of the rest of Latin Europe. Proving the extent of this distinction was one of the main stimuli to Venetian historiography—and mythmaking—in the first place. Particular circumstances had indeed kept the Republic out of the Carolingian-Western Roman imperial sphere of influence. Its historians extrapolated from this truth the fantasy that Venice had remained separate from the original *imperium* as well. Nothing Roman, her most potent propagandists argued, could, in consequence, ever legitimately be allowed to exercise an “unhistorical” control over Venice. This included the Roman Church, many of whose medieval demands for

---

<sup>50</sup> Mayeur, VIII, 556-558; IX, 143-152; Jedin and Dolan, V, 616-619.

## STATUS QUO

correcting and transforming a flawed nature had, in fact, effectively been kept at bay over the course of the past five hundred years, allowing the Republic to practice a pronounced form of regalist and secular minded politics.

The Word-friendly fervor flamed by the Tridentine reform movement thus proved to be both perplexing and difficult for a government like that of Venice to accept. It faced the Republic with a reinvigorated Papacy on the one hand and many zealous bishops on the other, both forces eager to maintain an international Catholic Christendom critical of parochial interests. With the Roman Church awakened from her dogmatic slumber and dedicated to the work of correction and transformation in Christ, local regalists warned that Venice was being seduced into a Roman ecclesiastical *imperium* threatening subversion of the original intent of her foundation vision. Since the rhetoric of religion was as important to the Republic as it was to other contemporary states, they felt obliged to reassert that what this foundation vision taught regarding Church and State was as pious as it was politically sound.

Regalist fears came to a head through one of the most important crises of the Catholic Reformation era: the Venetian Interdict, which began in April of 1606 and continued until April of 1607. On the one hand, this involved practical economic matters and power-political relationships that the Church may not have judged correctly. Nevertheless, it also represented a *cause célèbre* engaging much of the European continent in a debate on the relationship of man, changeable nature, and the unchanging God. And in this conflict, a Church that had rediscovered her proper mission was indeed on the side of the angels.

A basic outline of the history of the Venetian Interdict can be sketched quickly. Venice and the Papacy, which often quarreled over jurisdictional questions, clashed especially harshly over a number of such matters in the years 1602-1605. Laws that, in effect, legitimized lay confiscation of lands that had been leased from the Church (1602), prohibited the construction of church buildings without State permission (1603) and ended transfers of property from secular to ecclesiastical hands (1605) followed swiftly, one upon the other. Meanwhile, two clerics, Scipione Saraceno, a canon of Vicenza, and Abbot Brandolino of Nervesa, accused of crimes ranging from mockery of the symbols of state authority to sorcery and murder, were arrested by the Republic to be tried in secular rather than ecclesiastical courts. Marsilius of Padua would have been edified—and prepared for coming papal retribution.

And, indeed, Pope Paul V (1605-1621) put Venice on warning that failure to change her behavior would bring a sentence of excommunication upon her leaders and the laying of an interdict upon the entire Republic. Warnings came to naught. In April of 1606, therefore, the Papal threat became a reality. There then took place a battle of great bitterness for the obedience of the clergy and the laity within the Republic, in the midst of which the bulk of the churches were kept functioning by the government and especially pro-papal forces like the Jesuits were expelled. A Venetian protest of the interdict, similar to that of the Emperor Frederick II in the thirteenth century, sought to interest all secular authorities throughout Europe in the plight of the Republic. It cited papal actions as an example of unjust Church interference in the life of the State with general negative repercussions for everyone. Protestants, especially among the English and the

## STATUS QUO

Dutch, became excited over the new possibilities this fight might offer for penetrating the Italian peninsula. French Gallicans were enticed into the fray. Rome weighed the prospects for a military solution that would inevitably drag the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs into the brouhaha.

The long-term justice of papal concern over the Venetian actions—and, with it, a sign of the Holy See's renewed commitment to taking the full message of the Incarnation seriously-- stands out when one examines the *spirit* behind Venice's struggle with Rome. Even a superficial glance at much of the Venetian writing in defense of the Republic reveals an outlook that the Church was obliged to combat and can be proud to have resisted. In fact, men like Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine (1542-1621) and Cesare Baronius (1538-1607), who were uncomfortable with a number of the specific political and legal aspects of the interdict controversy, were in the forefront of the battle against the monstrous intellectual errors at play alongside them.

Who were the spokesmen for this unacceptable Venetian spirit? One cannot aspire here to a complete listing of every name of significance. Let it suffice to say that the main figures of importance were men appreciated by or directly connected in one way or another with a political faction called the *Giovani*--the "Young Turks" we would say--which managed to gain control of the Republic in 1582. The *Giovani* were men with deep intellectual roots, highly conscious of the distinct historical position of Venice in the life of the West, and very eager for their city to overcome her commercial, agricultural, and strategic problems and survive.

Reference should be made specifically to the names of Paolo Paruta (1540-1598), author of *Political Discourses* and a

work *On the Perfection of the Political Life*; Enrico Davila (1576-1631), known for his *History of the Civil Wars in France*; Leonardo Donà (1536-1612), Doge from 1606 onwards, for whom service to the State was an act of religious commitment evoking from him a vow of celibacy; Giovanni Marsilio (d. 1612), an ex-Jesuit and bridge between the realms of politics and theology; and Fulgenzio Micanzio (1570-1654), a Franciscan who served as spiritual consultant to the Republic after the death of the most famous of all those involved in the battle: Paolo Sarpi (1553-1623).

Sarpi, a Servite friar who came to epitomize the revolt in the eyes of Rome and who was excommunicated along with Marsilio and Micanzio, was counselor to the government from 1606 onwards. His *Treatise on Benefices*, *History of the Interdict*, *History of the Council of Trent*, and *Thoughts* cannot be overlooked by the student either of the Venetian Interdict, the general history of the black legends and alternative good stories cultivated by rhetoricians opposing the substantive message of the Word, or the complete development of modern secular culture based on the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is". This is testified to by no less an enemy of Christianity than Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), who considered Sarpi, along with Davila, Machiavelli, and Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), as the bright lights in the recent flowering of historiography. It is also confirmed by the fact that a copy of his book on the Council of Trent was one of the works cherished by the spiritual head of the Pilgrim community on the Mayflower bound for the New World and

## STATUS QUO

the stimulation of that City on a Hill mentality that would guide the future American Empire.<sup>51</sup>

A full treatment of the arguments of the Venetian spokesmen for “nature as is” can be found – and presented, I might add, in a more favorable light – in William Bouwsma’s work on *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*. Briefly stated, without untangling the specific positions of each of the different thinkers mentioned above, what one finds therein is a high-minded appeal to spiritual principles and the State’s role in defending them, combined with a view of the universe as the realm of irrationality, sin, and lust for power. All was accompanied by a haughty indifference to the contradictions and consequences of this confusion of ideas very much reminiscent of the whole of the *Zeitgeist* of the new death camp era. The entire vision was seasoned with an equally familiar disdain for everything Roman, both religious and secular. Let us explore this outlook and its dangers beginning with that anti-Roman bias.

Rome’s “aggression” offended the *Giovani* for three reasons, the first of which stemmed from their unshakeable conviction that the State was the sole instrument created by God to act in the secular realm in the name of things spiritual. The State ruled by Divine Right. Rome, by emphasizing the rights of the supernatural order in the natural sphere was therefore sacrilegiously invading the space of God’s State in an innovative fashion. The reader knows by now that Rome

---

<sup>51</sup> W. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty. Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter-Reformation* (California, 1968). For a connection with the American Pilgrim Fathers, see p. 626; Jedin and Dolan, V, 616-619.

was merely reiterating what any number of Church thinkers, especially from the time of St. Maximus the Confessor onwards, had stressed; a concept that Pope St. Gregory VII tied to the ancient canonical tradition that had been suppressed by bad political customs over the course of what we call Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Hence, the *Giovani* had not only a pre-Tridentine but also a pre-Gregorian understanding of the State's spiritual role in the life of Christendom.

Constantine would have understood their second objection against a reinvigorated Rome, because this involved a flip on the familiar ancient complaint of the rhetoricians against the Socratics. The earthly realm, the *Giovani* insisted, was the sphere of constant flux and change, the sort of condition best described by history – the discipline they held to be most suited to demonstrating Venice's unique position in the West and the unchanging demands of her foundation vision. God wanted His one spiritual agent, the State, to examine the changing reality around it, different for different societies, and to use all the tools necessary to move people to do what was required to survive in their midst. His Divine Will was united with the State in all that it demanded of its citizens.

Now, however, the *Giovani* protested, the Church, descending from her proper field of action into another, unsuitable one, was claiming that the realm of flux had to be guided by theological and metaphysical constructs – ideological principles, we would say, if we wished to give the same negative feel to the argument that the Venetians did. Rome, to take but one example, wanted individual States' foreign policies to be conducted with an eye to the overall interest of Christianity and Christendom, a demand that



## STATUS QUO

could embroil Venice in wars against the Turks. For Venice, however, a foreign policy that aimed strictly at practical issues concerning her survival and growth might lead to commerce with the Moslems rather than crusades. Moreover, the Church wanted such practical economic interests to be guided by broad Catholic moral aims rather than by the laws of agricultural and industrial advantage alone. To the *Giovani*, this was a hideous mistake. Great truths, they claimed, were beyond human definition and application to the natural world, and any institution that sought to intervene in the secular realm in their name was venturing into the theater of the absurd.

For Sarpi, such a critique even extended to the dogmatic activity of the Church, since theology required the use of natural, human language, which was unsuitable for an accurate expression of divine truths. Given this argument, it is difficult to see how Christianity could ever mean anything for him other than the observable spiritual life of distinct, changeable, local "churches", incapable of any serious advancement down the path of doctrinal formulation. Indeed, it is hard to see how Sarpi and some of the other *Giovani* could permit anyone even to use history as a model for their action, since to do so would be to turn an historical argument into an intellectual guideline attempting to explain and shape pure "flux". The State, the direct agent of God in natural life, must merely act, commanded by nothing rational or architectonic. Discrete moments of life and reaction to them were the stuff of its existence. And, once again, obedience to State decisions was obedience to the will of God.

It might have been more difficult for a Constantine to understand the third motivation for the anti-papal attitude of

the *Giovani*, since this centered round a variation of the recent Protestant doctrine of total depravity. Simply put, Rome offended them by acting as though the earth could be transformed *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. Such a transformation was obviously an utter impossibility. The world was the realm of sin, with the lust for power the specific stimulus to all human endeavors. Lust for power was identified as the special distinguishing impulse behind Roman action throughout her history, the popes merely devoting themselves to the continuation of the old imperial aggression under ecclesiastical pretenses. In fact, the whole Tridentine reform effort, the entire enterprise of transformation of the world in Christ, the thrust of the growing interest in dogma and its application to daily life, was one enormous fraudulent mask for building Roman power. It was therefore the duty of the intelligent man to uncover this lust for power behind every papal action; to “deconstruct” the Holy See’s seemingly principled moves to reveal its sin-saturated reality and act accordingly. It was this that Sarpi did particularly skillfully, after the interdict was lifted, in his *History of the Council of Trent*.

Needless to say, such an idea means that the State, the lion-tamer in a jungle of endless irrational conflict that ceaselessly changed its precise form, must logically exhibit that same sinful, mindless lust for power reflected in the actions of the Papacy. Still, if the State insisted upon its Divine Right to obedience, cut off all discussion of higher principles, and relied on the kind of terror that Sarpi had absolutely no qualms about encouraging to enforce its will, it could easily prevent “deconstruction” of its own hypocritical posturing as God’s agent in the world and full recognition of the depth and the extent of the evils that it perpetrated.

## STATUS QUO

Mentioning this point brings us to a final underlying contradiction. According to the *Giovani*, no universal ideas were to be allowed a role in shaping the life of states with their different histories and varying problems. Politics was to be the realm of the “pragmatic”. But it was clear that the pragmatically minded *Giovani* were devoted to their political conclusions with a religious fervor. Many of them spoke of their Republic as though she had sprung fully formed out of the supernatural wisdom of her Founding Fathers, with universally applicable practical lessons for a world desperately in need of enlightenment. Hence, they were teaching pragmatism as dogma. A contradiction, indeed, but it should be clear by this time that we have entered an era in which consistency itself was to be dismissed as the “hobgoblin of little minds”.

In any case, after a year of terrible turmoil, a French Cardinal, Francois de Joyeuse (1562-1615), building upon the strong, mutual—and anti-Spanish—friendship of Venice and his own kingdom, negotiated a settlement (April 21, 1607). Rome let the censures drop, Venice abandoned her protest, and the Republic promised to hand the clerical criminals whose immunity it had violated over to the King of France, who might, if he so wished, give them up to the pope for judgment.

Already beforehand, Cardinals Baronius and Roberto Bellarmine, two of the greatest contemporary defenders of Church authority, had expressed their objections to imposing an interdict against Venice. Almost everyone since them has agreed that doing so was a prudential mistake and an embarrassing failure on the practical level. Not only did Paul V underestimate the extent to which seventeenth-century

clergy and laity might cavalierly disdain commands that would have made even hostile medieval peoples tremble, but he also could be accused of a dreamer's indifference to Venice's serious economic concerns about land usage and political fears for her survival in a Hapsburg-dominated Italy. Not only did he pick a weapon, the interdict, which had the historical reputation of striking at the innocent as well as the guilty, but he also used it against Venice while sparing a Hapsburg Spain that terrified Rome just as much as the Republic; a Hapsburg Spain that men like Baronius judged to be considerably more guilty in these jurisdictional matters. No wonder that other states frightened by the Spaniards had reason to be aroused to sympathy for Venice in a crisis that damaged overall papal prestige.

Even the settlement of the issue proved to be an embarrassment for the Papacy. The Republic forbade celebration of the reconciliation and the seeking of absolution for canonical penalties incurred by violating the interdict, insisting that it was apologizing for nothing and changing nothing in its behavior. Venice made it clear that its compromise in the matter of the criminal clerics was a one-time event, in no way prejudicial to its future jurisdictional demands. In short, the Venetian Interdict seriously called into question the good sense and effectiveness of Rome, and some of the greatest minds in the Catholic world could have said, "I told you so".

But there was real glory amidst prudential error in this whole episode. The real glory of the Church and her apologists in the Venetian Interdict controversy was their recognition of the essential flaw lying behind the vision of the *Giovani*: the recipe for the triumph of the will, the glorification of the will to power--the "right to choose"--of the strong over

## STATUS QUO

the weak, without having to be called to account for their action; a triumph of the will and a glorification of the will to power that was brilliantly argued for the benefit not of a monarchy nor of a military dictatorship but of a republic. Both the Roman Church and her apologists had the acuity to “deconstruct the deconstructors”, to show where a true cynicism with universal implications for the destruction of Faith and Reason had taken root. This was no mean accomplishment, and must always be imitated by a Bride of Christ true to the corrective and transforming mission of the Word—in our own all too similar time and with respect to the American Republic as well.

Not every Tridentine prelate and apologist in the seventeenth century was so perceptive. It was difficult for them to understand that radicals working in the service of “words” rather than for the cause of the Word were radically subverting the meaning of the spiritual role that they all agreed the State possessed. Indeed, their opponents may themselves not have seen all the consequences of their thought either. Whatever the case may be, the bulk of the Catholic attacks on Venice were centered on the particular facts of the jurisdictional battle, which involved issues that did indeed touch upon legitimate Venetian political and economic fears, and on which the Church might, in fairness, have compromised in 1606-1607. The more serious matters were very much ignored or left in the background. A deeper meditation on the full message of the Word in history, building upon what the best of Catholic apologists were saying, would have been much more suitable for defense against the growing strength of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.

### *H. Grace, Free Will, and Nature*

Protestantism had brought the question of man's justification and, with it, the relationship of faith, grace, and free will onto the center of the sixteenth century stage. In doing so, it had also called attention to the tremendous and differing implications for a general understanding of the role of nature in the work of salvation that flowed from the way in which this question was resolved. Trent, while teaching that both grace and free will played a role in man's justification, had not by any means found the attempt to specify their exact contributions in the work of salvation a simple or straightforward one. Various schools of thought, with their particular emphases and nuances, skirmished with one another in studying and reworking the original sketches of decrees written by men like Girolamo Seripando (1492-1563), General of the Augustinian Hermits at the time of the first sitting, and Cardinal-Legate at the last. Council Fathers lined up for or against efforts to keep the doors to reconciliation with the Protestants still open by building a decree on justification from the work of Cardinal Gasparo Contarini at Regensburg in 1541, the last major bilateral attempt to heal the split in Western Christendom. "Double-justification" had been the theme at that colloquy – a first reconciliation by faith being followed up by a second one that called attention to man's personal contribution to his own salvation.

The decrees related to justification ultimately passed at Trent reflected the frustrations, compromises, and limitations of many a heated discussion. Although, as noted above, they did emphasize the work of both grace and free will, they finally did so not in the context of a theory of double

## STATUS QUO

justification criticized as being redundant but as a single act of cooperation of man and God. Traditional positions were reiterated as far as they could be co-opted by the terms of a new debate, but so much so that some of the Council Fathers thought that the controversy of the relationship of free will and grace had been left as unresolved as it was before Trent. Others were worried that anti-Protestant preoccupations had so triumphed as to leave the erroneous impression that freedom actually counted more than grace and faith in the Catholic vision. All this means that the post-conciliar era was to witness a hunt for further clarity on the grace-free will issue, demonstrating in the process that a misplaced zeal could degenerate into heresy, creating fervent believers whose vehemence transformed them into arrogant, self-righteous Machiavellians.<sup>52</sup>

Let us now place this particular doctrinal problem in its more specific historical context, with reference to the long and bitter Catholic controversy surrounding the work of the Jesuits. After Trent, the Society of Jesus proved to be crucial to the project of evangelization in Protestant territories as well as in mission countries. It was thereby directly associated in many people's minds with the council and the Catholic Reform in and of themselves. But the Jesuits, who claimed to be followers of St. Thomas Aquinas, opted for a clarification of the teaching of Trent that emphasized the importance of free will in a way that Dominican Thomists, not to mention non-Thomist Augustinians, found to be excessive.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> On Trent and the grace issue, see Jedin, *Konzil*. I, 104-268.

<sup>53</sup> Jedin and Dolan, V, 535-545.

Jesuits tied their theological approach together with devotional practices, spiritual direction, and missionary methods open to objections from their opponents along the same lines: namely, that they were more friendly to nature and human freedom than they ought to be. Franciscans soon joined in the chorus of complaint as well. Dominicans, Augustinians, and Franciscans felt that should the Jesuit approach remain uncontested, they might find themselves accused of being crypto-Protestants. They therefore perceived the need to assail the Society's free will position as one tending towards Pelagianism, if not actually Pelagian pure and simple.

A first, intense, and instructive post-conciliar skirmish over the grace-free will issue involved three figures active in Hapsburg lands. One, Michel Baius (1513-1589), was a Frenchman who taught in the Lowlands at the University of Louvain. Two others were Spaniards: the Jesuit, Luis de Molina (1535-1600), author of the *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* (1588) and an *Appendix ad Concordiam* (1589), and his Dominican Thomist opponent, Domingo Bañez (1528-1604). This initial confrontation established much of the serious intellectual framework within which Catholics would fight the future world war over the meaning and value of nature and freedom in relation to supernatural grace. It also gave a foretaste of the role to be played in the conflict both by the Lowlands and the non-theological rivalries of Jesuits and other religious orders. Finally, it once again demonstrated Rome's difficulties in resolving the grace and free will dilemma left nearly intact by Trent. For, although much of Baius' work was definitely reprovved, a long series of nerve-racking debates during the reigns of Clement VIII (1592-1605) and Pope Paul V (1605-1621) led to a standoff, with both



## STATUS QUO

Bañez' and Molina's views being accepted as Catholic in character.<sup>54</sup>

A second stimulus concerned a broad set of developments in the Netherlands, a new country that had an immensely symbolic importance as a Protestant federation that had conducted a lengthy but ultimately triumphant revolt against the power of Catholic Spain. Whatever was done or discussed in the politically and militarily successful Netherlands stood as a constant challenge to Tridentine Catholic effectiveness in all realms. Some viewed the Dutch challenge as a spur to further commitment to the Baroque path. Others considered it a call to a review of post-conciliar developments to reevaluate their Catholicity as well as their pastoral effectiveness.

Nowhere was this more the case than in the Catholic regions of the Lowlands, whether those subject to Protestant Dutch rule or others still under the control of the Catholic Kings of Spain in neighboring Belgium. If the Dutch Republic adopted secularist policies, if a Calvinist Synod at Dordrecht spoke on problems concerning the efficacy of grace, and if the Protestant University of Leiden changed the focus of its curriculum, then Catholic Utrecht, Ypres, and the University of Louvain would blink and react swiftly. And everything that happened in the Lowlands could not help but be of concern to the Hapsburg Family, in both its Spanish and Austrian branches, as well as to the French Bourbons, always eager to penetrate this divided Hapsburg bailiwick.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Jedin and Dolan, V, 535-545.

<sup>55</sup> Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 637-676, 982-983, 1038-1066.

Bishop Cornelius Jansenius of Ypres, author of a massive work called the *Augustinus* (1640-1641), built on many of the themes first developed by Baius.<sup>56</sup> His studies gained an early enthusiastic backing in France due to the influence of one of the bishop's old friends and regular correspondents, Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, the Abbot of St. Cyr (d. 1642). They were also energetically endorsed by a variety of members of the important Arnauld Family: Mothers Angelica (1591-1661) and Agnes (1593-1672), active in the powerful religious communities of Port Royal, with branches in both Paris and the countryside, along with their brother Antoine (1612-1694)--known as the Great Arnauld--a brilliant and leading member of the University of Paris.

St. Cyr and the Arnauld Family were part of the *dévot* party. The *dévots*, once again, were eager to emphasize the construction of a truly Catholic political and social order on the national and international level. They were upset by Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin's direction of French energies on the international level to purely secular projects, as reflected in the decision to oppose the Catholic Hapsburg cause in the Thirty Years War. Jansenius aided this *dévot* opposition with that anti-war pamphlet entitled *Mars Gallicus* mentioned above. Taking their cue from its message, the budding Jansenist movement encouraged at least a passive resistance to a king who based his actions upon Reason of State alone. One serious way in which it did so was through its penitential practices, which involved an "opting-out" of the world that clearly tempted those segments of that French

---

<sup>56</sup> On Jansenism, see Mayeur, IX, 351-407; Mersch, pp. 531-555; Philips, pp. 189-205; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 24-57.

## STATUS QUO

elite that Richelieu was most eager to entice into active service of the cause of dynastic and national “glory”.

Still, the Jansenist rump of the *dévot* party proved to be a more troublesome force for the Papacy than any Jesuits who might temporarily have veered into the *bon français* camp. However much its clear challenge to French regalism during the first part of the reign of Louis XIV sometimes earned the movement the gratitude of popes like Blessed Innocent XI (1676-1689), its assault on the Jesuit free will position proved to be a dangerously exaggerated one, perilously close to that of supporters of the doctrine of total depravity. Occasional appreciation of Jansenist political positions was therefore interspersed with repeated condemnations of its theology by the Papacy and the vast bulk of the French episcopacy alike. From shaky victory to temporary defeat to renewed fragile triumph, the Jesuit free will camp fought to gain the upper hand for good.

It appeared to have done so definitively by the time of Pope Clement XI's (1700-1721) Apostolic Constitution, *Unigenitus* (1713). This document, one of the most significant, discussed, passionately defended, and angrily reviled papal statements of the entire eighteenth century, was remarkable for far more than its firm and complete attack on Jansenism. For, in one respect, it represented a serious backtracking and repudiation of the Gallican position on the part of the French Monarchy. Louis XIV, who loathed Jansenism for its doctrinal and pastoral vision as much as for its anti-regalist approach, had himself pressed the pope to intervene in French affairs to condemn the movement anew. The government of his successor, Louis XV (1715-1774), would demand obedience to the judgment of *Unigenitus* through French civil as well as

religious law. Jesuit support of Bourbon Absolutism had seemingly been vindicated on at least this one practical matter. The Papacy, the French Monarchy, and the Society were united in the battle of grace and free will as never before on any other issue.<sup>57</sup>

By that time, however, Jansenism had much evolved since the publication of Cornelius Jansen's *Augustinus*. What, exactly, did it mean in the eighteenth century? Its depressing theology of sin, with little if any room for human freedom and nature to aid man's progress to God, always underlay everything it thought and did. Its most important changes, however, involved, first of all, a development of a "spiritual" form of naturalism reminiscent of the later work of Rousseau and, secondly, the adoption of a pronounced revolutionary political spirit. It is best to postpone discussion of a third factor, its focus on pastoral activities, until the moment that the bitter Catholic debate on these important practical matters is addressed in detail.

We have seen that the Jansenists began as defenders of the superiority of the spirit over the political demands of the *bons français*. Unfortunately, due to their condemnation by the Papacy and the French Episcopacy---with the enthusiastical approval of the Bourbon Monarchy, no less---they felt obliged to find another, final, still more spiritual teaching authority than that provided by Church and State. They discovered solace in the midst of eighteenth century crises in the dictates of the individual Jansenist conscience. This they proclaimed infallible because of its unquestionable "sincerity". It was here that they arrived at a position that was not particularly

---

<sup>57</sup> Van Kley, pp. 59-248; M. Antoine, *Louis XV* (Fayard, 1989), 567-907; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 381-428.

## STATUS QUO

different from that of Rousseau, who, in fact, himself had passed through a brief Catholic stage as a member of the Jansenist camp. Conscientious resistance against papal, episcopal, and regal “despotism” thus became one of their major themes, even though their future horror over the Civil Constitution of the Clergy at the time of the Revolution indicated a continued—though perhaps illogical—commitment to the vision of an organized, hierarchal Church.

Having reached the point of basing the defense of truth on an interior sincerity that could transform one single honest Jansenist believer into the firm source of orthodox teaching, the movement’s means for responding to opposition also inevitably took on a proto-Rousseauian character as well. Any resistance to the sincerely held convictions of the Jansenists was castigated as a sign of pure hypocrisy and cynicism. While all of the enemies of the movement were thus chastised, Jansenists devoted most of their energies to debunking the spiritual and devotional practices of their primary theological opponent, the Society of Jesus, treating them as sanctimonious humbug at the very best. Exposure of Jesuit casuistry and trickery became the regular obsession of these “obviously” more sincere, more pious, and, therefore, more natural men.

Jansenist “sincerity” was hammered home by the most effective secret journal of the day—and perhaps of all time—*Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques* (*Church News*).<sup>58</sup> This periodical, more than any other eighteenth century journal, developed the future standard operating procedure of an underground revolutionary “cell”, as well as the use of the *cause célèbre* to

---

<sup>58</sup> Van Kley, pp. 94-97, 104-189.

further its goals. Revolutionary organization enabled it to operate illegally, in the underbrush, from 1728-1803, without ever once being closed down, and this despite the most assiduous efforts of the French police. Skill in manipulating *causes célèbres* involved its editors in the use of “noble lies” in propagating the movement’s evolving message; lies somehow transmuted by Jansenist sincerity into acceptably pious and natural tools for building the future reign of virtue in a presently evil universe. Perhaps most famous among such tall tales was that of the savage, anti-Jansenist Louis XV, kidnapping, murdering, and bathing in the blood of Parisian children to try to cure his physical and spiritual leprosy.

Mention of *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques* brings us to the last stage in the evolution of the Jansenist movement, that which transformed it into a naturalist revolutionary force. This development flowed logically from its location of the source of truth in the sincere conscience. Convinced of its righteousness, the leaders of the movement organized an international network of opponents of the Papacy, the discovery of which---functioning under the guidance of the Jansenist author and agitator Pasquier Quesnel (1634-1719)---was the immediate cause for Louis XIV’s demand for another papal intervention against the influence of “the sect”. Despite that intervention, in the form of *Unigenitus*, the movement’s work of subversion was to continue and expand throughout the eighteenth century. But, just as with Kant and Rousseau, the Jansenist vision of the supremacy of conscience was a recipe for encouraging the self-righteous rebuilding of existing man and society by those advocating other “sincere” projects as well. In fact, it was a recipe for the handing of the definition of things spiritual into the hands of as many little “kings” ready to bend everything natural to their own

## STATUS QUO

“Reasons of State” as there were sincere, natural, individual wills prepared to insist upon their evident infallibility.<sup>59</sup>

*I. Speculative, Positive, and Pastoral Theology*

Another major source of dispute in the centuries following the Council of Trent, one that also continued and expanded upon older battles long familiar to the reader, involved the question of the theological methodology most suitable for dealing with problems of faith and morals.<sup>60</sup> This dispute was highly significant because it was the conclusions arrived at and propagated through different schools of thought regarding such methodology that appeared in popular catechisms, devotional books and practices, preaching, and spiritual direction—in short, in pastoral work in general. And pastoral work was designed to resolve the enormously important prudential problem of how to carry out the corrective and transforming labor of the Word in history—firm in allegiance to the truth, but open, through possession of the proper pilgrim spirit, to the new and varied steps in the dance of life required by constantly changing times.

Let us begin our discussion at Trent itself. We have already seen that something of a renaissance in speculative theological studies began to take place by the latter part of the Fifteenth Century. Speculative theologians of Thomist, Scotist, and broad Augustinian schools were therefore active,

---

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-297 as one example.

<sup>60</sup> Mayeur, VIII, 247-279, 1061-1119; IX, 931-1033, 1089-1157; Jedin and Dolan, V, 546-555; VI, 93-106; Philips, pp. 100-261.

in differing degrees, at each of the three sittings of the Council. Representatives of the new Society of Jesus, dedicated more and more to the use of the systematic writings of Aquinas, were especially active in the third and last stage of Trent's history, assuring the Angelic Doctor a high place in the formulation of that synod's final decrees.

On the other hand, some of the most active Council Fathers deeply felt the sting of the anti-Catholic attack of Protestants using the most important tools of positive theology: Scripture and historical data. Time and time again, they had to admit that while they firmly believed Catholic doctrines to be true, and Catholic canonical norms and liturgical practices to be justified, they were frequently ignorant of where these came from and upon exactly what pillars they were primarily based. They thus felt themselves to be at a disadvantage in dealing with critiques of indulgences, communion under one kind, private confession, and clerical celibacy as unjustifiable innovations. They correspondingly also felt themselves to be at a disadvantage in explaining why Protestants rejecting such practices should come under ecclesiastical censure. Repeatedly, help had to be sought from Catholic experts in positive theology outside the council to save it from confusion and potential ridicule. And fortunately, such Catholics there were, skilled, through humanist influence, in the use of the same tools as their Protestant opponents but ready to turn them to the defense of the beleaguered Church.<sup>61</sup>

Positive theology seemed to remain in good shape throughout the 1500's and 1600's. The number of Catholics engaged in research on the primary sources of Christian

---

<sup>61</sup> Jedin and Dolan, V, 546-555; VI, 93-106.



## STATUS QUO

teaching and life were legion. Scripture was being probed by men such as Sixtus of Siena (1520-1569) and Cornelius à Lapide (1567-1637); patrology by Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto (1514-1585), Marguerin de la Bigne (1546-1595), Fronton du Duc (1558-1624), and Luc D'Achery (1609-1685); dogmatic history by Dionysius Petavius (1583-1652); archaeology and martyrology by Onofrio Panvinio (1530-1568) and Antonio Bosio (1576-1629), the author of *Roma sotterranea*. Suffridius Peti (d. 1597), Antonio Possevino (1533-1611), Angelus Rocca (d. 1620), Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine, and Aubert Miraeus (1573-1640) provided guides to Christian literature in general, following in the line of St. Jerome's early work in this field. The lives of the saints were studied by Laurentius Surius (1522-1578), Heribert Rosweyde (1569-1629), John van Bolland (1596-1665) and the Bollandists, as well as (among their manifold pioneering endeavors) by the Benedictine Congregation of St. Maur, or Maurists, and its perhaps most famous representative, Jean Mabillon (1632-1707). Cardinal Pietro Sforza Pallavicino (1607-1667) dedicated his labors to analysis of the recent contributions to positive theology from the documents and events of the Council of Trent. Even more than this, broad historical texts constructed from primary source materials and capable of answering the Magdeburg *Centuries* were also being produced.

The name that immediately rises in this context is that of the above-mentioned Cardinal Cesare Baronius, author of the *Annales ecclesiastici*. Baronius' story is linked with that of St. Philip Neri (1515-1595), the founder of the Roman Oratory. Neri was fascinated by the direct approach to the ancient martyrs and the various sites of Christian antiquity that was possible in a city like Rome—hence, his popularization of

pilgrimages to the catacombs and early basilicas and stational churches. Aware as he was of the Magdeburg *Centuries* and the way in which Protestants were trying to claim for themselves the role of representatives of a Christian antiquity subverted by Catholic Rome, Neri promoted an historical response to their threat. He urged--indeed, commanded--Baronius, who had moved in his orbit from a very early age, to prepare lectures on history for the meeting of his Oratory from 1558 onwards. From such modest beginnings, his work expanded, continuing even after he became a cardinal in 1596. He eventually completed twelve volumes on Church history, carrying the *Annales* down to the eve of Innocent III's reign in 1198. Baronius, in consequence, made the Catholic view something to be seriously answered rather than one that served simply as an inviting target for any hostile scholar's sharpshooting practice.<sup>62</sup>

A number of nations offered men who sought to follow in Baronius' footsteps in the 1600's, including the Italian Oratorian, Odorico Raynaldi (1595-1671). Still, it was France, so important to Catholic thought and life in practically every regard throughout the seventeenth century, which, perhaps, did the most in this realm. French scholars laboring in varied fields of positive theology in the 1600's turned their attention at one time or another towards the publication of broad ecclesiastical histories. Perhaps not surprisingly, it was a member of the French Oratory, Charles Lecointe (1611-1681), who is most noted for such work. Eight volumes of his *Annales ecclesiastici francorum* appeared between 1665 and 1683. In sum, a bright

---

<sup>62</sup> Jedin and Dolan, V, 546-555; VI, 93-106; von Pastor, XXII, 189-194.

## STATUS QUO

future for Catholic historical studies, drawing from original research in positive theology, might have seemed secured. The chance for Catholics to mold the world's attitude toward the past, and thereby gain the edge for interpreting the present, might have been judged very good indeed.

Unfortunately, despite the massive efforts of the heirs of Baronius, this desirable Catholic shaping of historical attitudes never materialized. It was the presentation of the past as concocted by the black legends and alternative good stories in the process of definitive formulation at this time that was to tighten an iron grip on the western mind, putting the orthodox Catholic perpetually on the defensive, incapable of organizing the framework of scholarly debate, fighting merely to be heard, much less harkened. Why? In discussing the problem from within the Catholic camp, two reasons come immediately to the fore.

On the one hand, Catholics eager to defend the orthodox viewpoint by drawing from positive theology were not given the full support that the importance of their work deserved. So much was this true that even in the 1600's the fifth Jesuit General, Claudio Aquaviva (1543-1615), found it impossible to carry to completion plans for a Catholic Academy of History. Perhaps this was because the Church was once again in a seemingly commanding position by the beginning of the seventeenth century and a crisis-driven concern for historical studies appeared to be no longer urgent, and even superfluous. Perhaps having built up a systematic speculative theology that worked together impressively with the ancient philosophical heritage to defend belief both in an ordered universe and its need for Redemption, many Catholics did not necessarily see why one had to undertake a

complementary examination of the roots and development of the Christian message. Then, again, on the practical level, historical research had proven to produce painful political conflict, as Baronius himself had discovered in his battles with regalist Spain over Hapsburg claims to special, age-old rights to control Church affairs in Sicily and Naples. Finally, over time, as the victorious advance of the historical picture painted by the word merchants of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo began to be appreciated, many Catholics seem to have drawn the conclusion that all in-depth probing of the Church's past must be rejected as innately suspect.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, and quite ironically, Catholics also failed to give a faith-friendly explanation to history because of a corresponding tendency to abandon and even display open contempt for traditional speculative theology. Yes, after its revival in the late fifteenth century, systematic thought continued to thrive in Catholic circles. Certainly Thomism was very much promoted by both the *Ratio studiorum* of the Jesuits as well as by the Dominican friars. Work with a number of the other great systematic thinkers continued until the second half of the 1600's as well. By that point, however, the cause of systematic, speculative thought was already once again under serious attack. Some of the Catholics engaged in work on positive theology fell prey to a disdain for traditional speculative theology reminiscent of the spirit of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance Second Childhood. A great man like Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) indicates that he dutifully took his notes on the old, approved, scholastic thinkers while at university, but then

---

<sup>63</sup> Jedin and Dolan, V, 615-617, Bangert, pp. 113-123; Von Pastor, XXII, 399-402; XXIII, 205.

## STATUS QUO

tossed them instantly into the rubbish bin as useless once beginning intellectual labor in the “real world”. Here, he found positive theology, especially history, to be much more suitable to his apologetic efforts.<sup>64</sup>

Yet without a systematic, speculative, Catholic theology to guide it, positive theology yields nothing but raw data that still has to be molded by an organizing principle to make it fruitful. What would happen when lesser minds and weaker spirits than the Bishop of Meaux tried to operate without such guidance? Who and what would become the guides for learning about the corrective and transforming message of the Word and what was pastorally necessary for its translation from the realm of theory to that of practice? The answer should be clear. Under these circumstances, it would readily fall prey to the organizing principle that comes from the *Zeitgeist*, the “spirit of the times”---a power that is difficult to resist at any moment and in any land. And this, by the end of the seventeenth century, was happy to second the temptation to abandon Catholic speculative theology with all the means at its disposal.

In doing so, the *Zeitgeist* appeared, at first, as though it would favor the adoption of Cartesian methodology for theological as well as philosophical labors, and, once again, with good reason, as a means of banishing the interference of the occult in supernatural as well as natural studies. Catholic Cartesians created something of a cult surrounding their master at the Church of St. Geneviève where he was buried, and sought to tie his ideas together with the philosophy of St. Augustine in doing so. Religious orders engaged in

---

<sup>64</sup> Phillips, pp. 100-188; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 95.

intellectual labors then took sides, either for or against the Frenchman's approach. Since the Jesuits were openly committed to a speculative theology founded upon Thomism, their enemies and vigorous competitors for students—forces such as the French Oratorians—nursed a tendency to approve the Cartesian approach.<sup>65</sup>

We have seen, however, that Descartes, for many Catholics as well as Protestants, ultimately meant Spinoza's atheism. Spinoza was simply too radical a figure to exercise a direct influence over any established religious milieu, even when his clear rejection of God was young and somewhat disguised. The only darling of the *Zeitgeist* with any chance of an impact in the existing religious environment by the 1700's was that mixture of Pietism with regalism and Whig Enlightenment doctrines dominating Prussia and Britain respectively. And word merchants found this two-headed ideology easy to forge into marching orders for new units of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.

Should Catholic students of positive theology fall prey to its charms, this would mean that they would fit the results of their research into the system being created by their moderate enemies and presented as the obvious *Diktat* of "common sense". They, as Catholics, might be tempted to avoid that particular term and label the *Diktat* the clear judgment of a sound "natural theology" instead. Work upon a distinct Catholic vision of history would then be rendered superfluous and downright unthinkable. Students of the positive theology of the Word Incarnate might continue to labor, but it would be the "natural theologians"—in practice, the Pietists, scientists, and propagandists of the Moderate

---

<sup>65</sup> Phillips, pp. 100-101, 135-170, 171, 185-186.

## STATUS QUO

Enlightenment—who would explain to them how their work could be used and what it actually signified. Whatever this might be said to mean, it definitely could never indicate anything supporting a vision of life that called for correcting nature and transforming man and society in Christ. And, given the ultimate illogic of the Pietist, Newtonian, and Whig position, it was readily subject to a radicalization that could end by serving the plans of the atheists, disguised or open, as well.

In any case, fear of giving aid and comfort to such atheism proved highly significant in guiding many Catholic circles to a particular appreciation for Boyle and Newton in their efforts to combine an experimental science, the practical study of nature, and the worship of a Creator God. Since the opponents of the Jesuits had veered towards Descartes, many of the priests of the Society, who already shared a Baconian and Newtonian love for physical sciences anyway, now turned down the pathway of a “practical Christianity” finding God in the experimentation with and pragmatic development of the fruits of nature. As much as Catholic Cartesians tied Descartes together with Augustine, they then tried to marry off Bacon and Newton with St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle.<sup>66</sup>

Unfortunately, the more that the approach of the Moderate Enlightenment was accepted and imitated, the more that Catholics lost a sense of the supernatural character of their Faith and what it is they most needed to do to fend off intensified attacks on its doctrinal integrity and mission.

---

<sup>66</sup> Van Kley, pp. 234-248, Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 751-780.

For, once again, an unexamined acceptance of Newton and his followers could never remain frozen at their initial and seemingly most Christian phase. An uncritical friendship entailed an opening to an outlook that we have seen quite readily lent itself to belief in a Deist rather than a personal God. Moreover, this same uncritical friendship introduced them to the other members of the Whig oligarchy who together made the Glorious Revolution. In ways that would be repeated all too often in the future, this meant that undiscerning Catholics always gained more “friends” by working with the Moderate Enlightenment spirit than first met the eye.

To begin with, they were introduced, on the intellectual front, to camaraderie with John Locke. Such friendship inevitably brought with it two problematic consequences: 1) acceptance of a notion of religious tolerance that Locke expressly excluded doctrine-rich Roman Catholics from enjoying; a religious tolerance that would threaten a total emasculation of the work of correcting nature and transforming it in Christ, even if papists were to be granted its version of freedom of worship; and, 2) exposure to an attack on universal ideas turning the very formulation of a Catholic doctrinal statement into a meaningless endeavor.

On the practical political level, adoption of the Newtonian vision also introduced the unwary to two other “unwanted guests”, the first of which was the enlightened Whig concept of government. I do not mean to say by this that Catholics were obliged to reject a system of checks and balances that had emerged as an historical fact of life in any given land. The problem here was not the constitutional structure of the government as such but the accompanying practical and ideological limitation of the public sphere of



## STATUS QUO

activity and victory of arbitrary, materialist, group and individual interests over the common good. Secondly, openness to the Whig spirit brought with it a friendship for British foreign policy. This, we know, made no distinction between a man like Louis XIV in his role as an unacceptable absolutist and Catholic monarchy in general. Moreover, it encouraged a freemasonic “big tent” that included radicals developing the naturalist logic in the Moderate Enlightenment position to a much more destructive degree than their perhaps unwitting Whig patrons.

Interestingly enough, there is an also very clearly documented enthusiasm for all of these extra “friends” among contemporary Catholic theologians, often based on what seemed to them to be solid intellectual and practical grounds. Perhaps most instructive in this regard was the seemingly irresistible attraction of John Locke. French Jesuits and influential Roman academic circles began to revere the teacher of religious tolerance and doctrinal destruction as an oracle—not because they grasped the fullness of his argument and agreed with it but because he was presented to them as the man most suitable for destroying Descartes, Cartesian mathematical ideology, and the Spinozan atheism and mechanical fatalism deemed by many to be their inevitable by-product; in short, because he was presented as a God fearing, modern empiricist in the line of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, along with Bacon, Boyle, and Newton.<sup>67</sup>

But the attraction certainly did not end with Locke. For, despite papal condemnation of such secret societies,

---

<sup>67</sup> Van Kley, pp. 234-248; Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 751-780.

membership in freemasonic lodges also became very popular among Catholics dedicated to gaining “common sense wisdom”. Hence, Catholic cultivation of Freemasonry, which began during Hapsburg involvement with the Grand Coalition fighting Louis XIV, continued long thereafter, and only slackened on the eve of the French Revolution, as the dangers of both the Moderate and Radical Enlightenment slowly began to be more appreciated by a wider audience.<sup>68</sup>

### *J. Success*

One final point must briefly be discussed in order to understand the weaknesses displayed by Catholics in the developing global war over the meaning of nature: the premium placed by everyone engaged in the battle on “success”. This emphasis was noticeable at the Council of Trent itself. All those truly interested in the work of Tridentine reform believed that any pastoral approach worthy of the name had to prove itself by yielding palpable results. Delivery of clear victories in the fight for improvement in the life of the Church and Christians was to be the mark of the difference of *this* council from its unsuccessful predecessors, trapped, as they were, by the hellish “traditions” of the Rut Triumphant. No council had said more about reform than Fifth Lateran under Julius II and Leo X, and none had achieved less. Trent could not be permitted to follow in its suit.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Phillips, pp. 1-99.

<sup>69</sup> On the new pastoral work, see Mayeur, VIII, 857-1028; IX, 309-349; X, 247-298; Jedin and Dolan, V, 441-442, 499-534.

## STATUS QUO

That being the case, each of the many contesting forces noted above developed a "cheering squad" seeking to demonstrate that it offered the best pathway to a Catholic triumph, while its opponents delivered little if anything of true value to the cause. By way of summary, let us recall that these competing guides included Ultramontanists and various defenders of Gallican and local episcopal rights; supporters of the prerogatives of sacred rulers ranging from the Most Christian King to the French *parlements* and the Divine Venetian Republic; promoters of a "Jesuitical", Tridentine, Baroque free will vision and a Jansenist sin and grace shaped outlook on life; and, finally, teachers basing themselves on the conclusions of speculative, positive, or natural theology. Couple together the passionate desire to demonstrate "success" with a confusion as to which authority should lead the campaign to achieve it; add to this the debate regarding what pastoral tools should be employed in the process. The result, even under the best of circumstances, had to be yet another crisis in the dramatic history of the work of the Word in history.

What was to make this crisis a much more troublesome one than ever before was the fact that the Achilles Heels described above clearly indicated that there existed in the Catholic camp major divisions over how to define the very character of "success" itself. While the whole spirit of Trent pointed to the conclusion that "success" would entail victory in the work of correcting and transforming nature in Christ, there were all too many competing Catholic forces whose approach, whether conscious or unconscious, seemed destined to define success according to the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is". These latter elements could

look to significant assistance from the now public and powerful Grand Coalition of the Status Quo that was eager to incorporate Catholic fellow travelers, alongside those coming from the Protestant world, openly into its ranks. Still, if their definition of Catholic success were to triumph, they would have to inflict a decisive defeat upon whatever it was that most clearly and substantively symbolized the vision of Trent. Their chance to do so now lay open before them.

# The Naturalist Revolution, the Implosion of the GCSQ, and the Troubled Beginnings of the Ninth Crusade

## *A. The Grand Coalition of the Status Quo and Reform Catholicism*

By this point, the reader has a clear idea of the new advance of the message of the Word made possible by “Tridentine” Catholicism. That “Tridentine” vision was, of course, merely the perennial teaching of the Church but better understood and freed from the seemingly unbreakable shackles of the late medieval Rut Triumphant. It was a vision that was promoted by a myriad of vibrant forces active in its service. Regardless of the diversity of its support, however, the Tridentine worldview was most symbolized in the eyes of

its opponents by the work of three forces: the Hapsburg Family, the Society of Jesus, and, eventually, due chiefly to its detestation by both Whig Britain and the Jansenist movement, the Kingdom of France as well. The Treaty of Westphalia permanently weakened Hapsburg Austria as an internationally threatening Tridentine culture bearer. And the War of the Spanish Succession, with the victory of the Bourbon candidate for the throne, ended the dynasty's ability to cause Catholic trouble from the Iberian Peninsula as well. That left the Society of Jesus and the Kingdom of France to humble or destroy before the proponents of "nature as is" could psychologically feel successful in their efforts to crush the spirit of Tridentine reform.

Readers are by now also fully aware of the large number and diversity of the members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo ready to be mobilized against that Tridentine ethos. The ranks of this coalition included both those who, in various ways, intellectually rejected the project of correcting the flaws of nature and transforming it in Christ as well as men who simply put specific practical obstacles in the path of implementation of the demands of the Word in history. Both Radical and Moderate Enlightenment naturalists were members of the anti-Word alliance, the first group openly, the second in a more quiet and subtle manner. So were ex-Protestants who had taken seriously the logical consequences of the doctrine of total depravity. But there were others who unwittingly played a role in the Coalition as fellow travelers, such as the Pietists, who no longer wished to discuss divisive doctrinal questions and therefore tended to reduce Christianity to a religion of practical, natural, common sense alone. And signing up for active service in the Christian

## REVOLUTION

fellow traveling unit they had formed were recruits from inside the Roman Catholic camp itself.

Opposition to the Tridentine, Baroque vision was offered by a variety of supporters of what has broadly been called Reform Catholicism, which emerged out of the quarrels rooted in the numerous “Achilles Heels” outlined in the previous chapter. Whatever their original grounds for lamenting Catholicism’s Tridentine manifestation might have been, all of the reformers in question ended by strengthening the “business as usual” concerns of “nature as is” in a way that proved to be highly useful to the goals of the openly enthusiastic members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.<sup>1</sup>

Regalist defenders of the “dignity” and the “rights” of sacred States often played a major role in the work of Reform Catholicism. Their chief theme was the need to combat the Ultramontanism flourishing in the pro-Tridentine camp and the papal-dominated Church this favored. Regalist-minded reformers, along with their local episcopal allies, were encouraged by the writings of a wide group of canonists, beginning with Zega-Bernard van Espen (1646-1728), author of the *Ius ecclesiasticum universum* (1700) in the Lowlands, passing through Johann Kaspar Barthel (1697-1771) and Georg Christoph Neller (1709-1783), and culminating in Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim (1701-1790), Auxiliary Bishop of Trier, who wrote underneath the pseudonym of Justinus Febronius. These canonists rejected the idea of an Ultramontanist Church and pressed bishops to defy Rome on the grounds of their apostolic call to be “popes in their own

---

<sup>1</sup> Mayeur, X, 1-88, 179-298; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 443-582.

dioceses". They also stressed both the State's divinely given right to concern itself with religion as well as its rationally-grounded responsibility for dealing with all aspects of man's being---including his "natural" spiritual needs. Nature's God required a secular, civic gendarme, aided in his policing measures by an army of ministers of that "natural" religion formerly known as Christianity. Marsilius of Padua could not have expressed himself more clearly.<sup>1</sup>

Other reformers generally worked with reference to a primary concern for "pastoral" questions. In consequence, they were eager to play down the importance of that doctrinal rigor that Trent felt to be essential to any solid guidance to practical work among the faithful. Such pastoral-minded Catholics also disliked mystical fervor. They viewed this as, at best, the product of psychologically overheated spirits, and, at worst, conducive to the moral aberrations connected with the Quietism of Miguel de Molinos (1628-1696), whose activities in Rome eventually provoked a European wide scandal.<sup>2</sup>

Whether these reformers were thinkers or statesmen, their approach was in almost every respect simply a more developed expression of a practical Erasmian or Pietist morality. They pointed to the fact that the Decalogue was accepted as a given by all the main parties to contemporary religious disputes. Moreover, they believed that anyone possessed of a "basic common sense" realized that society obviously called for the moral framework it now clearly provided to carry out its business in orderly fashion. This being the case, why dwell on more detailed theological

---

<sup>2</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 90, 125, 167, 440, 442.



## REVOLUTION

matters that could add nothing practical to the peace of a Christian commonwealth? Give a man the basic education to persevere in that moral code that was simply part of the fundamental heritage of all European societies, back this up with a more natural, more “nobly simple” liturgical and devotional life than was encouraged by the doctrine-obsessed, Tridentine, Baroque culture, and both the religious and secular order would be far better off.

French and Italian Oratorians, Dominicans, and Augustinians were all active in the anti-Tridentine ranks, although it was Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750), the Italian priest-historian, whose *Della regolata divozione dei cristianti* (1747) gave “the classic statement of Catholic reforming ideals in the eighteenth century”.<sup>3</sup> Every branch of Reform Catholicism was visibly represented and influential in Rome herself from the late 1600’s onwards. Oratorians of the *Chiesa nuova* provided ready recruits for its ranks, a major center for whose meetings was the so-called *Circolo dell’Archetto*. The cause of reform was certainly prevalent in the Eternal City by the reign of Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758), a canonist by profession and himself a proponent of the movement. Benedict’s Rome also included reformers of the stature of the Cardinal Secretary of State, Silvio Gonzaga (1690-1756), along with numerous other Princes of the Church, heads of religious orders, and scholars. One would not be far off the mark in saying that Rome herself, by the middle of the eighteenth century, had become openly embarrassed at Catholic “inadequacy” as a spiritual force and

---

<sup>3</sup> H.M. Scott, *Enlightened Absolutism*, p. 59.

was calling out for help from more serious students of God and man to remedy this scandal.<sup>4</sup>

Jansenists were very prominent among Reform Catholics, in Rome as much as elsewhere in Europe. Already by the latter part of the seventeenth century, primarily in order to divert attention from their doctrinal deviations, many supporters of their movement had turned their efforts to what might be construed as purely “pastoral” work. Those who did so often even denied the very existence of a Jansenist faction, claiming simply to be going about the business of Christian evangelization in line with the perennial tradition of the Church and—once again—much more successfully than their opponents. Enemies who continued to harass them on doctrinal grounds were accused of nourishing a jealous, perverse spirit of private vendetta and of being “schismatic” and “divisive” in their desire to stir up trouble where no grounds for it existed. Through their spiritual direction, the publication of catechisms and devotional works, translations of the liturgy, and other activities, hidden Jansenists insisted that they were merely seeking to form individual men and women ready to live and defend the orthodox Catholic Faith.

Of course the “purely pastoral” direction that they gave---which they refused to discuss on doctrinal grounds---still involved commitment to their peculiar mixture of Catholicism and Calvinist theology. Predictably, therefore, such pastoral guidance struck at the heart of the effort to correct and transform all of nature in accord with the full message of the Word in history. Pastoral Jansenism began with rigorous penitential practices and a reticence to allow sinful men to receive the communion that the Jesuits tended

---

<sup>4</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 443-590.

## REVOLUTION

to view as a crucial medicine ensuring growth in Christ rather than a reward for perfect behavior. It moved on to an assault on all the “arrogant”, “pompous” forms of “Jesuitical” Baroque practice in the name of noble simplicity, ancient Christian humility, and the demands of an individual, self-abasing, sincere conscience. Everything indicative of the “pride” of man and nature—which gradually included all higher culture—had to disappear from Catholic life if the goals of this school of pastoral formation were to be achieved. Thus, as the eighteenth century progressed, Jansenists thundered ever more loudly—but always, of course, on the “practical” as opposed to the doctrinal plane—against Latin, music, art, processions, Eucharistic devotions, feast days, the rosary, the way of the Cross, adoration of the Sacred Heart, and any project for any earthly mystical union with the Trinity.<sup>5</sup>

*B. The Grand Coalition and the Assault on the Jesuits*

Stirred by their passions, the arguments of their rhetoricians, and the encouragement of so many fellow travelers of the GCSQ from inside the Protestant and Catholic camps themselves, the eighteenth century Grand Coalition was ready to go on the march. It was to do so across the entire globe, in Asia and Latin America as well as Europe. In the process, it would employ every tool useful for imposing the impassioned will of a determined minority upon a confused majority. All of the destructive consequences would be justified as the satisfaction of either the rational wishes of

---

<sup>5</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 232-435, 443-582.

"nature" or the fulfillment of the democratic wishes of the population and the dictates of the outraged consciences of individuals. It began its demolition derby by focusing on a simple, easily defined, and readily demonized enemy: the Society of Jesus.

Of course the Jesuits and Jesuit innovations had been under attack since their very birth. Admittedly, many of those Catholics who opposed the Society had rational, nuanced, and understandable grievances against it. But those whose spirit really dominated the assault railed against the Jesuits simply because they were so visible a symbol of that "Tridentine, Baroque Catholicism" that was merely another and more brilliant development of Christian understanding of the message of the Word in history. It was this corrective and transforming message that was the true target of their ire; this that made them allies with every supporter of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo from Isocrates to Marsilius of Padua, to Locke, to Kant, and to Rousseau.<sup>6</sup>

What was it that the Society was *not* chastised for supporting? Its emphasis on individual prayer life and reflection was disliked by more traditional religious orders whose members preferred to worship God in common. Regalists, Gallicans, Febronians, and the canonical writers in alliance with them loathed their outspoken devotion to the Papacy. Reforming prelates, extolling the memory of the anti-Jesuit activity of Bishop Juan Palafox y Mendoza (1600-1659)

---

<sup>6</sup> For the attack on the Jesuits, see Mayeur, IX, 755-1157; X, 179-191; on consequences for the missions, see IX, 755-834; X, 89-178; Van Kley, pp. 72-367; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 235-435, 443-582; on rivalries and the missions, see, 276-317; Im Hof, pp. 174-180; Lacouture, pp. 325-365, 400-477; Bangert, pp. 387-489.

## REVOLUTION

of Puebla in Mexico, saw in the Society the symbol of the whole of the regular clergy, pampered by Rome in their sabotage of the legitimate power of local ordinaries and the work of their diocesan priests. Proponents of noble simplicity tore into the Jesuit understanding of the relationship of grace and free will, which they correctly deemed responsible for much of the "pompous" doctrinal, mystical, liturgically rich Baroque culture they deplored. Jesuit inspired culture was rejected as an obstacle to that common sense and Scripture-supported education and moral development producing the practical social improvements that Catholic reformers more and more recognized as the pinnacle of "spiritual" growth. Dominican Thomists and Augustinian friars, the latter very much influenced by the *Historia pelagiana* and *Vindiciae augustiniana*e of their confrère, Cardinal Enrico Noris (1631-1704), happily joined in the assault. But most important to the coalition was the entire army of French, Belgian, Dutch, German, Italian, and Spanish Jansenists, whose varied divisions, at different moments and in different places, emphasized all the above complaints.

Grand Coalition warriors of "common sense", "nature", "conscience", "simplicity", "local, national, and regal dignity", and "liberation from Jesuitical chains" grew even more belligerent in their attitude towards the sons of St. Ignatius due to the Society's seemingly total victory over the Jansenists through the publication of *Unigenitus* in 1713. Church and State enforcement of this document, particularly in France, called forth a great number of different strategies and punishments. These ranged from deposition and expulsion of Jansenist bishops and priests to demands for certificates from the dying that demonstrated their use of

approved, non-Jansenist confessors before permission for administration of Extreme Unction and burial in consecrated cemeteries was granted. *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques* catalogued, but in its own inimitable and often highly mendacious way, all the suffering that these stringent disciplinary measures undoubtedly caused. It drilled home the argument that the Jesuits, along with the popes, kings, bishops, priests, and Tridentine, Baroque Catholicism encouraging them, represented the essence of both blasphemy and tyranny.<sup>7</sup>

Missionary quarrels in China proved to be a highly useful tool for humbling the Society of Jesus, even after *Unigenitus* made direct assault on their position in the grace and free will dispute more difficult.<sup>8</sup> The Celestial Kingdom had provided a focus for European discussion of evangelization from the middle of the 1600's onwards. It was at that time that Jesuit missionary tactics, approved by the Papacy although contested within the Society itself, were brought vigorously into question by Spanish Dominicans and Franciscans who were also toiling in the Chinese vineyard. The debate raged on into the next century. Eventually it involved a large number of individuals and groups, including ordinary members of the Society as well as those working as scholar-courtiers in the Imperial City, mendicants, the Sorbonne, disciples of the Paris Mission Seminary active as Vicars Apostolic in the Asian theater in competition with the Jesuits, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and even the Papacy itself. Nevertheless, it was the Jansenists and the Jansenist spirit that tied all these diverse elements together and relentlessly guided the propaganda campaign they

---

<sup>7</sup> Van Kley, pp. 94-97, 104-289.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 303-317.

## REVOLUTION

jointly inspired, demonizing the Jesuits in the process. Disputes regarding China thus exposed educated Europeans to the backbiting still prevalent among many of those responsible for spreading the Gospel of Love—even after the “official” Religious Wars had ended.

Perhaps more importantly still, while excoriating the Jesuits for missionary strategies that were said to be too “nature friendly” to be fully Catholic in character, the China wars also pointed to the possibility of the existence of a successful “atheistic” society that supporters of the Radical Enlightenment could exploit for their own purposes. All of this emerged from the debate over the specifics of the so-called “Chinese Rites”—ceremonies in honor of Confucius and the ancestral dead--and the suitability for Christian use of the native Chinese “names” for God.<sup>9</sup>

More than one hundred thirty books on the subject--an astonishing number for the time--were published in France alone between 1660 and 1714. Were such rites merely natural marks of honor akin to saluting a flag, or were they actually acts of pagan worship? Were the terms used by the Chinese to describe their concept of divinity valid starting points from which to leap to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or were they dead ends pulling the Christian vision downwards into a pantheistic-materialistic swamp? What about Confucianism itself, the grand system underlying the whole ethos of the Empire and its administration? Did it involve Taoist and Buddhist speculations and practices? If so, were these susceptible to allegorical Christian interpretation or

---

<sup>9</sup> Phillips, pp. 240-252; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 303-317; Bangert, pp. 357-369; von Pastor, XXXIV, 66-92.

editing, along the lines of what Catholic thinkers and missionaries had done with much Greek, Roman, and barbarian thought and custom? Was the entire Confucianist school basically a pagan religious construct or a secular philosophical-ethical system that meshed together happily with the comparably powerful and positivist Chinese legal tradition?

A number of participants in the debate about Confucianism, the names of God, and the Chinese Rites in general emphasized an underlying atheism in the dominant native political-social vision. But here, as the Jesuit missionary Louis Le Comte (1655-1728) worriedly noted, lay both exaggeration and a danger with consequences far beyond anything related to specific Chinese issues. For European theologians had always insisted that atheism was actually an unthinkable position, as every man had the instinct for God written in his soul. They had ascribed disbelief to a pure perversion of the will, a nonsense that made any hope for an ordered society impossible. But if one accepted the notion that atheism *was* thinkable in the sophisticated Chinese intellectual world and that it sustained the greatest non-European society, the whole apologetic of the necessity of religion for ordered community life would be shaken.

Indeed, with the decisions taken against the Jesuit approach in China from the time of Pope Clement XI (1700-1721) to Benedict XIV (1740-1758), it *was* so shaken. Voltaire (1694-1778) gave immediate testimony to its secularizing implications by breaking with the traditional western manner of discussing the history of the world in relation to that of salvation, beginning his own global historical study with China. Here, the atheist society was not only shown to be



## REVOLUTION

possible, but (erroneously) given priority in time as well. As A. Kors writes:<sup>10</sup>

In the heat of the polemic...positions lost their nuances, and a concert of voices insisted that what most educated French took to be the most learned minds of the most civilized nation outside Europe were 'atheists' pure and simple...Its own Church would come to insist that this was not a theoretical possibility, but a historical fact. If one accepted the widely circulated view of the excellence of Confucian ethics and the official determination by both Rome and the Faculty of Theology at Paris that Confucianism was atheistic, this conclusion followed ineluctably.

### *C. The GCSQ, the Jesuits, and the Socio-Political Assault*

By the middle decades of the eighteenth century, Jansenists and their allies had succeeded in convincing many people that the Jesuits, with their influential cheering squads, were promoters of both tyranny and atheism—an atheism that nevertheless somehow worked to maintain the highly admired Chinese Empire—at one and the same time. They had even felt compensated somewhat for their repression by

---

<sup>10</sup> Phillips, p. 247; pp. 240-252; on China, see Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 588-589, *Enlightenment Contested*, pp. 590-696.

*Unigenitus* in seeing Loyola's "papal army" chastised for its missionary "errors" at the hands of its own commander in Rome. But what was still needed for the complete humiliation of the Society and, with it, the excoriation of the whole Tridentine, Baroque, Catholic Establishment, was socio-political pressure. That pressure was to emerge in the years after the War of the Austrian Succession through a desire for fundamental change in many of the Catholic countries of Europe; through the ravages of a middle to late century "reform fever" with terribly detrimental effects for the mission of the Word in history – all long before the revolution in France had even begun.<sup>11</sup>

As a necessary prelude to a plunge into this topic, let us note that some—even much—of what might pass at first glance for an eighteenth-century frontal attack on Christianity was not really such in the final analysis. For Christendom, with its many diverse corporate elements, ranging from parish sodalities through guilds, religious and crusading orders, universities, international confraternities, up to the different branches of the royal and papal courts themselves, did, admittedly, provide shelter for an all too numerous collection of human concerns and ambitions overly dedicated to "business as usual" demands of "nature as is", alongside and closely intermingled with those which were divine. It is always tempting to enlist theology in the defense and promotion of what might be merely self-interested goals—once again, dictates of the *Rut Triumphant*—thus lending an exalted, sacred flavor to something historically venerable but unjustifiably parochial and even totally natural in character.

---

<sup>11</sup> On the background, see Scott, pp. 1-53; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 443-582.

## REVOLUTION

An attack on ramparts that serve to protect purely or mostly human treasures but which are nevertheless held together with much shoddy theological cement may understandably seem to be an assault on Christendom. In practice, however, it might actually be an aid in the liberation of the sacred from decadent secularizing incrustations. What is hidebound, overblown, and grasping is not inherently Christian due to a long-term association with the Christian name. We have repeatedly seen that a lunge at the customary and the grandiose, while always risky and psychologically distressing to powerful individuals and groups, is not necessarily a thrust at the Christian heart itself.

Many servants of eighteenth century governments in Catholic Europe were convinced of the desperate need to implement certain educational, scientific, economic, administrative, and legal changes for the benefit of society-at-large. Ecclesiastical privileges and financial exemptions of labyrinthine proportions often stood in their way, alongside the corporate prerogatives of countless secular institutions. Did the State have any right to seek to modify this situation? Was a dismantling of specific aspects of the existing corporate order, religious as well as secular, ever justifiable? It is difficult to answer this question with an uncompromising "no" without jeopardizing the very *raison d'être* of the civil authority; without baptizing and declaring essential to the plan of God every primarily natural desire that every corporate body with some tie to the Church or to a Christian-inspired tradition has at one time or another succeeded in satisfying. Such a "no" would be entirely closed to a pilgrim spirit ready to admit the need for ever new steps in the ever changeable dance of life.

Nevertheless, middle to late century pre-revolutionary statesmen went further than the mere assertion of the necessary role of the State in coordinating a corporate society for the sake of the common good. Many passed beyond the limits of an arrogant unilateral reform program that *could* have been totally justifiable if undertaken in cooperation with the Church. A startling number of statesmen ventured into the work of ridding everyday life of truly indispensable sacred elements; supernatural influences that could not be eliminated without a substantive Christianity and its corrective and transforming mission themselves disappearing entirely from the public arena.<sup>12</sup>

Economic resentment, defeat in war, and natural disasters drove most Catholic lands down the pathway of reform by the middle years of the eighteenth century. For Portugal and Spain, inability to resist British commercial pressures at home and in the Americas were major incitements to change. Austria shared similar anti-British sentiments since the reign of Charles VI (1711-1740). She was, however, pushed to tinkering with her own system most urgently by her bad military showing, first against the Ottoman Empire in the 1730's, and even more against Prussia in the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and the subsequent Seven Years' War (1757-1763). Severe crop failures that seemed unnecessarily destructive, given the state of contemporary science and technology, led certain Italian and German lands down the same pathway. A desire to be able to tackle these problems with strong State power appears to have been the chief motivating factor in the reform programs of many Italians, particularly those of graduates of the University of

---

<sup>12</sup> Mayeur, IX, 11-206; X, 7-88, also, 179-298; Scott, pp. 1-74.

## REVOLUTION

Pavia, like the Tuscan-Neapolitan statesman Bernardo Tanucci (1678-1783). Such a desire also strongly influenced the contemporary Electors Emmerich Joseph (1707-1774) of Mainz and Clemens Wenceslaus (1739-1812) of Trier, important bishops of the Roman Church though they were. France responded to comparable stimuli with similar reactions, though her complicated story will require special and separate treatment later in this chapter.

More than anything else, those kings and ministers of state gripped by reform fever were guided in their pursuit of change by the standard of "success"---that psychologically powerful slogan that sophism has always turned into an "either-or" measuring rod favorable to its work on behalf of the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" and destructive to that of its Logos-hunting enemies. "Success" seemed easy to identify by mid-century. Everything Britain touched from the time of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) appeared to turn to political and even literal gold. Prussia was similarly blessed, and at no time more than in the reign of Frederick II "the Great" (1740-1786), son of the "soldier-king", Frederick William I (1713-1740). What, the rest of Europe asked, was their secret?<sup>13</sup>

On the one hand, that secret was nothing other than the willingness to embrace each political and material opportunity that a fallen nature offered; to apply all of one's available strength to exploit good fortune, regardless of obstacles arising from existing alliances or generally agreed upon norms of international behavior. One cannot help but share the contemporary astonishment over British diplomatic

---

<sup>13</sup> Scott, pp. 55-288.

and commercial audacity; its willingness to provoke Spain, France, and Austria without just cause and then react with moral indignation when these countries responded in kind. Neither can one be surprised that many Catholics were shocked by Frederick the Great's open, cynical admission that truth played no role in the governance of men, and by his readiness to act without any just cause, as with his sudden aggression against Austria in Silesia.

Still, kings and ministers wondered, perhaps the outrage of Louis XV (1715-1774) over illegitimate British colonial incursions in the Americas and Frederick's diplomatic shenanigans, as well as Maria Theresa's (1740-1780) horror at the Prussian king's eagerness to dismember Poland, merely expressed the bewilderment of outmaneuvered and decaying powers. The telling French expression, "to work for the King of Prussia", indicating laboring without pay and originating out of experiences with Frederick during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), once again underlines the basic attitude of the rest of Europe to both Britain and Prussia: no matter what *we* do, *they* win. Britain and Prussia must, therefore, hold the key to effective successful reform.

Maria Theresa (1740-1780) began instituting reform measures in Austria. Joseph II (co-ruler, 1765-1780; sole ruler, 1780-1790) and the Austrian Chancellor, Wenzel Anton Kaunitz (1711-1794), who had imbibed cameralist and Pietist principles in foreign schools, were still more vigorous promoters of Hapsburg administrative, fiscal, and educational changes along Prussian lines. Austrian Prussophilia also influenced smaller German states, many of which had already made tentative moves down the same highway, following the model of co-operative activity offered by the Dublin Society. Prussian methods and ideas

## REVOLUTION

penetrated from Hapsburg Austria into its lands in Italy, though the entire peninsula was itself filled with men like the Neapolitan, Antonio Genovesi (1713-1769), who pointed to the English experience for their primary guidance.<sup>14</sup>

Portugal's secularization under José I (1750-1777) is forever associated with the influence of his Prime Minister, Sebastiao José de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), known as the Count of Oeiras from 1759, and as the Marquis de Pombal after 1770. Pombal became a member of a British-style "confraternity" established by the Ericeiras Family, the *Academia dos Illustrados*, in 1733. He drank in more British influence during his diplomatic work in London (1739-1744), at which time he was admitted to the Royal Society. Pombal completed his reform education during a second assignment in Vienna in the 1740's, just as Prussian fever was taking hold of the Hapsburg Crown.

King Charles III of Spain (1759-1788) had already gained a reputation as a reformer while ruler of the Two Sicilies (1734-1759). His work in Italy was aided and continued by men like the regalist Tanucci. In Spain, other allies also proved to be useful in the effort to redirect society to the primary goal of practical, constructive labor. One of them, Pedro Rodriguez de Campomanes (1723-1803), in his *Discourse on the Encouragement of Popular Industry* (1774) argued for the universal spread of the English-style cooperative movement as the best means of promoting economic efficiency. This movement was mediated in Spain through organizations

---

<sup>14</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 443-508; T. Blanning, *Joseph II* (Longman, 1994), 27-101, 161-208; C. Ingrao, *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 150-219; Scott, pp. 55-74, 145-243.

such as the Basque Economic Society of Friends of the Country, founded in 1763.<sup>15</sup>

Wherever regalists took up the banner of practical regeneration, they found that Reform Catholics of various stripes would enthusiastically fall in step alongside them, often pressing them to advance still further in their assault. Oratorians like the Portuguese Luís António Verney (1713-1792), whose *O Verdadeiro metodo de estudar* (1746) had called for the introduction of a type of instruction "intended to be useful to the Republic and to the Church commensurate to the style and necessity of Portugal",<sup>16</sup> was of central assistance to Pombal's educational policies. The Spanish bishops José Clíment (1706-1781) and Felipe Bertrám (1704-1783), as well as the Benedictine Benito Jeronimo Feijoo (1676-1764), author of the *Teatro critico universal*, proved invaluable to Charles III's reform program, in education as well as in other fields of activity. Johann Ignaz Felbiger (1724-1788), the Augustinian Abbot of Sagan in Prussian Silesia and a noted educational reformer, was imported to Vienna in 1774 to supervise the alterations in Austria, which provided its own Benedictine apologist for change in the person of Franz Stephan Rautenstrauch (1734-1785).

Muratori's influence over reform fever was palpable. Two of his disciples, Johann Joseph Trautson (1751-1757) and that Christoph Anton Migazzi (1757-1803) who ensured the

---

<sup>15</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 161-172, 238-270; W, Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-century Spain* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1979); in Italy in general, see F. Venturi, *Italy and the Enlightenment* (N.Y.U., 1972); Scott, pp. 55-118.

<sup>16</sup> Scott, p. 104.



## REVOLUTION

translation of the Italian's major work into German in 1763, became Archbishops of Vienna and, thus, advisors to reforming Hapsburgs. But Jansenists were not far behind Muratori in the strength of their impact. A Jansenist trio--the natural law theorist Carlo Antonio Martini (1726-1800), along with Maria Theresa's physician, Gerard van Swieten (1700-1762), and confessor, Ignaz Müller (1713-1782)--was most conspicuous in Austria. The University of Pavia was a conduit for practical Jansenist support of reform in Italy, though its most famous active proponent was the Bishop of Pistoia and Prato, Scipione de' Ricci (1741-1809), himself a close collaborator of the secularizing Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany (1765-1790). Jansenists from the reform circles of Feijoo, Clíment, Bertrám, and the historian-philosopher, Gregorio Mayáns y Siscar (1699-1781), flourished in Spain and assisted Charles III's activities there.

Rome herself frequently stimulated or accepted the results of reform fever, depending upon pope and pontificate. Encyclicals on varied matters signaled papal support for change. Concordat after concordat, some forced, some bought, still others willingly conceded, abandoned Church prerogatives to State authorities in Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, and elsewhere, allowing them to make their desired alterations. Once again, the practical reformer might be excused for thinking that the Papacy itself saw the justice of securing or submitting to secular help in order to control a voracious regular clergy and a self-interested traditional lay

elite that led people away from useful activity, both divine and human.<sup>17</sup>

But what reforms were actually undertaken? As noted above, many were of an administrative, fiscal, and legal character, concerned with bureaucratic efficiency, tax collection, and the reduction of expenses. Even if generally unilateral and insensitive in their planning and implementation, they did not necessarily impinge upon the essential spiritual rights of the Church. Where unjust, they were often unjust regarding primarily secular matters. Moreover, it must be admitted that certain changes that even did impinge upon the spiritual realm ultimately helped to alleviate undeniable abuses which Trent itself had sought to address, one of them being the exaggeratedly early and easy entry into religious life of men and women who later regretted lives dedicated to what had really not been free will choices in the first place.

Others reforms, however, entailed an unbearable tightening of regalist restrictions on all Church activities, spiritual as well as secular, according to the naturalist, secularizing plan. This plan, as the dynasties of Europe and their ministers to a large degree conceived it, dictated devoting the primary attention of a State to military matters. Such a project demanded corresponding controls on Church teachings and activities that were too peaceful, otherworldly, and costly in character to allow for the victory of a dynasty in a world filled with belligerent spirits.

---

<sup>17</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 443-582; von Pastor, Vols. XXXIV-XL; see XXV, 196-200 on Muratori as historian; also, Mayeur, IX, 151, 237, 276, 1121, 1127, 1146; X, 32-48.

## REVOLUTION

Unacceptable measures included the closing of contemplative monasteries, the abolition of “unproductive” feast days, devotions, and liturgical ceremonies, the prohibition of confraternities not engaged in “practical” work as *ipso facto* “useless”, the expropriation of properties supporting such “pointless” groups and their activities, the civil usurpation of controls over marriage questions, and State direction of seminary education. This last reform, in places like Austria, was integral to the overall effort of the civil authority to train the secular clergy as a Pietist morals police in the Prussian manner and the consequent need to prohibit non-governmental (especially papal) spiritual influence over the formation of priests. Such changes were repeatedly promoted and implemented by prince-bishops as well as lay rulers, while popes like Clement XIV (1769-1774) cooperated, willingly and unwillingly, in radical reform. They savaged religious orders and avoided “insulting” the “spiritual” activities of the secularizing Catholic monarchs of Europe by abandoning the traditional Holy Thursday catalogue of State abuses in the religious sphere altogether.<sup>18</sup>

Most symbolic of all these reforms was the almost total annihilation of the Society of Jesus.<sup>19</sup> This took place at first on the national level, through truly Stalinist libels, purges, imprisonments, expulsions, and deportations, causing great physical pain for a large number of individuals, many of

---

<sup>18</sup> Jedin, VI, 443-582; von Pastor, Vols. XXXIV, XXXV, 294-476; XXXVI, 143-504.

<sup>19</sup> Van Kley, pp. 156-159, 300-301; Bangert, pp. 387-439; von Pastor, Vols. XXXVI, 143-504; XXXIV, XXXVII, and XXXVIII, *passim*.

them old and long highly respected in their varied fields of study. Such horrors began with Portugal, Spain, and their colonies throughout the globe, and eventually included Italian States and the Kingdom of France as well. Pope Clement XIV decreed the universal destruction of the Society, imprisoning its last General under increasingly brutal conditions, although the utility of individual Jesuits as scholars and educators kept the order unofficially alive in places like Prussia and Russia until a happier day finally dawned. But the interim disaster, for Catholic education, Catholic devotional life, and basic Catholic self-respect was incalculable.

Whatever the specific measures dictated by reform fever, its truly offensive aspect was the *spirit* in which they were adopted: an ultimately closed-minded and self-interested spirit which, nevertheless, passed itself off with a good story—as a public-minded, philanthropic attack on a meaningless obscurantism. Pombal's *Dedução cronológica analítica* and *Relação abbreviada* laid all secular problems at the doorstep of a Church dominated by Jesuit irrationality---and this at a time when fellow reformers like Joseph II were scattering scholarly Bollandist libraries as useless scrap paper and van Swieten was rejecting the Jesuit-encouraged use of smallpox vaccine. Love of mankind led reformers simultaneously both to deep anguish over religious intolerance as well as summary condemnation of a myriad of Jesuit priests to a decades-long living death in monstrous Portuguese prisons. Popular anti-reform protests were attributed to Jesuit conspiratorial activity and brutally suppressed on that basis. Meanwhile, "the People" as a whole were repeatedly said to benefit by the reforms in question: such "practical" measures as the tossing of aged

## REVOLUTION

contemplatives into the street, an end of price controls in grain and the prohibition of evening outdoor diversions that kept men up too late at night, limiting their sleep and, hence, their productivity on the following morning. The “reform movement” rejected contemptuously and out of hand the idea that Catholic Christianity had the ability to say anything sensible and practical. Catholicism was there to learn, not to teach, and the teaching it was obliged to swallow displayed that same union of sweet rhetoric, practical cruelty, and blatant money-grubbing that had been a central characteristic of most revolutionary movements since the twelfth century.<sup>20</sup>

Outright supporters of the Enlightenment, both Radical and Moderate, were involved in all of these changes, although the enthusiastic backing of Jansenists and Reformed Catholics made the concerns of the open naturalists hard to separate from the others. Voltaire found it easy to utilize the writings of Reform Catholics in his more radical, post-1750 work, and men such as Joseph von Sonnenfels (1733-1817), one of Joseph II’s educational czars, could move back and forth from the Reform Catholic to the anti-Catholic Enlightenment camp without notable difficulty.<sup>21</sup>

Many of the religious proponents of practical change and Reform Catholicism were, however, ultimately quite well meaning believers. Upon seeing that governmental reform was moving down an openly anti-Christian direction, they became honestly frightened for the future. Archbishop Migazzi and Maria Theresa, shocked by the intensity of the anti-Catholicism of her more radical son, Joseph II, were

---

<sup>20</sup> Scott, pp. 55-243.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 189-288; Jedin and Dolan, VI, 475.

among them. So was Pope Pius VI (1775-1799), who also has to be generally counted as an advocate of reform. His famous journey to Vienna in 1782 to urge the Austrian Emperor to retract his secularizing Edict of Toleration, illustrated the extent of this deepening papal concern.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, objections of repentant pragmatists and reformers got almost nowhere. The Migazzis of the movement had badly underestimated the way in which their own confused intellectual and spiritual statements had deprived them of logical consistency when wishing to bridle more radical elements. The pre-revolutionary Revolution could not be halted by their action. Mass resistance in places like Belgium, stimulated by a mixture of "gut" parochial and religious feeling, did much more to stop it. Still, by that time, the whole Catholic understanding of political and social life and its relation to God had received a tremendous and seemingly irrevocably jolt. And the worst was yet to come.

#### *D. The GCSQ and the Assault on Catholic France*

Good stories regarding the foundation of a nation, both the false along with the accurate ones, do indeed play a practical role in the life of any given people. Foundation stories concerning the Kingdom of France, whatever their obvious flaws, did relate two basic truths regarding its history. The first was the fact that France's earliest origins as a historically important power lay with the acceptance by her leaders of the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. The second was that the Capetian Dynasty had cemented this

---

<sup>22</sup> Jedin and Dolan, VI, 481; Blanning, pp. 39, 44, 45, 100, 162; Ingraio, pp. 166, 189, 199.

## REVOLUTION

union still further by associating itself with the crusading vision that underlay the great reform movement of the High Middle Ages and the brilliant achievements accompanying its new ascent of Mount Tabor.

Despite the evils of Philip the Fair, the Gallican regalism of the New Monarchy under the Valois, and the belligerent, centralizing, and secularizing tactics of the Bourbons and the *bon Français*, something of the commitment to the underlying truths of the foundation story always remained alive within segments of the Court as well as in the country at large. If a Frenchman were a believing Catholic, he might proudly argue that St. Louis IX was praying for his nation in heaven. In fact, personal royal commitment in some ways seemed to grow in the course of the eighteenth century, justifying the steadfastness of that segment of the *dévot* party that had always remained loyal to the monarchy and its policies.

Louis XIV, both due to the influence of his second wife, the very Catholic Madame de Maintenon (1635-1719), as well as to his own intuitive dislike of Jansenism, cemented the nation's doctrinal unity with the Roman Pontiffs. Yes, Louis XV's unending sensual escapades, which prevented his reception of Holy Communion and made it impossible for him to play his necessary public role as a sacred monarch, did much damage to the monarchy's religious reputation. Nevertheless, this in no way blocked him either from pursuing a policy that was as Catholic friendly as the very volatile circumstances of his reign and the bitter divisions within his own Court made possible. Nor did it prevent him from understanding and attempting to fulfill his duty to defend the common good in a land of great corporate diversity. And, finally, in Louis XVI (1773-1794), the Church

and the royalist segment of the *dévot* party found a firm believer and a man who, however limited he might have been intellectually, was morally above reproach.<sup>23</sup>

In short, the French Monarchy, its abundant failures notwithstanding, was, in the days before its destruction, in many respects precisely the kind of Catholic target that the enemies of the Word needed to destroy before their victory over the “Tridentine” vision could be considered in any way to be symbolically complete. As befits a force that should be open to the full message of Christ in the pilgrim dance of life, the Court of that venerable kingdom was proving itself to be both doctrinally committed and yet ready to experiment on the socio-political level with all that the natural world around it offered. Ironically, it was perhaps too uncritically ready to indulge in political and social experimentation in an environment more subject to the dictates of the *Zeitgeist* than the good of the monarchy—and the nation as a whole—actually permitted.<sup>24</sup> But explaining the peculiar situation of Catholicism, the monarchy, and France in general demands a return to the developing story of the Jansenist movement.

We have seen that that second wing of the *dévot* party in which the Jansenists militated went steadily down the path of radical opposition to the established system. With both the Papacy as well as the vast bulk of the French bishops working against them, the Jansenists obviously could not rest secure either in their former Ultramontanism or in a Gallicanism relying on native prelates for protection against the

---

<sup>23</sup> Mayeur, IX, 113-183, 301-410; X, 7-88, 179-288; Van Kley, pp. 114-122, 139-142; Schama, pp. 210-211; J.W. Merrick, *The Desacralization of the French Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century* (Louisiana State, 1990); Antoine, *passim*.



## REVOLUTION

pretensions of Rome. To make matters worse, they had discovered that a Gallicanism based on the support of the king had proven to offer an equally unsuitable protection. The Papacy, the local episcopacy, and the monarchy were all firmly united against them.

On the other hand, the law courts, the *parlements*, were also bitterly angry with the king and the vast majority of the French bishops. They were furious with them for three reasons: for abandoning the “Gallican liberties” in the appeal for papal judgment against the Jansenists that had resulted in *Unigenitus*; for their support for Jesuit “agents of a foreign court”; and for repeatedly attempting to repress their own legitimate role in what we would call the judicial review of legislation. Moreover, many members of the lower ranks of the secular clergy were also disposed to rebellion against the decisions of king and prelates. They were upset both by the unbearably tight controls that the monarchy had allowed the bishops to exercise over their ecclesiastical careers in exchange for episcopal subservience to the court, as well as by their total exclusion from all deliberation in French Church affairs. Jansenists moved to gain a support from both of these forces, just as their leaders were disposed, voluntarily, to offer it to them. And this alliance of Jansenists, *parlements*, and lower clergy against popes, kings, bishops, and Jesuits proved to be a powerful and subversive one indeed – even if stronger wills ultimately led it down directions that it did not itself “choose” to go.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Venturi, pp. 351-376; Schama, pp. 183-247.

<sup>25</sup> Van Kley, pp. 72-248; Schama, pp. 96-121.

The history of the Kingdom of France in the years between the death of Louis XIV in 1715 and the Revolution of 1789 involves twists and turns in the war of these contesting alliances that require a book of their own to outline.<sup>26</sup> Philippe d'Orleans (1674-1723), Regent during the minority of Louis XV, presided over a general reaction to the policies of the previous reign and therefore brought about a temporary relaxation of the monarchy's efforts to control the Jansenists and the *parlements*. The consequent disruption of monarchical power swiftly resulted in Philippe's recognition of the need to return to past restrictions upon them. Such controls then gave way to renewed efforts to satisfy anti-monarchical and anti-Jesuit forces when the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), the Seven Years War (1756-1763), and the financial difficulties associated with them, seemed to require concessions guaranteeing a solid national unity. These concessions having proved counterproductive, stricter restraints on the subversive coalition were once again rigidly imposed. Attempts to revive or weaken the assault on the Jansenists and the *parlements* were met with angry and often violent reactions on the part of all concerned, friend and foe alike.

Still, it was the anti-papal, anti-Jesuit, and anti-monarchical faction that excelled in cultivation of rage and violence. Here, more than anywhere else in the eighteenth century, one finds a true "War of Words against the Word" in full swing. Vilification became the stuff of daily political

---

<sup>26</sup> See Van Kley and Schama, *passim*; also, P. Chaunu, M. Foisil, and F. de

Noirfontaine, *Le basculement religieux de Paris au xviii siècle* (Fayard, 1998); Antoine, pp. 229-351, 567-907.

## REVOLUTION

discourse. "Sincerity", "conscience", "nature", and accusations of despotism, atheism, and subservience to foreign interests were invoked with wild abandon. Historical myths concerning the role of the *parlements* in the life of the French nation were treated as absolute truths.

These legends were perhaps best represented by Louis-Adrien Le Paige's (1712-1802) *Historical Letters on the Essential Functions of the Parlement, on the Rights of Peers, and on the Fundamental Laws of the Realm* (1753-1754), along with his *Letter on the Lits de Justice* (1754). Such writings illustrated the strength of the Jansenist-judiciary alliance and once again demonstrated how a "high-minded lie" making claims to a distinguished pedigree could be used to bend nature to the demands of strong-willed contemporary hearts. They drilled in the argument that only the "sincerity" of the Jansenist-minded law courts, whose role was traced back to their "foundation" in the forests of Merovingian France, could properly guide both the religious and political life of the nation, defending it from "absolutism", "despotism", and "tyranny". They taught that only the *parlement*, with their Jansenist allies, were worthy of the name of "patriot" in a land where foreign interests, reflected in the influence of despotic popes, casuist Spanish and Italian Jesuits, and a wicked woman bred by the still loathed Hapsburg Dynasty, Marie Antoinette, clearly dominated.<sup>27</sup>

In periods of strength, when national unity for war purposes was required, this alliance was pampered by the monarchy, which permitted it to persecute Catholic bishops and priests, driving them into exile from their dioceses and

---

<sup>27</sup> Van Kley, pp. 141-176, 203-210, 262-270; Schama, pp. 96-182.

their parishes. In periods of weakness, when the court followed the normal dictates of its Catholic mind and heart, functionaries of the *parlements* resorted to judicial “strikes” that ground the legal machinery of France to a halt. These strikes then provoked royal interventions that were chastised as still further examples of a “despotism” whose most palpable symbol more and more became the fortress of the Bastille in Paris. Aside from impacting upon the religious question, the influence of men like Le Paige and the parliamentary obstructionism he advocated helped mightily to cripple the legitimate, experimental, and often quite innovative efforts of the monarchy to make necessary reforms that might effectively have dealt with a threatening national bankruptcy. For whether this perceived approaching economic disaster was real or imaginary, it was true that nothing serious could be accomplished to handle it in the atmosphere of the battle of absolute evil against absolute good that the Jansenist and parliamentary word merchants worked unceasingly to foster.<sup>28</sup>

Under these circumstances, supporters of the Enlightenment were forced to a painful choice of their own.<sup>29</sup> In theory, none of them, whether leaning towards the radical or moderate naturalism of the movement, were friends of Bourbon Absolutism. One of their number, the Baron Charles de Montesquieu (1689-1755), was a leading proponent of the kind of “constitutionalism” that seemed to support parliamentary objectives. And even if Montesquieu’s

---

<sup>28</sup> Chaunu, pp. 153-311; Antoine, pp. 567-907; Schama, pp. 96-182.

<sup>29</sup> Van Kley, pp. 75-76, 234-248, 252, 299-301; Chaunu, pp. 312-470; Schama, pp. 107-110.

## REVOLUTION

historically and sociologically influenced approach veered far away from the universal natural law vision that most mainstream *philosophes* preferred, permitting him to justify a diversity of political systems where they would wish to find but one, the parliamentary-Jansenist coalition included more acceptable thinkers as well. The Abbé Claude Mey (dates unknown) and Gabriel-Nicholas Maultrot's (1714-1803) *Maximes du droit public français* (1775), along with Guillaume-Joseph Saige's (dates unknown) *Catéchisme du citoyen* (1775), expressed their concerns on the universal natural law/natural right plane, bringing John Locke as well as Rousseau into the peculiar French battle against the Papacy, the French Episcopacy, and the Bourbon Monarchy.

On the other hand, believing Jansenists, with their loathing of the natural world, were anathema to the nature-friendly *philosophes*. Their religious fanaticism, roused to fever pitch through claims of miracles and displays of writhings, convulsions, and speaking in tongues around the grave of one of their clerical heroes at the Church of St. Médard in Paris, were among the most blatant examples of contemporary obscurantism rationalists could identify. Voltaire's brother himself was drawn into them to his intense embarrassment. Moreover, the *parlements*, whatever the validity of their claim to oppose monarchical "tyranny", fought royal power in order to protect irrational, brutal, and anti-social national "traditions", ranging from torture to tax sheltering, that must be shattered if any enlightened progress were to take effect. Hence, the decision of many of the moderate *philosophes* to work with the government of the king, which allowed them employment and influence and seemed more than open to a number of the reforms that they

themselves believed to be necessary. Hence, also, the charge of their more radical opponents that in opting for Versailles, moderates had proven themselves to be power-hungry time servers and insincere hypocrites who might one fine day have to be eliminated from the revolutionary march to the victory of "nature" over artifice.

Before their dissolution, the Jesuits often attacked the Jansenists and their parliamentary allies for utilizing a language making an appeal to ancient traditions in defense against novel monarchical usurpations that actually aided the cause of the Radical Enlightenment. But let us also remember that many Jesuits had themselves tried to fit into the Moderate Enlightenment mould, and had been bitterly criticized by Jansenists for doing so in turn. Worse still, the French Church was often all too ready to join the anti-monarchical alliance to protect its corporate financial interests against governmental "tyranny" whenever efforts to confront the supposed national bankruptcy threatened her own "traditional" privileges. But Jesuit infatuation with Enlightenment ideas weakened both due to the growing union of radicals and moderates after 1750 for common intellectual defense purposes as well as to the Society's need to fight primarily against the relentless attempts of the *parlements* to undermine its "alien" and "despotic" presence in the Kingdom of France.

Unfortunately, the friends of Monarchy and Church, conscious of the need for serious measures both to avoid bankruptcy and national impotence as well as to protect the doctrinal foundations of Catholicism, sought salvation in an apologetic of "willfulness" more suitable to the proponents of "nature as is" than to orthodox Christians. Hence, as the obstructionism of the court's opponents grew stronger, the

## REVOLUTION

king's ministers began to see political redemption chiefly in an exaltation of the royal *will* over any solid intellectual principle or historical fact of life:<sup>30</sup>

As on the patriot side, a radical, potentially subversive strand of ministerial pamphleteering therefore stands out in contrast to a moderate one. And what distinguishes this radical strand is in part its skepticism about the relevance or even accessibility of the past. While a moderate defender of the monarchy like Moreau attempted to fashion a royalist version of French history in order better to compete with the parliamentary and patriot versions, the likes of Linguet and Marie turned their backs on history entirely and, renewing contact with a line of royal apologetics represented most recently by the abbé de Saint-Pierre during the Regency, argued the case of the royal will in utilitarian terms alone. Even sharper, then, was the contrast with patriot pamphleteering. For where patriot pamphleteering—especially the more Jansenist versions of it—all but eliminated the flesh and blood monarch in favor of immutable fundamental laws as they supposedly existed by national consent during the monarchy's earliest centuries, this more radical wing of the ministerial front strove to free the monarchical will from the constraints of the past however construed.

---

<sup>30</sup> Van Kley, p. 288.

Catholic apologists tended to do the same, adding their support for a *willful* Papacy, unbound by dogmas, rational ideas, or history to royalists arguing on behalf of a *willful* monarchy.<sup>31</sup>

For just as some of the most radical patriot constitutionalism had roots in Jansenist conciliarism and its vision of a pristine patristic revelation—for Jansenists the touchstone of all ulterior theologizing—so some of this radical ministerial anticonstitutionalism arguably had roots or at least a counterpart in a devout apologetical tactic developed during the eighteenth century's earlier decades.

That apologetical effort, undertaken by the Jesuits Jean Hardouin and his disciple Isaac-Berruyer, had audaciously challenged the authenticity or at least the accessibility of much of the historical and documentary evidence of Christian revelation, like the writings of the church fathers and the pronouncements of church councils. Thereby freed from the constraints of both ecclesiastical and dogmatic history—so ran the strategy of this apologetic—the papal magisterium would be free to define what the church had presumably always believed as it infallibly saw fit. In the works of Jean Hardouin, who wrote during the earlier decades of the century, this apologetic took the crude form of challenging the authenticity of all the church's documentary evidence except for the Vulgate before the fourteenth century, at which time some atheistical

---

<sup>31</sup> Van Kley, pp. 288-289; pp. 281-290.



## REVOLUTION

monks forged all of the patristic and conciliar evidence in an attempt to undermine papal authority.

Hardouin's disciple Isaac Berruyer took a subtler tack, holding that the meanings of terms and the systems of reference of such ancient documents were so time-bound as to render their meaning all but impenetrable to the eighteenth-century understanding. Berruyer therefore hoped to improve on 'dry and sterile' précis and vernacular translations and felt free to make the ancient protagonists of the Hebrew Scriptures 'speak as they would speak today if they were among us' and to present a 'living and animated tableau of the adorable perfections of the great Master who we have the honor to serve'. This he did with scandalous effect in his multivolume and novelistic *History of the People of God*. But the intended effect, as in Hardouin's work, was to emancipate the papacy from documentary evidence of just about any kind, allowing it to define or refine the Catholic dogmatic tradition in the sense of the bull *Unigenitus*.

Therefore, in one sense, everyone—including the Church, the Monarchy, and the *parlements*, alongside Jesuit, Jansenist, and Enlightenment thinkers—was simultaneously engaged in promoting intellectual argumentation founded upon a basic willfulness unbound by historical facts, and the inevitable "business as usual" consequences flowing from it. And it is no surprise that with the final failure of the government's quite innovative reform efforts and its frustrated summons of the Estates General, this appeal to willful language was still further intensified. The end result was indeed to be a triumph

of the will---but not the will of the monarchy. A combination of more committed and determined revolutionary supporters of “nature as is” was the willful force destined to dominate the future of western man and the future of the globe at large.

The French episcopacy, clergy, and monarchy ultimately reacted admirably to the vicissitudes of the Revolution, at least once its blatant anti-religious nature became crystal clear. Any Catholic reading the responses of the overwhelming number of bishops who refused to take the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1791 can be justly proud of their steadfastness. But they did not act *successfully* against the Revolution for a long time. A major reason they did not do so was that they did not know *how* to do so. Catholic Achilles Heels and their development into tools for recruitment into the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo had deprived them of their best weapons in fighting their opponents: the full corrective and transforming message of Christ. Far from being able to tell a good story about their true story, their failure to understand important aspects of the Faith actually led them to use the arguments of their enemies in futile attempts to defend themselves.

This is why Louis XVI, in trying to undertake reforms before 1789, and in seeking to protect the Roman Catholic Church, the monarchy, and the common good during the Revolution, could never find the correct words to explain his policies and actions. Yes, it is true that his own indecisive personality and intellectual limitations played a major role in compromising him. Nevertheless, he, like his Catholic compatriots in general, also simply did not have the “words of the Word” to aid him in finding his voice. Lacking these, and resorting, in his confusion, to the language of the friends of “nature as is”, he was all the more easily depicted by the

## REVOLUTION

Georges Dantons (1759-1794), Jean-Paul Marats (1743-1793), Jacques Héberts (1757-1794), Maximilian Robespierres (1758-1794), and Louis-Antoine St. Justs (1767-1794) of the Revolution as an insincere hypocrite. And this, in the universe described by Rousseau, qualified him as being a non-human Enemy of the People, for whom law and legal procedures were as of little application as they would be for a cockroach. Jansenists, judges in the law courts, and all "moderates" who did not grasp the full logic of the revolutionary argument were to find that the same charges of hypocrisy and the same attendant lack of personal consideration were to be used to destroy them as well. They had well served their purpose as vanguards in the next stage of construction of the death camp of modernity, but their day in the sun was obviously finished as soon as experts in a more violent and thoroughgoing willfulness arrived on the political, social, and mythmaking scene.<sup>32</sup>

Radical Enlightenment influence in the French Revolution, especially dominant after 1792, took both deist and atheist form. It thus reflected Rousseau's belief in the immortal soul, favored by Robespierre through his Cult of the Supreme Being, as well as the violent anticlerical and anti-religious feeling carried into frightful action by the *sansculotte* gangs of men like Hébert. But more than anything else, it took the genocide of the Vendée and the insight of a number of its spokesmen to begin to turn the condition of Catholic

---

<sup>32</sup> See D. Jordan, *The Revolutionary Career of Maximilien Robespierre* (Free Press, 1985), especially, pp. 63-79, 117-147; Blum, pp. 153-181; Schama, pp. 472-572, 619-675.

“wordlessness” around. Here, among the victims, one finds the Seeds of the Word at work again, along with words suitable for attacking the purveyors of sophist power games. For even if the self-sacrificing Catholic insurgents against the Republic did not yet know all that they needed to know for the defense and advancement of the Faith, they did grasp and express one major point essential to building the intellectual bridge back to sanity: they knew that the revolutionary “good story” of an age of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Progress was a fraud; that this tall tale was nothing other than a cover for enslavement to the will of a minority supporting brutal and truly obscurantist goals; and that it was as destructive to the well being of those “sincere” naturalists who honestly believed in its lies as it was for defenders of the peace that passeth all understanding---the *Pax Christi*. Let us hear the words of the Abbé Étienne-Alexandre Bernier (1762-1806) on this subject:<sup>33</sup>

Heaven has declared for the holiest and most just of causes. {Ours is} the sacred sign of the cross of Jesus Christ. We know the true wish of France, it is our own, namely to recover and preserve forever our holy apostolic and Roman Catholic religion. It is to have a King who will serve as father within and protector without...

---

<sup>33</sup> Schama, p. 705; also, pp.690-792; on the radical revolution and the Church, see M. Vovelle, *The Revolution Against the Church* (Ohio State, 1991); on the Vendée, see R. Secher, *La Vendée-Vengé* (Perrin, 1986); J. Tulard, *La contre-révolution* (Perrin, 1990).

## REVOLUTION

Patriots, our enemies, you accuse us of overturning our *patrie* by rebellion but it is you, who, subverting all the principles of the religious and political order, were the first to proclaim that insurrection is the most sacred of duties. You have introduced atheism in the place of religion, anarchy in the place of laws, men who are tyrants in place of the King who was our father. You reproach us with religious fanaticism, you whose pretensions to liberty have led to the most extreme penalties.

That *this* Revolution, given its depredations, was a danger to the historical work of the Word Incarnate now became undeniably manifest to many Catholics. But what about the one brought about by the Moderate Enlightenment, with its “godly” façade; the Enlightenment as practiced in Britain and the new United States of America? Did this not come off well in the midst of the radical revolutionary fury? Were not its supporters persecuted inside France alongside Catholics? Had not England provided a welcome refuge for fleeing bishops, priests, monks, and nuns? Were these not actually provided places of worship? Was it not the case that at the very moment that religion was being destroyed in revolutionary Europe, the Catholic Church’s right to organize her flock, and this without a trace of either monarchical or republican regalism, was being taken for granted in the New World? Had not those Catholics who had opted for encouraging the ideas and the methodology of the Whigs thus been proven correct in their approach?

Anyone attempting to answer these questions with the benefit of hindsight has to respond to them with a

simultaneous “yes” and “no”. Yes, Catholics had gained help from countries that were home to the Moderate Enlightenment. But we shall see that in so far as the problems of the Radical Revolution were recognized without an appreciation of those more subtly prepared by its Whig compatriot, the path of the Word in history would still have a painfully bumpy route to follow. For radicalism followed in the footsteps of the moderates active in England and the United States as daytime follows night—only much more slowly.<sup>34</sup>

### *E. The Implosion of the Grand Coalition*

A despondent Catholic of the 1790’s could well have been forgiven for entertaining fears that proponents of deceptive but pleasant sounding words concerning man, society, nature, and progress had inflicted a decisive defeat upon the supporters of the cause of the substantive, corrective, transforming Word in history. The religious structure of the Eldest Daughter of the Church lay in ruins, and those responsible for the damage were violently expanding their destructive enterprise into other countries as well. These states were ripe for more deadly attacks on religion, given that Catholicism in all European lands had already been deeply wounded in the half century before the Revolution erupted. The tragic enslavement—even self-enslavement—to meaningless words guaranteed by rejection of the full

---

<sup>34</sup> On the appeal and possible problems of the United States, see Mayeur, X, 479-512; von Pastor, XL; M. Jacob and J. Jacob, *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (Humanities, 1984); Venturi, pp. 377-437.

## REVOLUTION

message of the Word Incarnate is poignantly illustrated by J.J. Norwich's account of the situation in Venice in 1797:<sup>35</sup>

It was Sunday, 4 June – Whit Sunday, a day which in former years the Venetians had been accustomed to celebrate with all the pomp and parade appropriate to one of the great feasts of the Church. But this year, 1797, was different. Shocked and stunned to find their city occupied by foreign troops for the first time in its thousand years of history, the people were in no mood for rejoicing. Nevertheless, General Louis Baraguey d'Hilliers, the French commander, had decided that some form of celebration would be desirable, if only to give a much-needed boost to local morale. He had discussed the form it should take with the leaders of the Provisional Municipality, in whom, under his own watchful eye, the supreme political power of the new Republic was now entrusted; and plans had been accordingly drawn up for a *Festa Nazionale*, at which the citizens were to be given their first full-scale public opportunity to salute their 'Democracy' and the resonant revolutionary principles that inspired it.

Those who, prompted more by curiosity than by enthusiasm, made their way to the Piazza that Sunday morning had grown accustomed to the 'Tree of Liberty' – that huge wooden pole, surmounted by the symbolic scarlet Phrygian cap which bore more than a passing resemblance to the ducal *cornio* – rising

---

<sup>35</sup> J.J. Norwich, *A History of Venice* (Knopf, 1982), pp. 632-633.

incongruously from its centre. This they now found to have been supplemented by three large tribunes, ranged along the north, south and west sides. The western one, which was intended for the sixty members of the Municipality, carried the inscription LIBERTY IS PRESERVED BY OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW; the other two, destined for the French and other less distinguished Italian authorities, respectively proclaimed that DAWNING LIBERTY IS PROTECTED BY FORCE OF ARMS and ESTABLISHED LIBERTY LEADS TO UNIVERSAL PEACE. The Piazzetta was similarly bedecked, with a banner in praise of Bonaparte stretched between the two columns by the Molo, one of which was draped in black in memory of those brave Frenchmen who had perished victims of the Venetian aristocracy....

After Baraguey d'Hilliers and the Municipality had taken their places, the bands began to play—there were four of them, disposed at intervals around the Piazza, comprising a total of well over 300 musicians—and the procession began. First came a group of Italian soldiers, followed by two small children carrying lighted torches and another banner with the words GROW UP, HOPE OF THE FATHERLAND. Behind them marched a betrothed couple (DEMOCRATIC FECUNDITY) and finally an aged pair staggering under the weight of agricultural implements, bearing words 'referring to their advanced age, at which time liberty was instituted'.

The procession over, the President of the Municipality advanced to the Tree of Liberty, where, after a brief ceremony in the Basilica, he proceeded to



## REVOLUTION

the most dramatic business of the day: the symbolic burning of a *cornio* and other emblems of ducal dignity (all obligingly provided for the purpose by Lodovico Manin {the last doge} himself) and a copy of the Golden Book {of Venetian aristocrats}. He and his fellow-*municipalisti*, together with the General and the senior members of his staff, then led off the dancing round the Liberty Tree, while the guns fired repeated salutes, the church bells rang and the bands played *La Carmagnole*. The celebrations ended with a gala performance of opera at the Fenice Theatre, completed less than five years before.

This was the level to which Venice had sunk within a month of the Republic's end—the level of tasteless allegory and those empty, flatulent slogans so beloved of totalitarian governments of today: a demoralization so complete as to allow her citizens, many of whom had been crying 'Viva San Marco!' beneath the windows of the Great Council as it met for the last time, to stand by and applaud while all their proud past was symbolically consigned to the flames. Not long afterwards one Giacomo Gallini, head of the stone-masons' guild, signed a contract to remove or efface every winged lion in the city, as had already been done by the French, with horrible thoroughness, throughout the *terra firma*. We can be thankful that he proved less conscientious: though he accepted his pay—982 ducats—relatively few lions were touched. But the fact that such an action was even contemplated is indication enough of the

mentality of French and Venetians alike through that nightmare summer.

So profound was the destruction of the remnants of a Catholic order by 1799 that Pope Pius VI died on the way to captivity in France, and the chances of a demoralized College of Cardinals electing a successor seemed to be quite slim indeed. To the joy of the most radical members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, the “unnatural” Christian beast, the “obvious” enemy of the individual and society at large, appeared to be at death’s door. And yet, far from dying, the resuscitation of the Bride of Christ had already begun. Far from ending, the war of words against the Word was simply entering into another one of its many stages, and this for two distinct reasons. For the purposes of the present work it is best to begin our discussion of Catholic revival and the transformation of the age-old conflict of “nature as is” with the corrective and transforming mission of the Word in history with reference to the implosion inside the revolutionary coalition that ended its momentary, but highly destructive, unity.<sup>36</sup>

Such an internal disturbance always threatened the GCSQ, but even more so now that Enlightenment naturalism was the primary driving force behind it. For this form of naturalism was truly a many-edged sword. We have seen that it was ultimately based upon an individual willfulness allowing men to seize the definition of “nature” and then run with it down as many pathways as their fantasy, their desire, and their rhetoric could discover. The most politically

---

<sup>36</sup> For the situation by the 1790’s, see Mayeur, X, 301-477, 539-621; Jedin and Dolan, II, 3-50; Schama, pp. 619-875.

## REVOLUTION

powerful among these definitions of nature by the time of the French Revolution were threefold: two of them rooted in intellectual concerns and the third simply in raw, unadorned, parochial self-interest.

Although both of the intellectually rooted definitions of nature were more openly willing to break with the past and use governmental authority to destroy it than Enlightenment-minded forces in Britain, one of these shared many of the concerns for “natural laws”, combined with a defense of certain individual “natural rights”, common to English Whigs. Its counterpart sought the realization of a Rousseau-inspired vision of a “natural” democratic society. Both these proponents of a more nature-friendly order of things had created a distinguished historical pedigree for themselves. Both argued that failure to follow the guidelines that they outlined would lead to a disastrous war against the very character of man and the universe. And both also insisted that Catholicism had provoked just such disastrous warfare in the past by not unquestioningly accepting their definitions of “nature as is” — hence, the need to use the tools placed in their hands by the Revolution to undermine its continuing evil religious influence, whether in more subtle or more violent fashion.

A third “felt” and wholly non-intellectual “definition” of nature as the dictate of raw, deeply-sensed self-interest was represented by two politically and socially important forces in French society, only one of which needs to be mentioned at the moment: the bourgeoisie. The genesis of this bourgeois impact was somewhat complex. On the one hand, it seems as though its development was perfectly logical, given any number of factors, including, most importantly, anger over

the loss of bourgeois influence following the nobility's efforts to recoup its position after the death of Louis XIV, as well as the fear of being stuck footing the bill for that perceived national bankruptcy that was the proximate cause for the calling of the Estates General. On the other hand, everything that we know about the Revolution tells us that the bourgeoisie was literally handed the ability to define nature on its own terms on a golden platter, through the arguments of thinkers and polemicists, many of them clerics and aristocrats, who wished to stir it up and manipulate it for their own specific purposes. And, of course, the bourgeoisie as a class was one thing; the human individuals composing it quite another. Some of its members were politically engaged and eager to pursue class interests while others were not. Some bourgeois even became vigorous opponents of the whole revolutionary enterprise.

Politically active members of the bourgeoisie—not necessarily merchants, but lawyers and other professionals—had the money and the time to serve as the representatives of the “common people” as a whole in the Estates General. Still, the average bourgeois, even if he might wish to defend his own self-interest, did not possess the rhetoric of the sort required by Isocrates to justify satisfaction of his material desires. All manner of religious and customary influences over his behavior weakened his ability to formulate a coherent selfish program. Courtiers and other supporters of the monarchy, frustrated by the obstacles put in the path of reform by the clergy and the nobility, sought to give him the arguments that he needed to concentrate his thoughts and awaken his class consciousness. They warned him of a plot on the part of the privileged classes to avoid their responsibilities during the present crisis and place the whole

## REVOLUTION

burden in the lap of the Third Estate alone. But it was the men of the Enlightenment, who argued that the bourgeoisie's natural, productive function gave it the right to ride roughshod over an unproductive – and therefore unnatural – clergy and nobility, who really provided the solid “good story” and “appropriate explanation of deeply felt desire” that its future relevance as a class required. It was they who made the bourgeois moneymen look like the virtuous, down-to-earth Figaro humbling the parasitic and despotic Count Almaviva in Pierre Beaumarchais' (1734-1799) wildly popular pre-revolutionary play.<sup>37</sup>

Whatever the genesis of the bourgeois impact on the unfolding of the Revolution, the consequences for its class interests were real. They included freedom from guild restrictions, prohibition of workingmen's organizations, access to cheap purchase of Church goods, and limitation of the vote and service in future legislatures to men of property. But the bourgeoisie had to pay a price for the good story concerning its exalted role as proper representative of the productive nation. It paid it in the form of support for its rhetorical spokesmen and the thoroughgoing Enlightenment attack on the heritage of France that they launched; an assault that went far beyond anything that “practical men” would have ever dreamed up on their own. Still, it was because both moderate and radical men of ideas, along with bourgeois “pragmatists”, were all in some way or another, consciously or unconsciously, attracted to either the vision of “nature as is” or the palpable rewards that promoting it would give them that they could cooperate in the work of destruction of

---

<sup>37</sup> Schama, pp. 139-144, 288-368.

the Church and the monarchy. And it was because the men of ideas needed the "brawn" of a social class, and that social class the justificatory "words" provided by the men of thought, that the revolutionary enterprise could move forward.

Unfortunately for all the parties concerned, a Grand Coalition of the Status Quo dominated by such differing forces could last only so long as it gave to each of them at least something that they desired. It certainly had to break down once the radicals recognized that, according to their definition of nature, their bourgeois allies were "unnatural" hypocrites, unwilling to conform to the obvious demands of a virtuous, fraternal, egalitarian society. If not this, it definitely had to collapse when the pragmatic men of property grasped two truths: that the radical supporters of Rousseau threatened the wealth that they had joined the Revolution to defend and increase; and that even the more moderate Coalition intellectuals had themselves worked to create the State machinery through which any determined and willful faction could launch a devastating, authoritative attack upon them.

A violent disintegration of this combustible alliance took place in the revolutionary months of Prairial and Thermidor of the Year Two of the new dispensation---the time known to the old European world as June through August of 1794. It was at that moment that the non-intellectual, bourgeois majority of the National Convention understood that building a democratic Republic of Virtue as conceived by supporters of Rousseau such as Maximilian Robespierre and Louis Antoine de St. Just would very shortly lead both to their condemnation as selfish counterrevolutionaries as well as to the confiscation of the individual private property that

## REVOLUTION

*their* "natural" Revolution was meant to protect. The revolutionary initiatives of men whom the bourgeois might easily label *unnatural* utopian visionaries had to diminish so that the individual property demands of "nature-friendly pragmatists" could increase. And, indeed, revolutionary pragmatists won the battle for defining the "obvious meaning of nature" by withdrawing their support from the Committee of Public Safety and backing up their rejection by a more successful appeal to force than their opponents could muster during the short but decisive scuffle that followed.<sup>38</sup>

Alas, appeals to force would prove to be *regularly* necessary to them. For it was no easy matter to break the bond with the intellectuals who had played such a crucial role in giving the appropriate revolutionary explanations for the satisfaction of passion that had benefitted the cause of the materialist segment of the bourgeoisie. Although union with radical Enlightenment ideas meant succor for undesirable ideologues who created big government that could disturb the growth of personal property, abandonment of the nature-and-freedom-loving "cover" that the rhetoric of the utopians had at least temporarily provided for vulgar material enhancement invited the victory of counterrevolutionary ideas equally threatening to the self-interested bourgeois dominance of society. Hence, the decision to ally with the second non-intellectual force noted above; a force whose concerns were significant at the start of the Revolution and whose leadership became more directly involved in it by the 1790's: the army. And the army in question was now that leviathan swollen in size by the vision of an entire "nation-in-

---

<sup>38</sup> Blum, pp. 182-281; Schama, pp. 805-875.

arms", as galvanized and manipulated by a hero of the sort that Isocrates would most certainly have appreciated; the army as guided by the genius of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821).<sup>39</sup>

Readers know by now that Enlightenment ideas and the influence of the men who supported them could never have become as significant as they did in the pre-revolutionary era had it not been for their seeming utility to rulers primarily concerned for the needs of the army. It was mainly for the sake of breaking down obstacles to more effectively building, maintaining, and regularly using a standing army that the various dynasties of Europe had secularized international life, fought against otherworldly religious influence and inefficient corporate diversity internally, and turned to Enlightenment naturalists for intellectual and administrative assistance in their endeavors. Moreover, the perceived bankruptcy leading to the call of the Estates General and the initial outbreak of the Revolution was of central consideration primarily because of its immediate impact on army survival.

Certainly, the army did significantly benefit from revolutionary changes. These gave the military the backing of a centralized State machine infinitely more powerful and suitable to maintaining its upkeep than the still somewhat religious and tradition bound French Monarchy ever could

---

<sup>39</sup> On the Napoleonic "settlement", see Mayeur, X, 627-690; M. Broers, *Europe Under Napoleon* (Arnold, 1996), pp. 50-222, 249-265; M. Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (St. Martin's, 1994), pp. 77-93; J. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men* (Basic Books, 1980), pp. 54-123. R.R. Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 208-220 for an example of the problems of reaction.



## REVOLUTION

have provided. But, once again, it had gained these benefits in union with revolutionary men of ideas whose visions promised an unending internal disorder as disruptive to army goals as to bourgeois business. In short, the practical, non-ideological army technocrats, like the pragmatic bourgeoisie, wanted *both* the fruits that the Revolution had provided *and* the short-circuiting of the troublesome radical intellectual currents that had nevertheless done so much to justify them. Their common outlook therefore pressed them to form a "coalition within the coalition"; one that had the project, first and foremost, of expelling from the revolutionary alliance their burdensome leftist "friends".

Napoleon, the army's most anti-ideological general of real military genius, perfectly understood the concerns and dilemma of the men of property. As an outsider to French noble society, he also had prospered from the revolutionary dismantling of the existing order of things to satisfy his own personal goals. He, too, could not completely fulfill those particular ambitions under the kind of system that either the idealistic proponents of natural law and natural rights or the radical supporters of Rousseau wished to construct. Neither could he tolerate a counterrevolution bringing back an *ancien régime* that for various reasons would never allow an independent army leader to mould society to his supreme will.<sup>40</sup>

Hence, that willful and materialist segment of the bourgeoisie that had "gone revolutionary" united with the willful leader of a willful army, gained control of France, and crushed the power of the equally willful men of more radical

---

<sup>40</sup> Broers, pp. 1-23; Lyons, pp. 5-76; Billington, pp. 22-23.

spirit who were placing obstacles in the path of the specific ambitions of the victors. "Nature", inside France, would not mean what the supporters either of Rousseau or of the more progressive continental Whigs wished it to mean. Much of that which had been dismantled by the losing faction and had previously been condemned as counterrevolutionary by them could now be rebuilt—with the proviso, however, that the rehabilitated groups and institutions did not disturb any of the "acceptable" revolutionary changes that had benefited the victorious men of property and the army, acting in tandem.

Unfortunately, Napoleon and the army under his control viewed military power as something to be used primarily to *their* advantage as opposed to that of their internal bourgeois allies. This attitude produced imperialist wars without end. The expense that those conflicts entailed brought their own special dangers to the individual property holdings of the French bourgeoisie. Moreover, they led to the introduction of just that tablespoonful of "acceptable" revolutionary changes needed to secure the fruits of victories in conquered countries. This, inevitably, required the assistance of certain justificatory ideas and the recruitment of all the common rhetorical slogans of Nature, Reason, Freedom, and Progress. Unfortunately, mobilization of such slogans for external use brought with it the risk of a potential recrudescence of revolutionary utopianism inside France as well. Worst of all, Napoleon's wars ultimately ended in the military defeat of 1814-1815 and the return to power of the dreaded counterrevolutionaries.

With the army crushed, the supporters of a pragmatic understanding of the natural life found that they lacked the material force that they needed for political domination. Still, reliance on the physical strength of the military alone had

## REVOLUTION

exposed the raw self-interestedness of these two allies within the revolutionary coalition in much too open a manner. Perhaps significantly more in the way of an intellectual cover was needed after all if the bourgeoisie were going to protect itself from the appearance of gross covetousness on the one hand and radical revolutionary progress or counterrevolutionary regression on the other. In fact, the exiled Napoleon also recognized the need to cover his past power grabbing with an "appropriate justification of desire" that made his personal willfulness and belligerence seem to serve the higher purpose of awakening national self-consciousness and creating a new and more enlightened European unity. He satisfied this need by writing his highly dubious but very influential *Memoirs*.<sup>41</sup>

And an intellectual cover *was* offered to the revolutionary bourgeoisie through its alliance with and funding of the broad political-intellectual movement that came to use the name "liberal" to define itself. Although the goal of liberalism was, like that of the moderate revolutionaries of earlier days, to protect natural laws and natural rights in general, bourgeois predominance within it meant that its heaviest emphasis was given to the exaltation of laws and rights promoting individual economic freedom and the vigorous defense of private property. After the experiences of the

---

<sup>41</sup> Broers, pp. 261-274; Lyons, pp. 294-300; Billington; D. Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1997); T. Lentz, *Napoléon "Mon Ambition Était Grande"* (Découvertes Gallimard, 1998); L. de Bourriene, *The Complete Memoirs* (Halcyon, Sixteen Volumes, 2011); R. Gildea, *Barricades and Borders* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 34-54.

Terror, all liberals were eager to avoid the disorder and rank violence associated with radical Revolution. Bourgeois involvement with the movement guaranteed that this peaceful

orientation especially entailed working to avoid the storm that attempts to create a more egalitarian Republic of Virtue would unleash.<sup>42</sup>

Liberalism also meant closer ties with the Whig Enlightenment, whose superiority was apparently confirmed by England's victory over Napoleon, as well as by the immeasurable riches that her industrial development was providing to the bourgeois elite providing the investment stimulating and expanding it. Britain appeared to be a land where an oligarchy composed of men of property and the moderate ideas allowing just enough revolution to bring them into power could rest in peace. Its expanding principle of Lockean tolerance ensured that religion in its green and pleasant land was ever more "seen but not heard". An absence of persecution convinced believers of the system's continued godliness, while religion's lack of practical influence contented the English supporters of "nature as is". Britain's legislature, chosen by an electorate that had definitely tipped to bourgeois advantage by the 1830's, was increasingly friendly to a total individual economic freedom. Hence, it encouraged dreams of constructing a purely

---

<sup>42</sup> On liberalism and its relationship with radicalism and Christianity in the nineteenth century, see Mayeur, X, 705-792; XI, 11-345; Billington, pp. 191-207; Lyons, pp. 278- 293; P. Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton, 1995); Blackbourn, pp. 130-131.

## REVOLUTION

natural, materialist, freedom-loving society, while not openly offending the sensibilities of the seemingly hopelessly divided Christians or allowing liberty to mean something more unseemly than the propertied men of common sense wished it to mean.<sup>43</sup>

Setting aside discussion of the pronounced internal dilemmas of English liberalism, let us introduce some other problems that it posed for the nineteenth century by noting the obvious fact that the Continent was not Britain. Different methods were required in different countries in Europe in order to achieve the same fundamental liberal goals. Opposition in one land might have to be fought through a centralized government and in another through decentralization. National ethnic unity breaking down existing empires could be useful in some places, while promotion of an international spirit would work in others. Particular political situations could dictate cooperation with open-minded and moderate counterrevolutionaries in one land, or a policy of "no enemies on the Left" where such a desire to compromise on the part of the victors of 1815 simply did not exist.

All these possibilities entailed risks, chief among them the fact that liberalism did still require reliance on an Enlightenment vision that might always assert its particular logic and seek to escape from the straitjacket in which the "pragmatic" bourgeoisie sought to restrain it. Liberalism

---

<sup>43</sup> I. Newbould, *Whiggery and Reform, 1830-1841: The Politics of Government* (Macmillan, 1990); E. L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform, 1815-1870* (Oxford, 1962); T.S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1969).

could always lead to an emphasis upon other natural laws or individual natural rights than those appreciated by the men of property. Moreover, moderate liberal “fathers” were still capable of producing radical “sons” who might use the non-violent disguise provided by the movement to go about their more revolutionary activities. As these developments proceeded, the radical sons would regularly be tempted to jump the liberal ship and join together with men who had already deduced more disruptive conclusions from the same naturalist starting points and were busily at work using their theories to effect practical change. There were many such radicals everywhere, particularly those dedicated to the creation of unified, ethnic nation-states, undaunted by their temporary defeat at the hands of the wicked counterrevolutionaries.

Each and every one of the thoughtful, Enlightenment-inspired members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo were firmly united in their conviction that existence had to be understood on natural terms alone. Whether they sought to seize the meaning of life by looking inside themselves and examining their own “sincere” natural psyche or by focusing upon the “scientific” data coming from the natural world around them, all were convinced of two truths: that through their efforts they became the masters of them that know, and that acceptance of their knowledge would provide what every ancient sophist treasured above all else—success. Despite the more spiritual, soulful patina of the former, “inward” approach, both this and the “outward”, experiential, scientific path shared the same, willful, arrogant spirit of infallibility, along with the attendant certainty that the world’s consciousness had to be raised in obedience to their unquestionable dictates.

## REVOLUTION

This untroubled certitude is well expressed by Professor Thomas Gradgrind of *Hard Times* (1854), Charles Dickens' well-chosen representative of the nineteenth century liberal pragmatist version of the age-old spirit of willfulness. Gradgrind as educator considers himself bound to raise children to understand and obey laws of nature built upon obvious "facts" that no one under any circumstances can even question, much less disobey. Let us allow Dickens to introduce us to him and to his educational philosophy as he sets to work in a classroom filled with youthful prey:<sup>44</sup>

'Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'...In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

Teaching the Facts about the laws of nature was ultimately rather easy for Professor Gradgrind. It did not

---

<sup>44</sup> C. Dickens, *Hard Times* (Norton, 2001), p. 5.

involve anything more than imparting knowledge of a simple machine closed in upon and content with itself:<sup>45</sup>

Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir – peremptorily Thomas-- Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic.

Gradgrind's instruction came at a price, however. His Magisterium required that whatever other non-mechanical Facts had shaped his students in the past be ruthlessly purged from their benighted souls:<sup>46</sup>

Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts. Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, too, charged with a grim

---

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*



## REVOLUTION

mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.

An opening to the mechanical Facts bought at this price of a closing to knowledge of a different and perhaps broader quality could be utterly baffling to those multi-dimensional fools whom Gradgrind was dedicated to enlightening. Hence the circus girl Sissy's confusion regarding how to respond to the Professor's command to define a horse – an animal that to her was everything from mere beast to noble symbol. Hence, also, Gradgrind's sense that her discomfit confirms the truth of his mechanical wisdom. He triumphantly appeals to one of the pupils he has already "remade" to definitively resolve the issue of ignorance and enlightenment:<sup>47</sup>

'Girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger... 'Let me see. What is your father?'

'He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir.'

Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

'We don't want to know anything about that, here. You mustn't tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, don't he?'

'If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.'

---

<sup>47</sup> Dickens, pp. 6-7.

'You mustn't tell us about the ring, here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?'

'Oh yes, sir.'

'Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse.'

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

'Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!' said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.'

Finally, in one quite extraordinary passage, Dickens offers a Platonic judgment on the final results of Professor Gradgrind's Magisterium and the remaking of human beings that it involves. The extra, broader—and possibly higher—illumination that Sissy's corrective and transforming vision might have brought to those buried in her modernist cave of a classroom, where only a little light involving simple mechanical Facts shone, cannot be permitted to penetrate. Thus, Bitzer, the student called upon to enlighten her, is seen to be not only in desperate need of further light himself, but also stripped of whatever visible defining features he probably once possessed. Gradgrind, the self-proclaimed Master of Them That Know, therefore reveals to us that he has no clue concerning real darkness or enlightenment at all; that it is the proponent of "nature as is" who is the ignorant

## REVOLUTION

loser, rather than the voyager taking the Great Platonic Detour:<sup>48</sup>

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely white-washed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.

---

<sup>48</sup> Dickens, p. 7-8.

'Bitzer,' said Thomas Gradgrind. 'Your definition of a horse.'

'Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.' Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

'Now girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'You know what a horse is.'

Professor Thomas Gradgrind, as presented by Dickens, is one of the all too many arrogant ideologues emerging out of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Once again, *all* truly committed Enlightenment thinkers insisted upon building their knowledge of the universe and man's role within it upon "nature" and the "facts" of natural life. All were absolutely and arrogantly certain that they therefore possessed the sole rational, infallible path to understanding the universe and to assuring freedom, the liberation of human potential, and progress upon the earth. It was this certainty that required that program of revolutionary remaking of men and women, clearly described in the 1700's in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, the *Emile*, and the *Social Contract*.

Readers know that that program began with a declaration of natural man's "obvious" imprisonment in an unnatural environment and his urgent need to return to a natural way of life. Souls who offered resistance to nature and nature's laws had to be subjected to a consciousness-raising education awakening them to their true natural selves and the well being that they still so pathetically rejected. None of their

## REVOLUTION

continued calls for nuance or consideration of other, broader facts in making decisions regarding both nature's rules as well as individual and social happiness could be rationally addressed. Reason, by definition, was on the side of the man of Enlightenment alone. Unnaturalness, and therefore irrationality and even non-humanness as a whole, were the lot of his opponents. The arguments of those in unquestioned need of being remade had to be either ignored or ridiculed. How could a truly rational man be expected to act otherwise?

When, as has happened all too often in the last few centuries, the revolutionary will to power that underlies the entire Enlightenment vision of intelligence triumphs, and a remaking of human beings is actually undertaken, the Gradgrinds succeed in giving the world the *appearance* of operating as they say it does. In the name of nature's laws they cut off sources of light that draw from the whole of nature—not just the ideologue's portion of it—essential facts to teach us. They make natural men as *unnatural* as they are capable of becoming. And since the Gradgrinds are the masters of the shriveled, unnatural world and individuals they create—namely, the ones who “succeed” within their system—they have yet another argument for rejecting further criticism of their vision, adopted straight from Isocrates' handbook. Critics are depicted as envious losers in addition to being mentally deficient. As neat sophist approaches goes, this Enlightenment pedagogue's program is probably unmatchable. Unfortunately for him, as well as for the rest of humanity, it is totally false.

Let us once again reiterate the fact that there could be no question for a Gradgrind or any other ideological revolutionary but that his vision was based upon absolutely

infallible Facts, whether these emerged from observation of his sincere visceral feelings or experimental data. Still, we have seen that the militant columns of revolutionaries disagreed intensely on what these obvious Facts might be. One set of naturalist, progress-hungry, success-seekers insisted on rock-solid Facts that completely contradicted those of another. Moreover, the number of these varying groups of revolutionaries, working with a myriad of differing crystal-clear Facts, increased enormously as the nineteenth century proceeded. Still, as in the previous century, this conflict of wills calling for the triumph of one set of absolute certainties over the others continued to take shape out of two basic approaches towards defining nature, both intensified due to current developments.

One of these, the belief that examination of nature yielded a guidance of life by crystal clear natural laws that could magically be simplified by finding a single mechanical key to the *spiritus mundi*, was aided mightily by the Industrial Revolution. The increasing omnipresence of machines and the much more highly structured way of life that they pressed men and women into living lent credibility to the hunt for such simple machine-like answers to the mysterious dance of life. Whether one saw these answers in laws of supply and demand, class struggle, or biological and racial clash, depended to a certain degree upon individual taste and choice. On the other hand, each of these intellectual answers attracted allies – often cumbersome allies – in the form of self-interested men, women, and states, ready to support one or the other all encompassing “law” depending upon which yielded them the greater chance of financial gain, of building better and more effective weaponry, or of gaining political mastery of Europe and the world.

## REVOLUTION

Belief in nature as the realm of freedom and diversity also intensified in the nineteenth century due to that development of the Enlightenment that we call Romanticism.<sup>49</sup> Romanticism, a movement beginning in Germany and England in literature and poetry and then affecting every sphere of artistic and intellectual life in the western world, started as a reaction against those who saw the aesthetic model of Greece and Rome as a natural law that must guide all creative endeavor. Romantics rejected this vision of nature in favor of one that understood the universe to be immensely more diverse than that depicted by the naturalist of classical tastes. In effect, they could, in theory, consider any force that existed and exercised a power and an influence over individuals and peoples as something both natural and good. It is in this sense that Rousseau himself can be considered as an early proponent of the Romantic vision.

Many nineteenth century Romantics took their vision to an anarchistic conclusion, justifying the validity of each and every possible idea, artistic endeavor, and custom—all in the name of nature, freedom, and diversity. Some of those who did so felt that the fullness of expression thus released would lead to the creation of a more meaningful and ordered world. Others drew from their recognition of the endless diversity of nature the impossibility of reaching any definitive universal conclusions regarding truth, beauty, or goodness whatsoever. Among those arriving at what would by mid-century be

---

<sup>49</sup> On Romanticism and its fallout, see Mayeur, X, 19-24, 627-633, 705-908; XI, 11-13; M. Cranston, *The Romantic Movement* (Blackwell, 1994); on Romanticism and Catholicism, see J. Fitzer, ed., *Romance and the Rock* (Augsburg Fortress, 1989).

called a nihilist position were men and women so horrified by the consequences of their thought that they stepped back thoroughly from them. Their questioning of the underlying dogmas of naturalism then pressed them to an exploration of the possible value of a corrective and transformative supernatural vision in gaining a proper understanding of the meaning of life. Movement from such salutary doubt to active promotion of the message of the Incarnate Word in history then proved to be a short and very swift step.

Most nineteenth century Romantic lovers of diversity never got as far as the nihilist position or a catholicizing reaction to it. Instead, they stopped at various way stations along the route to meaninglessness, and were happy to have broken free at least somewhat from the stranglehold of an appreciation of nature dominated solely by the Greco-Roman tradition. In political terms, the most significant expression of Romanticism was an anti-universalist democratic nationalism. Its development was fed not only by the passion for linguistic, poetic, and general literary diversity but also by the studies of men like Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803). Herder and his disciples argued vigorously for the need to come to terms with a given people and a given period in history by recognizing that each had a different kind of spirit shaping and motivating it: a *Volksgeist* and a *Zeitgeist*.<sup>50</sup>

Such concepts have proven to be immensely helpful to the historian. They aid in driving home the importance of grasping the complexity of the environment in which men live and the mixture of influences that need to be considered in order to judge how and why individuals and peoples act as

---

<sup>50</sup> Cranston, pp. 21-47; Blackburn, pp. 3-44; Copleston, VI, 135-149.



## REVOLUTION

they do. This blocks the formation of hasty conclusions based upon one's own presuppositions, themselves shaped unconsciously by the impact upon a man of his own land and his own time. In this one sense, Herder's arguments can also be said to be innately friendly to Catholicism as well. For historians who seek first to understand the past before making a final judgment regarding its history manifest that opening to all of nature taught by the full message of the Incarnation that enables them to distinguish between a Seed of the Logos, a new or different step in the dance of life, and an outright evil.

Having said this, however, and admitted what I believe to be one significant example of the real value of certain aspects of the Romantic approach, both aesthetically and intellectually, let me hasten to add that the *Volksgeist/Zeitgeist* message had hugely negative consequences as well. Whether on its own or in conjunction with Kant's "inward" hunt for certainty or political visions of the superiority of a democratic system of government, what it did was to allow for an "appropriate explanation" of the desires of a given people or a given time. This justified a people or an era doing anything that it wished to do and then altering its desires willfully without fear of being taken to task for error or contradictory flightiness by a critic. In fact, it made it impossible for any given people or era even to contemplate *explaining* its desires, since all outside "others" were, by their innate distinctions, incapable of understanding them anyway. Human dialogue was thereby rendered utterly pointless. Hence the chance to begin speaking of different national and historical interpretations of everything from morality to physics, with success in imposing one's own will, not surprisingly,

becoming the ultimate standard of truth. This is the logic of the development of life as presented by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Starting with the principle of freedom as the supreme historical teaching, Hegel moves on to tell us that we recognize its successful march through time in the triumph of whatever it is that dominates a given age. A spiritual and intellectual freedom and the possession and exercise of physical strength end by becoming one and the same thing.

It was with reference to such concepts, generally presented in the envelope provided by Kantian intellectual or democratic political “baggage”, that the nationalist offshoot of Romanticism worked to shatter the ordered progress desired by nineteenth-century liberals. In the hands of German, Polish, and Italian thinkers—men like Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872)—romantic nationalism became a recipe for placing the construction of a unified, democratic, ethnic nation-state above all other considerations, moral or otherwise. What was morally good was what aided the creation of the Italian Nation. What was morally evil was what stood in the path of the formation of the Polish or German Nation. War, deportation, and, eventually, racial engineering and genocide were of no significance aside from the result achieved. How else could the sincere desires and freedom of a people be expected to triumph?<sup>51</sup>

Appropriate explanations of the justice of a myriad of potentially conflicting wills brought along with them a conflicting set of new tall tales as well. Catholicism, of course, was to be attacked by all of them. Nevertheless, each revolutionary faction was also ready happily to apply many

---

<sup>51</sup> Billington, pp. 146-190.

## REVOLUTION

of the lies told to thrash Rome to campaigns against its various competing “enlightened” opponents. In fact, liberals perhaps found themselves assaulted through these onslaughts more than anyone else on the Left. This was chiefly due to their perceived hypocrisy in refusing to admit the logical development of their basic Enlightenment principles. It was also due to the fact that they offered an all too obvious target, given the grotesque capitalist self-seeking their own cover story of “freedom-fighting” presented. In any case, it is very easy to see how all the myths regarding the conspiratorial evils of the Jesuits were gradually applied to everyone from capitalists to Jews, depending upon whose vision of “nature” and “progress” was being pressed—and often with many of the specific details of the fables utilized remaining totally unchanged.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, and most importantly for my argument here, continental liberals—along with those radical competitors who played on their internal contradictions to seduce their “sons”—still had to deal with the continued strength of the correcting and transforming mission of the Catholicism that they mocked. This, in many places in Europe, had no competitors for the faith of believers, while the success of the British system required the establishment of that “free marketplace of religious ideas” to reduce Christianity to the political and social meaninglessness that already existed in England. Under continental circumstances, therefore, liberals debated whether or not a more radical call for an outright and militant separation of Church and State uncongenial to the

---

<sup>52</sup> M. Leroy, *Le mythe jésuite de Béranger a Michelet* (Presses Universitaire, 1992), pp. 106-107.

English approach might provide the best pathway to ensuring Catholic impotence.

### *F. The Calling of the Ninth Crusade: Anti-Legitimist Birth Pains*

But impotence was not in the program of the Catholicism that the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo was destined to confront in the nineteenth century. Popular historiography tends to speak of eight crusades. A recent book on the international armed force put together to defend the Papal States under Blessed Pius IX during the 1850's and 1860's refers to its cause as representing a Ninth Crusade. While not denying that specific cause a significant part in the same battle, I would call the Ninth Crusade the much broader conflict unleashed by all those battling for a Catholic Restoration in the period following the seemingly irresistible naturalist advance that began in 1750.<sup>53</sup>

Centers of recruitment for the Ninth Crusade—German, Italian, and French, for the most part—were lay-clerical circles of believers, religious confraternities, orders restored after the devastation of the Revolution, university faculties, and groups gathering round those journals and newspapers that seemed to spring up everywhere in the course of the nineteenth century. Anyone wishing to get a flavor of their

---

<sup>53</sup> Mayeur, X, 393-477, 705-906; XI, 35-43, 113-366, 934-984; Jedin and Dolan, VII, 50-115, 189-257; J. Rao, *Removing the Blindfold* (Remnant, 1999), pp. 13-20; P. Raggi, *La nona crociata* (Tonini, 1992); J. Guenel, *La dernière guerre du pape* (Presses Universitaire, 1998).

## REVOLUTION

general spirit should examine the pages of *Der Katholik*, the *Historisch-Politische Blätter*, and *Archiv für Katholisches Kirchenrecht* in the German world; *La Civiltà Cattolica* in Italy; *L'Univers-Le Monde* in France; and the *Dublin Review* in the United Kingdom.

Calling this Ninth Crusade was not an easy matter, to say the least.

For one thing, its initial recruitment centers opened simultaneously with the growth of liberalism, with all of liberalism's tendencies to variation depending upon local circumstances and with all of its potential openness to logical seduction by more radical elements. Varied conditions created a situation in France where the counterrevolutionary "legitimist" government of the restored Bourbon Family cooperated with liberals, who then, after the failed attempt by Charles X (1824-1830) to end this cooperation in 1830, took control of the kingdom as a whole. French liberals were doing quite fine on their own and therefore saw no need to cultivate union with more radical groups to advance their cause. Italy and Germany told a different story. Counterrevolutionary legitimist governments offered no opening to liberal participation in any of the numerous states composing these two large regions. Whatever their true feelings about other leftist forces might be, Italian and German liberals were lumped together with such "out groups" and therefore tempted to work together with them.

A number of militant Catholics crucial to the history of the Ninth Crusade inside and outside France were actually very much drawn to collaboration with this leftist anti-legitimist alliance. The attraction came from the fact that such militants, their consciousness raised by the troubles of the

French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815), were deeply disturbed by the conviction of many of their fellow Catholics that the massive disruption of the years 1789-1815 was the sole cause of the Church's lack of influence over political and social life. The corollary of such a conclusion was that fighting "the Revolution" required nothing other than defeating the "obvious" conspiracy that had promoted it and restoring the "legitimate counterrevolutionary authorities" of the pre-1789 era. And such a conclusion, the militants argued, was a terrible, self-deluding mistake.

For these soldiers of the Ninth Crusade came to see that their work was based upon learning, developing, and putting into practice themes and customs that had been buried by decades and even centuries of Protestant, naturalist, Jansenist, and simple parochial neglect. They understood that such a full revival alone could fight the Revolution and rescue Catholics from manipulation at the hands of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo. Depending upon energy, taste, and imagination, this drive to revival of a deeper knowledge of the Faith and militant action based upon a Christian pragmatism led them back to the Fathers of the Church, to the medieval scholastics, and to a mystical, devotional, and liturgical life rich in lessons for the science of ecclesiology and both Catholic community and individual life together.

The more our crusaders advanced in knowledge, the more they realized that belief in the sufficiency of a counterrevolutionary, legitimist Restoration was yet another in the long line of "alternative good stories" that misguided defenders of the Faith had swallowed throughout the ages while ignoring what the real problem before them always was: the rediscovery of the entire corrective and transforming mission of the Word made flesh and the cultivation of the

## REVOLUTION

tools needed to fulfill it. For believers had not been permitted to speak and act as real Catholics already for decades *before* the revolutionary disruptions in France, often with the aid of the very governments that now called themselves counterrevolutionary. This silencing of the Catholic voice had not only prevented believers from living as faithful Christians. Worse, still, it had created an atmosphere in which it was difficult for Catholics to discover what the teachings of the Church that affected them as individuals and social beings actually were in the first place.

It was sad but not terribly surprising therefore that the most powerful of the contemporary culprits muzzling the Catholic voice were the self-proclaimed friends and protectors of Christendom: legitimist sacred monarchies. In 1815, these had formed a "Holy Alliance", supposedly to fight the revolutionary demons of the Continent on behalf of Christianity itself. But this all too familiar sacred union *controlled* rather than protected Catholicism, subordinating spiritual corrective and transforming concerns to the "business as usual" demands of the legitimist understanding of "nature as is". Its chains were most painful where Protestants or Orthodox were the legitimate sacred monarchs, as in Prussia and Russia. Nevertheless, they were also quite burdensome under Catholic rulers, whose political and social goals were frequently inspired by the very Enlightenment ideals fomenting that Revolution they supposedly detested.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Mayeur, X, 670-792; Jedin and Dolan, VII, 85-104, 115-189; Rao, *Blindfold*; Blackbourn, pp. 91-137; J. Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 1-104; A. Gough, *Paris et Rome*:

Catholic activists in France were thus faced with a “most Christian” government that was the heir to a tradition of controls upon religion. Clerical political activity under such a “friendly” sacred monarchy had always led to an unseemly service of two masters, with the secular superior getting better attention than the spiritual and a consequent secularization of the Church’s own personnel. This tradition had been strengthened by the new Napoleonic Concordat, which, even while it “sold the pass” to the Ultramontanists by admitting papal authority to name an entirely new hierarchy, transformed bishops more than ever before into useful State functionaries. It was therefore potentially more beneficial for French liberals eager to rein in religious influence over society to encourage continuation of the “union of Church and State” and simply to gain control of the government machinery manipulating that union for its own benefit.

Hopes for a militant corrective, transforming Catholic action over the natural order were thus, in many respects, being stifled more effectively in Restoration Europe than ever before. The two most famous early representatives of the Ninth Crusade who raised their voices against this disastrous situation were the Savoyard, Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), and the Abbé Félicité de Lamennais (1782-1854). Both emphasized the long-lived character of the assault of the

---

*Les Catholiques Français et le Pape au XIX Siècle* (l’Atelier, 1985), pp. 19-83; R. Absalom, *Italy Since 1800* (Longman, 1995), pp. 1-25; A. Pellicciari, *L’altro Risorgimento* (Piemme, 2000), pp. 13-60; G. Cholvy and Y-M. Hilaire, *Histoire Religieuse de la France Contemporaine* (BHP, Three Volumes, 1985), I, *passim*; J-F Chiappe, *La France et le Roi* (Perrin, 1994), pp. 51-283; T. Chapman, *The Congress of Vienna* (Routledge, 1998).



## REVOLUTION

enemies of Christ in a way that put that events of 1789 and beyond in a broader historical perspective, with de Maistre in particular identifying the Protestant Reformation's seminal role in exchanging the guidance of the Word for mere words.<sup>55</sup>

Here we must deplore the glaring fallacy of a system {that is, Protestantism} which has divided Europe with such unfortunate consequences. Its partisans say: '*We believe only in the Word of God...*'. What a misuse of words! *We alone believe in the Word* while our dear *enemies* stubbornly persist in believing only *Scripture*. As if God could or would alter the nature of His creation and impart to Scripture the life and efficacy it lacks! The Holy Scripture—now then, is it not *a writing*? *Was it not formed with a pen and a little black fluid*? *Does it understand what to tell one man and what to hide from another*? Did not Leibnitz and his maidservant read the same words there? Can this writing be more than the *image of the Word*? However venerable it thus becomes, when we interrogate it, must it not *keep a divine silence*? If it were attacked or slurred, could it defend itself in the Father's absence? Praise be to the truth! If the immortal Word does not give life to Scripture, it will never become *speech*, that is to say, life. May the others invoke THE SILENT WORD as often as they please. We shall smile peacefully at this *false god* while ever awaiting with

---

<sup>55</sup> J. de Maistre, *On the Generative Principle of Constitutions*, XXII, in *On God and Society* (Regnery, 1967), pp. 31-32.

tender impatience the time when its disillusioned partisans will throw themselves into our arms, which have for nearly three centuries been ready to embrace them.

Both de Maistre and Lamennais became proponents of a more unified and militant Catholic endeavor to respond to this deeply rooted challenge. Nevertheless, the case of Lamennais illustrates that even this militancy could generate a permanent and tragic temptation for modern, activist defenders of the Faith. The path that he took—and suggested to future generations who would eagerly follow it—was one that helped to ensure enslavement to the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is” under the cover of a “good Catholic story” in many respects more seductive than any told to date.<sup>56</sup>

Lamennais, the son of a Breton bourgeois family ennobled one year before the outbreak of the Revolution, was ordained a priest in 1816. The success the following year of the first volume of his *Essay on Indifference in Matters of Religion* (four volumes, 1817-1823) caused many to view him as a modern-day Church Father. His enthusiasm for a revitalization of the Papacy and the episcopacy, clerical and lay political and social action, an impregnation of the State, education, the economic order, music, and art with a religious sense, a mobilization of the press as a teaching tool, and an

---

<sup>56</sup> J. de Maistre, *On God and Society*; Fitzer, pp. 187-223; Billington, pp. 125-364; J. Meinvielle, *De Lamennais à Maritain* (La Cité Catholique, 1949); Cranston, pp. 94-97; Mayeur, X, 427-477, 628-906; Jedin and Dolan, VII, 261-292.

## REVOLUTION

organization of Catholic energies on the international level quickly resonated throughout the European world.

The young priest's charisma can be measured by the quality of the men drawn to the Congregation of St. Peter, which he assembled at his estate of La Chênaie to study methods for resuscitating a dormant Christendom. The *Mennaisiens*, as their opponents often contemptuously labeled them, included in their ranks a large number of those who were to play major roles in all fields, lay and clerical, for many decades to come. Among these were Charles de Montalembert (1810-1870), future leader of that "Catholic Party" which fought for freedom of education in the French Parliament during the July Monarchy (1830-1848); Charles de Caux (1787-1864), social thinker and professor of economics at the University of Louvain; Jean Baptiste Lacordaire (1802-1861), who was instrumental in reestablishing the Dominican Order in France; Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875), Benedictine founder and proponent of liturgical reform; Olympe Philippe Gerbet (1798-1864), the theologian of the movement and Bishop of Perpignan; Alexis-François Rio (1797-1874), author of *De la poésie chrétienne* (1836); and René Rohrbacher (1789-1856), the Church historian.

Yet despite the brilliant careers of such disciples, Lamennais' own position within the Roman Catholic world was soon destroyed. His theories regarding Church-State relations — one of the keystones of his labors-- were rejected in Gregory XVI's (1831-1846) encyclical letter *Mirari vos* (August 15, 1832). The same pontiff excommunicated him personally in the letter entitled *Singulari nos* (June 21, 1834). Lamennais died in 1854, still out of communion with the Church. What evil spirit, his admirers have wondered, could possibly have

induced Rome symbolically to burn at the stake this male Joan of Arc, and precisely at the moment when he was pointing the way to a true liberation of the Catholic genius; to a seizing of the Catholic Moment to shape man and society?

Even a brief consideration of Lamennais' ideas provides the answer. The problem lay in his "liberation" of a Catholicism that was actually a new and different Faith than that of his Breton forebears; in his support for a belief system that seemed, at first glance, to exalt the supernatural, but ended by tossing it into a naturalist house of contradictory horrors from which it could never escape. For this "modern Church Father" did not ultimately base his religion upon the Apostolic Faith. Instead, he refashioned that Faith in a manner that reflects both the form of Enlightenment naturalism espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau as well as the evolutionary concept of change called *palingenesis*.

Rousseau-like statements of one form or another make an appearance in the writings of practically every revolutionary thinker of the nineteenth century. One finds them in the novels of Victor Hugo and Stendhal, in the political proclamations of the leaders of liberal as well as democratic and nationalist movements, and in the manifestos of the representatives of varied forms of contemporary socialism. One is constantly told that the proponents of The Cause are "feeling" men who have sincerely got in touch with their true nature and thus possess a virtue, an infallible intelligence, and a spiritual excellence that only dead souls could fail to recognize. One regularly learns that their opponents are enemies of the People who cannot be judged by the same standard as the revolutionary hero. After all, they do not subscribe to his teaching and are not incorporated into his Mystical Body. Thus, for Hugo, the revolt of a small segment

## REVOLUTION

of the awakened People accepting the hero's message is redemptive; the mass rebellion of the Catholic inhabitants of the Vendée is a vile riot. The massacres perpetrated by the former are Christ-like; a tap on the finger by the latter is the most wretched of crimes. Virtue lies all on one side, however animalistic its actions may be; animalism on the other, however rational and peaceful the behavior of its victimized supporters.

Lamennais served as one of Rousseau's chief conduits into the Catholic world. His path to becoming a passionate, natural, virtuous, infallible, heroic, revolutionary Rousseauian Everyman was paved by acceptance of the principle of "traditionalism". Traditionalism, in the nineteenth century, did not mean what it popularly signifies in our time, although we shall see at the conclusion of this work that it shared, in practice, some crucial points in common with its current namesake. In Lamennais' day, the word "traditionalism" identified a philosophical-theological outlook disdaining the role of Reason both in grasping truth and teaching the Faith. Truth, for Lamennais and nineteenth century traditionalists as a whole, was learned by individuals as social beings, under the active guidance of the historical institutions at the very core of society's "nature". In effect, it was the wholehearted opening to the vital force of these institutions that created believing, energetic *Catholic* Peoples. Truths lying behind institutional vitality were passed down through the process of living in the society that they formed. The Revolution's battle versus truth was effective not because of any rational struggle against ideas but due to its temporarily successful efforts to crush two crucial traditional institutions, the Church and the monarchy. For it was the

unified active energies of both that had led Frenchmen to accept and live the Faith. If Church and monarchy were ravaged, spiritual life and knowledge of the truth were also destined to be lost. Individuals could not be expected to understand the doctrines of the Faith as independent thinking atoms.

But here Lamennais encountered a terrible paradox. The Church, restored to legal institutional life after the Revolution, was not acting as the vital social force that she must be in order to have the desired spiritual effect. She ran the awful risk of not really electrifying men's social existence, and thus not passing down the message of Faith. It was necessary to shake Church structures out of their formalistic torpor and revive their will to give vital witness to the truth. This was ultimately the point of the *Essay on Indifference*, which was not a call for devotion to the intellectually elaborated doctrines of the Catholic Faith but, rather, a condemnation of half-hearted or lazy commitment preventing that "felt" witnessing to the truth that alone could be effective.

Committed, sincere witness could scarcely be offered if basic Church institutions were unable to live in accord with their own true "nature". Thus, the Papacy, thoroughly emasculated by the Enlightenment and the Revolution, had to have its integral rights and powers fully recognized and revived. Similarly, the bishops of each and every nation had to be free to follow their proper path under papal guidance. Place the Papacy and national episcopacies back in touch with their supernaturally "natural" character, and the spontaneous energetic life that would flow through their arteries would end religious indifference. The result would be

## REVOLUTION

an electrified, creative civilization of believing social individuals.

Lamennais had seen in the traditional Bourbon Monarchy of the French Restoration the force most apt to work together with the Church as a live battery charging Christian society and Christian man. He was a fervent contributor to legitimist journals such as *Le conservateur* and *Le drapeau blanc*. Gradually, however, the young priest became convinced that the monarchy actually had either little interest in or ability to do what was necessary to electrify Catholic civilization. It had turned its back on its own historical nature and mission.

One strong segment of legitimist opinion, represented most vigorously by François de Reynaud, the comte de Montlosier (1755-1838), in his *Mémoire à consulter sur un système religieux et politique tendant à renverser la religion, la société et le trône* (1826), was vigorously hostile to the idea of a Church living a spontaneous, independent life alongside a believing Monarchy.<sup>57</sup> Even more upsetting to Lamennais was the French Church authorities' apparent connivance in this betrayal. Legitimists, Lamennais began to think, sacrificed or redefined Church goals to suit their own unnatural and self-destructive ends. Catholics were culpable in trusting and even adulating these misguided secularist Pied Pipers. His reaction, in 1828, was to argue for a radical path to an ultimately restorative goal: a total end to a union of the deluded, abused Church with an unnaturally manipulative legitimist State, itself now in union with equally manipulative liberals. Separation alone could guarantee the

---

<sup>57</sup> For anticlerical activity in the first part of the century, see Leroy, pp. 5-111; on Montlosier, pp. 40-50; Mayeur, X, 627-906.

former a chance to get back in touch with her real nature and do her work in a way that would enable the Faith to survive and thrive.

1830 saw a Catholic-Liberal union in Belgium triumphantly overthrow a legitimist Dutch monarch unwilling to cooperate with either of these two groups and therefore harmful to both their quite different interests. France also succumbed to revolutionary fever that fateful year, replacing the legitimist Charles X with a liberal king from the Orléanist branch of the Bourbon Family, Louis-Philippe (1830-1848). Lammenais seized what he considered to be a general providential moment to found an outspoken journal, *L'Avenir (The Future)*, whose first issue appeared on October 16, 1830, under the motto "God and Liberty". *L'Avenir* was designed to become the mouthpiece of an international coalition of vital Catholics, a Holy Alliance of Peoples. Through its work, believers themselves would achieve what the old union of self-interested legitimist State and deceived national Church could or would not accomplish. In other words, if hypocritical or emasculated monarchies and episcopacies refused to undertake the necessary labor of getting in touch with their true nature and reanimating Christian society, then sincere, unpretentious, committed, believing Peoples as a whole would themselves energetically propel Church and State in Catholic nations to do their duty. The corrective and transforming mission of Catholicism would begin anew, and, in fact, with a vigor that was hitherto unknown to history.

Opposition from powerful circles in France and elsewhere was nevertheless so strong that the embattled Lamennais felt the need for papal confirmation of his vision. He thus temporarily suspended publication of *L'Avenir* in November



## REVOLUTION

of 1831 and set off with Lacordaire and Montalembert on a Roman "pilgrimage of liberty" to gain the blessing of Pope Gregory XVI. But despite the support of the Theatine philosopher, Fr. Gioacchino Ventura (1792-1861), and even of several cardinals, Rome proved to be unfavorable to his message. One by one, the "pilgrims of liberty" read the handwriting on the wall and left, Lamennais the last of all. The axe began to fall shortly thereafter, with *Mirari vos*. Then, following two years of further controversy regarding *L'Avenir*, *Mennaisien* enthusiasm for the Polish rebellion against Tsarist Russia, and the publication of Lamennais' controversial *Paroles d'un croyant*, came the aforementioned personal excommunication.

Our pilgrim of liberty was shocked. First, the French episcopacy had proven to be useless. Now the Papacy, the institution destined to benefit the most from an end to unnatural, legitimist State controls and episcopal collaborationism, had rejected the summons to vitality. The sincere, European-wide coalition of traditional-minded Catholic Peoples was thus left entirely to its own energies if Christianity were to survive and prosper. Lamennais called upon this Silent Catholic Majority to take up the task of teaching the Faith through the example of its vital living of its message---even if this should mean opposition to the pronouncements of its erstwhile papal leader, dethroned by his public display of "indifference".

A counterrevolutionary defense of a supernatural Faith now seemed, ironically, to be based upon a concept very much resembling the naturalist revolutionary principle of popular sovereignty. Lamennais had little trouble admitting as much, as he had by this point come to believe that vitality

itself was indeed a sure sign of the divine presence. Already in 1829, in *Progress of the Revolution*, he noted that the energetic fervor with which revolutionaries supported the doctrine of popular sovereignty demonstrated that there must be something solid and good behind it. Upheaval in 1830 merely confirmed him in this conviction. All that seemed to be lacking to the revolutionary vision was recognition that the truths taught by an energetic populace were not purely earthly ones. Vital Catholic Peoples possessed supernatural truths to which they had to testify, and would be able to give witness more effectively through further, democratic, revolutionary changes.

This brings us to the second influence on Lamennais, that of the concept of *palingenesis*. Formed from the Greek words "again" and "birth", palingenesis encouraged the notion that a "Third Age of Humanity" was emerging in the nineteenth century out of traditional western forces that most revolutionaries thought erroneously to be dead. Palingenesis was appealing to all defenders of modern ideas who still possessed a spiritual sense and did not want to jettison the entire Christian baggage of European civilization. These included men like Claude Henri de Saint Simon (1760-1825), Charles Fourier (1772-1837), Barthélemy Enfantin (1796-1864), Saint-Amand Bazard (1791-1832), and Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Such thinkers, horrified by destructive revolutionary violence, sought to illustrate how modernity could grow and develop, organically and peacefully, through the ages. They showed how one vital historical era was inevitably the prelude to the next; how the teachings of Jesus, the cult of the Virgin, a hierarchical priesthood, a liturgy, and many other elements of western civilization still played an energetic though transfigured role in modern life.

## REVOLUTION

Lamennais shared this good palingenesist story. Contemporary Catholicism, as far as he was concerned, was deeply flawed. "How far", he bitterly lamented, "we still are from that religion of devotion, of self-forgetfulness for the good of all; in sum, of that fraternity of which one speaks so much!"<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, historical Christianity had performed its basic task well. Its earlier vitality had prepared the way for a syncretist, universal religion that would electrify the Third Age of Humanity. If the familiar historic Faith were now dying, it was only because it was meant to be reborn in this new and better form.

Sincere, energetic, believing Catholic Peoples were to be the midwives of that birth. Following Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), poet and religious philosopher, and his friends, Alexander Towianski (1795-1878) and Julius Slowacki (1809-1849), Lamennais believed that Catholic Poland was pointing the route to the future. For, as Mickiewicz demonstrated in his *Book of the Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims* (1834), the preface for which was written by Montalembert, the contemporary revival of the seemingly dead Polish people was making it into the Christ among nations. Poland was destined to carry forward and improve upon the redemptive mission of the Savior, uniting all peoples and religions into a new, common worship of the Almighty, transforming and perfecting a praiseworthy but superannuated Catholicism. Europe, according to Lamennais, faced a stark choice between hope and despair. It could either place its faith in the People and palingenesis, or it would be delivered over to nihilism. "There will be no more middle way between faith and

---

<sup>58</sup> Mayeur, X, 866.

nothingness", he wrote to de Maistre with respect to the dilemma facing the world-in-birth; "Everything is extreme today. There is no dwelling place in between".<sup>59</sup> A dramatic "good story" this truly was, but one troubled by many internal problems.

One of these was the fact that the choice for Faith was complicated by the horrible truth that the Catholic Peoples themselves seemed to lack the requisite energy to accept, live, and thereby teach the activist, palingenesis program. They, too, were resistant to the command to get in touch with their true nature, indifferent to performance of the tasks vital to their role, and even susceptible to the continued influence of the hypocritical, artificial ecclesiastical and political authorities around them. Still, there was a way out of this nightmare. If the Catholic Peoples remained unconscious, then an enlightened prophet, a Rousseauian Everyman, could express their infallible message while awaiting their awakening.

Lamennais was that man. He must himself speak for the "dumb" Catholic Peoples and work to raise their consciousness from its unnatural torpor. He must destroy those who would stand in the way of their maturation. Isocrates' heroic leader had returned in his person. Hence, his openness to Giuseppe Mazzini's (1809-1872) call to leadership of a regenerated, God-loving priesthood; a vanguard that would establish the new heaven and the new earth; a "Church of Precursors which I should like to see you found while waiting for the People to rise".<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Billington, p. 123.

<sup>60</sup> Mayeur, X, 893.

## REVOLUTION

Why do you only write books? Humanity awaits something more from you...Do not deceive yourself, Lamennais, we need action. The thought of God is action; it is only by action that it is incarnated in us...So long as you will be alone, you will only be a philosopher and a moralist in the eyes of the masses; it is as a priest that you must appear before it, a priest of the future, of the epoch which is beginning, of that new religious manifestation of which you have a presentiment, and which must inevitably end in that new heaven and new earth which Luther glimpsed three centuries ago without being able to attain it, since the time had not yet come.

We are now in a much better position to understand the depth of the error lying behind the project central to our "Joan of Arc's" ecclesiastical condemnation: his call for a total separation of Church and State. *Mennaisien* separation, quite simply put, is a monstrous fraud, made possible by the convoluted reasoning of Rousseauian naturalism. That fraud has been remarkably successful, convincing the average thinking man that separation finally ensures the possibility for a liberated Church to operate according to her own spiritual nature in a free and properly focused State. Yet, under the cover of a public Church-State divorce, it actually ensures that these two institutions are more *dangerously* fused together than ever before in Christian History; that they are both placed under far more devastating secularist, demagogic control than at the most corrupt moments of traditional regimes professing their official union.

Unnatural fusion comes from the fact that in Lammenais' revolutionary universe ultimate authority in both institutions lies in exactly the same hands: those of "the People's Prophet". This man—or party—understands that People's true character and desires. He must do everything in his powers to arouse it to an awareness of what he understands it unconsciously longs to know, and he must destroy anyone standing in his path. The reason Lamennais does not have to worry about clashes between an independent Church and State on matters where their jurisdiction over creatures of body and soul intersect is that a collision, in his system, cannot possibly take place. How could there be any tension of authorities when all power is invested in the hands of the Everyman-Prophet, from whose judgments only the Rousseauian Enemy of the People might think of making appeal? And how could any such Enemy, non-human as he is, be permitted to point out the incredible swindle that was being perpetrated? Or how could he be treated seriously if he succeeded in having his animalistic voice heard? What Lamennais had illegitimately and surreptitiously linked together, no dehumanized supporter of a dignified public union might put asunder!

Vulgar, naturalist demagoguery triumphs in the Third Age of Humanity due to Church and State submission to an Everyman-Prophet/Party whose decisions are rooted in an arrogant willfulness disguised as both the height and *limit* of spirituality. Ultimately, it is only energetic passion and vital will that are kings in the land shaped by the new Christianity that they represent. Religion, republicanism, and socialism mean what the Prophet/Party want them to mean. When the victory of the Spirit is lauded by Lamennais and his disciples, one can be absolutely certain that this will surely entail, on

## REVOLUTION

the contrary, a total immersion in what every sane man recognizes to be either irrational willfulness or its ideological justification.

Quicksand lies everywhere in Lamennais' Rousseauian Third Age of Humanity. One thing always dissolves into another within it. Spiritual truths are grounded in commitment to natural passion and will power. Innately energetic Catholic Peoples opposed to palingenesis are condemned for their manifest lethargy. Getting in touch with their true nature requires annihilation of what they themselves believe that nature to be. A single individual speaks infallibly and democratically for an entire hostile People armed with rational arguments and all too eager to crush his wishes. Contradiction after contradiction piles up. Whoever unmask the deceptions somehow proves his own artifice and dissembling hypocrisy, voluntarily resigns from the human race, and justifies his future obliteration at the hands of the prophet of the humble and the weak. Marsilius of Padua had returned from the grave, and with a democratic, individualist, and rhetorical vengeance that only the intervening influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau could have made possible.

*G. Marching Orders for the Soldiers of the Word (1830-1848)*

When admirers of Lamennais condemn Gregory XVI for his supposed slavishness to legitimist secularism, what they are really criticizing is the pope's efforts to enunciate a *truly* supernatural sense of Christian evangelization, its consequences, and the difficulties of promoting it effectively

in a world of sinful men, both hypocritical and “sincere”. This involved encouraging a good deal of the same activism that the prophet himself had favored. For neither Lamennais’ vocal critique of the manipulation of religion by existing European states, nor his exploration of a variety of new religion-friendly studies, nor his openness to untraditional systems of government came under the attack of this “obscurantist” pontiff.<sup>61</sup>

Gregory XVI, the demonized scourge of the new Joan of Arc, himself dedicated the Papacy to a liberation of the Church from secular domination in *Commissum Divinitas* (17 May, 1835). He supported the famous German activist campaign protesting the Prussian government’s imprisonment of Archbishop Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering (1773-1845) of Cologne after that prelate tried to enforce canonical requirements regarding mixed marriages in his homeland. The same pontiff both recognized the Latin American republics that had revolted against the legitimate Spanish monarchy and also worked with the new liberal-Catholic Belgian Union. Moreover, Gregory never required *Mennaisiens* who had broken with their master to abandon the varied activist paths that he had marked out for them, politically controversial though these might be. Neither did he rein in Catholics, the recently revived members of the Society of Jesus prominent among them, who developed contacts with representatives of “modern” schools of philosophical, political and social thought. If a masculine Joan of Arc had been symbolically burned at the stake, many of the followers of his ideas concerning Catholic rediscovery of the

---

<sup>61</sup> Mayeur, X, 779-906; XI, 113-345.



## REVOLUTION

fullness of the message of the Faith continued to thrive quite nicely.

A major reason why so many of the successors of Lamennais could carry out their work without trouble from Rome was the emphasis they placed upon his call for "freedom of association" rather than his demand for an immediate and total "separation of Church and State". Almost all of these activists understood such a separation, given the joint spiritual-physical nature of the beings ruled over by each, to be a theoretical and practical impossibility. Freedom of association, however, would ensure a necessary Catholic influence upon society without impairing either the State's just prerogatives or the Church's own supernatural mission.<sup>62</sup>

It would do so, on the one hand, by allowing the entirety of the Catholic laity to express those of its religious concerns that had social implications. The laity, being a large mass of men, was neither an integral part of the government nor directly moved by the more suspicious self-interested aims of its secular rulers. It was also, by definition, not the clergy, and this meant that action by mobilized lay pressure groups would keep the clerical estate's hands clean of everything but the dogmatic and spiritual guidance that its apostolic mission justly demanded from it.

On the other hand, freedom of association for national episcopacies and other clerical groups would create initiatives stimulating better training on the part of bishops and priests. This in turn, would ensure still more solid teaching and

---

<sup>62</sup> Blackbourn, pp. 146-147; Sperber, pp. 161-162; Jedin and Dolan, VII, 294-349.

spiritual guidance for the laity. Should both clerical and lay associations freely come into operation, true Catholic doctrine would have a chance to make a real impact on society in a proper fashion. At the very least, lay activists who were tempted to engage in dubious battles with the government for tainted, self-interested, secular reasons would not compromise the prestige and mission of the supernatural Teaching Church as such, and the age old plague of secular minded clerical politicians would finally be eradicated.

Institutions like Lamennais' Congregation of St. Peter and the Belgian Catholic Union of the 1820's were examples of what proponents of freedom of association wanted to form. Countless other clerical and lay societies were added over time, ranging from the communities of Dom Prosper Guéranger to Pauline Jaricot's (1799-1862) Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and Frédéric Ozanam's (1813-1853) Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul. Catholic Action's potential political clout was soon obvious. France witnessed it, first and foremost, in the form of a determined resistance to regulations hindering the establishment of new religious congregations and their use as teachers in a school system opened to Catholic guidance.

Catholic activists in Italian and German states that applied tight governmental controls analogous to those in France were very keen supporters of the freedom of association principle. This was partly because of the fact that there was no union of the Roman Church with Protestant states, and partly because controls in all of them, the Catholic ones included, were choking liberals as well as radicals, thereby making the demand for "freedom" a much more general one.

## REVOLUTION

In fact, Germany's role in encouraging the free formation of associations dedicated to "Catholic Action" was in many respects even more seminal than that of France. It began with the creation of various lay-clerical "circles", such as that of Princess Adele Amalie Gallitsyn (1748-1806) in Münster already in the 1770's, and others in Bonn, Landshut, Mainz, Munich and Vienna by the next century. German Catholics actively transformed instances of counterrevolutionary governmental repression into major *causes célèbres*. The most famous of these, stirred by the publication of Joseph Görres' *Athanasius* (1838) and Karl Ernst Jarcke's numerous articles in the *Historisch-politische Blätter*, underlined the significance of that imprisonment of Archbishop Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering (1773-1845) of Cologne already noted above.<sup>63</sup>

Such unfamiliar political outspokenness, in Italy as well as Germany, led to embittered legitimist demands for a return to humble acceptance of the religious policies of the sacred monarchies. But calls to order of this kind merely strengthened activists' determination to lay bare the fraud of a supposed regalist respect for the Faith. Alliance with such states, they argued, could do the cause of Catholic influence over society no discernible good. Perhaps the model of Belgium should be followed everywhere? Perhaps friendship with groups promising the creation of free, responsive institutions might succeed in breaking the chains on a salutary Catholic Action?

---

<sup>63</sup> Mayeur, XI, 299-345; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 3-79; G. Goyau, *L'Allemagne religieuse: Le Catholicisme* (Paris, Four Volumes, 1905).

When Pope Pius IX, in 1846, appeared to make that principle his own, allowing freedom for all manner of groups and ideas in the Eternal City, an era of revolutionary-Catholic cooperation in Germany, Italy, and France looked as though it were on the verge of arriving. It was this spirit that gave the initial stages of the 1848 revolutions in those countries the character of an *agape*, a so-called "springtime of peoples" where representatives of the Enlightenment and the traditional Faith could march in step together. The call for "freedom" was then expanded upon to involve the principle of separation as well, with the goal of a "free Church" operating happily in independence of a "free State". How could a "free Church", with free Catholic associations of all kinds forming everywhere, not be allowed to shape a "free State" responsive to the will of a believing population?

Certainly the movement to promote the formation of properly motivated Catholic associations, lay and clerical, *did* gain further steam in those nations adopting liberal or democratic political institutions in the latter nineteenth century. A glance at the situation in Germany during and after the Revolution of March of 1848 is instructive in this regard. The so-called March Days brought with them the establishment in Mainz of the Pius Association for Religious Freedom, named after the new Roman Pontiff. Five months later, there were several hundred branches of this *Piusverein*. Their first general meeting took place in Mainz on October 1<sup>st</sup>, at which time a universal German Catholic Association was created. This then held seventeen Catholic Conferences in the years between 1850 and 1870, giving birth to many more subsidiary organizations, including charitable ones modeled on Ozanam's Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, Adolf Kolping's (1813-1865) workingmens' aid association, an

## REVOLUTION

aesthetic institute promoting the mystical-artistic ideas of the Nazarenes (who felt that they needed to be saints in order to paint well), the Görres Society, dedicated to scholarly and educational activity, and committees for the Defense of the Papal States and the founding of a Catholic University.<sup>64</sup>

The clergy also took advantage of revolutionary chain rattling to liberate their teaching mission from rigid State control. Groundbreaking episcopal conferences were held at Würzburg from October 22-November 16, 1848 and in Vienna by the spring of 1849. Both the Austrian Concordat of 1855 and the 1867 regularization of the meetings of the German bishops at Fulda and Freising testified to an ever-growing recognition of the need for an episcopal independence and cooperation guaranteeing effective Catholic teaching regarding political as well as other more spiritual matters. The vision of the proponents of freedom of association seemed as though it might actually be coming true. But, then again, first appearances are not always correct ones, as our next chapter will make abundantly clear. For much more correction and transformation in Christ of an unruly fallen world would prove to be necessary before substantial progress could be made against the potent modern pillars of support for "nature as is".

---

<sup>64</sup> Mayeur, XI, 301-345; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 3-79.

## The Ninth Crusade: Retrenchment and Renewed Assault

### *A. Revolutionary Word Games*

Catholic activists of the first half of the nineteenth century were deeply encouraged by the example of Blessed Pius IX and nurtured the same pilgrim spirit that seemed to motivate him in their attempts to confront the modern world. They were extremely eager to use the Revolutions of 1848 to work together with anyone seeking the creation of a more just political and social system. Given their unpleasant experiences with the Right, they were especially ready to join with those men of the Left who had been prevented from taking part in public affairs by either the counterrevolutionary governments of Italy and the German world or the liberal regime represented by the French July Monarchy.

## CRUSADE

But Ninth Crusader good will was based on one crucial premise. It was founded upon the belief that liberals, democrats, nationalists, and all the other leftist revolutionary groups that had emerged through logical developments of the same underlying naturalist concepts might actually permit the words “freedom”, “freedom of association”, and “a free Church in a free State” to mean what these Catholic activists thought that they meant. Alas, and to their shock, it swiftly became clear that no friends of “nature as is” were going to allow such a thing to happen. Revolutionary interpretations of what these important terms signified were in theory and in practice just too different from that of servants of the Word Incarnate to be of any benefit to the latter.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, crises in the liberal governments of France and Belgium in the 1830’s and 1840’s had already clearly indicated the reality of this word definition problem. The Revolutions of 1848 merely made the innate difficulties more obvious still. Militants of the Word began to realize that liberals, democrats, nationalists, and socialists all defined the term “freedom” in such a way as to ensure the victory of their particular faction. They realized too that their repeated expressions of devotion to liberty served simply as a hypocritical cover for their use of the machinery of the State to continue to repress any and all true Catholic action. Nineteenth century leftists therefore proved to be just as

---

<sup>1</sup> On the basic problem, Mayeur, XI, 171-345; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 83-120; Sperber, pp. 143, 148-238; A. Pellicciari, *Risorgimento da Riscrivere* (Ares, 1998), pp. 9-80 and *passim*; *L’Altro Risorgimento* (Piemme, 2000).

much false friends as most nineteenth century rightist legitimists. The Liberty Club had a sign on its door saying "no Catholics need apply". Any "freedom" that they were willing to grant to believers to defend their "rights" turned out to have an Enlightenment-shaped foundation involving certain conditions which were impossible for the faithful both to accept and to fulfill.

As events transpired, the more radical among the revolutionary forces lost out almost everywhere in the years between 1848 and 1852. Liberals, along with those nationalists who were prepared to jettison their democratic connections, alone made further gains. These two groups, acting in tandem, found ways of working together with legitimists in the Kingdoms of Sardinia and Prussia who were eager to use both of them for the strengthening of their ruling dynasties. French Liberals concerned primarily with economic questions eventually insinuated themselves into an alliance with yet another Bonaparte, Louis Napoleon (1808-1873), first as President of the Second Republic (1848-1852) and as the Emperor Napoleon III (1852-1870) thereafter. Catholic "freedom of association" and "a free Church in a free State" were then interpreted in these lands to signify precisely whatever the peculiar configuration of their governments wished them to mean.

Acceptance of their interpretations brought with it a demand for Catholic submission to one of two possible scenarios. The Church could agree to a "judgment of Solomon" that allowed a believer's spirit no right to impact upon his body and the world around him, since the physical environment was obliged to function according to purely "natural" material concerns alone. Barring this, she could accept a redefinition of the word "spirit" that identified the



## CRUSADE

voice of God as speaking in history through the pronouncements of either of the two different types of States in question.

Under these circumstances, an energetic "free Church" that was in the process of rediscovering the meaning of the Incarnation and dared to make known its views on the connection of spirit and matter had to come under severe assault. She had to be scourged as a hypocritical enemy of liberty, progress, and even a proper understanding of God as well. For freedom could never be given to the obvious enemies of freedom. Ninth Crusaders who were proponents of such errors could be allowed no rights. Only a Church and Catholic activists who behaved properly, in accord with the principles of the liberals and their various allies, could be considered truly worthy of liberty and its justifiable employment:<sup>2</sup>

A sad condition of the times is this: in civilized Europe, where in the nineteenth century an alleged freedom of conscience is highly extolled, and particularly in those European countries in which this liberty is most solemnly proclaimed, not merely the clergy, but all Catholic peoples, in the name of that same liberty, are reduced to the harsh alternative of choosing between the observance of the law like apostates or the holy disobedience of martyrs.

*B. The Christ of the Barricades*

---

<sup>2</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 11 (1855), 336.

Most of the post-1848 liberal-influenced governments would have preferred obtaining voluntary Catholic compliance with their measures rather than arousing a resistance requiring a severe repression that could, in turn, engender a powerful religious backlash. One way in which they hoped that they might perhaps obtain even an enthusiastic Catholic compliance was by emphasizing the new revolutionary threat posed by democratic socialism. The rhetorical arguments used by liberals in discussing that threat in the years after 1848 produced an almost unchangeable "good story" that has been successfully told to many Catholics in countries ranging from mid-nineteenth century France to twenty first century America. Such a record of success makes examination of the genesis and main features of this anti-socialist tale a valuable undertaking. But doing so first requires a look at that demonized Socialist Movement in and of itself.

"Socialism" in the period leading down to 1848 was much more vague a concept than it became in the 1890's under the influence of the Second International. Half a century earlier, it literally meant anything from a simple desire to have a guaranteed job, to the vision of a dramatic transformation of human life through a voluntary cooperative reorganization of politics and society, to the first expressions both of anarchism and materialist Marxism. If anything, it was its more romantic, cooperative manifestations that dominated the earlier years of the 1800's, when many visionaries prophesied the swift arrival of a socio-political order that would be jointly democratic and socialist in character; an "age of gold under the sign of universal fraternity through social justice".<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Mayeur, X, 864.

## CRUSADE

Socialists of this romantic-democratic character could and did make an appeal for the support of Catholic palingenesists like Lamennais. Why would they not do so? Was it not perfectly reasonable for them to claim that socialism shared with Catholicism a concern for the common good and the well being of the poorest of the poor? And was it not the case that there was a seemingly irresistible energy accompanying the birth and development of the Socialist Movement, demonstrating to men like Lamennais that it must somehow be favored by the Holy Spirit; that Christ, were he alive at this moment in time, would inevitably militate in its ranks alongside its poverty-stricken and persecuted supporters? In short, was it not true that a democratic socialist republic was just another name for a Christian commonwealth in the new form required by the nineteenth century? How could anyone deny, in consequence, that contemporary Catholics with a pilgrim spirit had a religious duty to join socialists—and Christ—on the barricades in any current revolutionary upheaval?<sup>4</sup>

Lamennais and many other Catholic palingenesists took that socialist appeal seriously, responding favorably to it. Nevertheless, most believers, along with other Europeans, only became aware of the existence and possible strength of a Socialist Movement due to the Parisian uprising in 1848 called the June Days. This rebellion was brought on by the sudden closing of the so-called National Workshops created by the new, revolutionary, democratic French government to

---

<sup>4</sup> On the Catholic response, see Mayeur, X, 837-908; XI, 5-43; Billington, pp. 208-364; F. Bowman, *Le Christ des Barricades: 1789-1848* (Cerf, 1987).

provide jobs for the many unemployed laborers of Paris who were suffering the effects of the latest European-wide industrial depression. Seizing control of the large working class district of the city, outraged workers eventually mobilized tens of thousands of disillusioned and desperate "socialists" to man the city barricades. The rebels were only suppressed by the Second Republic through a deployment of regular army troops and with that great bloodshed that led the defeated "socialists" to adopt a Red flag as the future symbol of their now much more embittered movement.

### *C. The Christ of the Party of Order*

French liberals welcomed that suppression and, in a sense, the very uprising that allowed it, with overwhelming joy. They themselves had been the chief targets of the 1848 revolution, which had ended with the granting of the democratic vote that they had dreaded since 1794 as an opening to renewed attacks on individual private property. The June Days not only confirmed their fears but also gave them a wonderful means of playing upon the terror of all property owners in order to regain at least some of their very recently lost influence. What all morally upright and far-sighted men should now do, they argued, was to create a unified, anti-socialist Party of Order. And Catholics, who knew that the individual's title to property was a God-given right, were called upon to do their doctrinal and moral duty and join this party, perhaps enlisting in its ranks even before everyone else. In other words, the liberal bourgeoisie was arguing that if Christ were alive in 1848, He, too, would enthusiastically join the Party of Order.

## CRUSADE

There was, however, one catch. Catholics entering the property-friendly coalition were summoned to accept the liberal contention that socialism was the only “real” leftist danger. This made a certain sense from their standpoint. Liberals had never seen the need for following the logic of their naturalist Enlightenment principles to its more consistent radical conclusions. They had only wanted a “little” revolution to achieve their economic freedom, and now recognized that the very word “revolution” was perhaps nasty in and of itself. In fact, having been “mugged” by the democrats and the socialists in 1848, many of them did not even like the name “liberal” any longer, considering it redolent of old Jacobin memories. What they felt they really should be called was “conservative”. Better still, they might even be identified as “counterrevolutionary”. In fact, liberalism could perhaps be recognized as the only truly “common sense” filled counterrevolutionary movement—a political vision awakened both to “the real danger” posed by “obvious” revolutionaries, as well as the beneficence of the good, solid, “traditional” ideas of the Enlightenment and the “nice bits” of the “principles of 1789” emerging from them.<sup>5</sup>

### *D. The Christ of Liberal Catholicism*

---

<sup>5</sup> On liberals, conservatives, and opponents of both, see Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 171-345; Sperber, pp. 148-238; J.M. Thompson, *Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire* (Noonday, 1955), pp. 76-136; G. Bordonove, *Napoleon III* (Pygmalion, 1998), pp. 66-118; A.C. Jemolo, *Chiesa e Stato in Italia dalla unificazione agli anni settanta* (Einaudi, 1977), pp. 3-46; Rao, *Blindfold, passim*; Gildea, pp. 80-264.

It was only some very few nineteenth century Catholics, mostly intellectuals, writers, and activists influenced by palingenesisist arguments, who had responded to the demand of socialists to see Christ manning their revolutionary barricades. Many more ordinary believers were aroused by the disturbances of the June Days to see Him in the Party of Order. Shocked by certain open critiques of property that accompanied and followed the Paris uprising, this latter group of Catholics did not investigate its deeper causes and its really quite variegated "socialist" complaints, many of them actually much more traditionally-minded in their concern for family and home than anything the liberals had to say. Instead, it lunged for the liberal, conservative, and supposedly counterrevolutionary capitalist bait with enthusiasm, joining, fervently, in the common crusade against the new and "really revolutionary" evil. Those who did so, obligingly condemned fellow-believers who refused to jettison the broader philosophical and historical battle with Enlightenment liberalism along with Catholics who had proven to be radical enough to set up their tents in the socialist camp. Both were chastised as shameless, and probably godless, rabble-rousers.

Many other French Catholics were frightened primarily by the demagoguery they feared might characterize the democratic system created by the Second Republic. These believers were happier with what they judged to be the more prudent machinery for expressing rational popular will provided by that English-like liberal constitutionalism that had taken root in France under the July Monarchy of Louis Philippe. Some of their number did, indeed, accept the anti-socialist arguments of the Party of Order. Others did not.

## CRUSADE

Whatever their attitude with respect to the conservative liberals, however, this segment of the believing population, with the Comte de Montalembert and the editors and contributors to the journal called *Le Correspondant* at its head, formed the faction that soon became known to the world as Liberal Catholics.<sup>6</sup>

Montalembert had abandoned Lamennais after *Mirari vos*. We have seen that he continued to pursue many of the goals of the Ninth Crusade that the excommunicated prophet had helped to stimulate. In doing so, he had become the parliamentary head of the Catholic Party during the reign of Louis Philippe. Montalembert was especially active politically as a champion of Catholic rights to set up their own schools and send their children to them. But after the regime changes in 1848 and 1852, especially from the time of his book, *On the Interests of Catholics in the Nineteenth Century* (1852), his arguments took on more and more of a *palingenesis* character. Hence, although he and those who agreed with him admitted that the Faith once was definitely anti-liberal in spirit, they claimed that it now was God's will that it be reconciled with its former enemy.

Once again, therefore, Christ was given a definite favorite in the political arena. This was not simply liberalism in its role as defender of economic freedom, which the Second Empire of Napoleon III, to the delight of the bourgeoisie, actively promoted. Montalembert detested the revival of

---

<sup>6</sup> Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 113-136, 171-345. 463-729; R. Aubert, *Pie IX* (Histoire de l'Église, Bloud et Gay, XXI, 1952) pp. 54-57, 193-211, 250-252; A. Simon, *L'hypothèse libérale en Belgique* (Wetteren, 1956), p. 169; *Le parti catholique belge 1830-1945* (Brussels, 1958).

Bonapartist despotism as much as he did the possible dangers of demagogic democracy. Instead, he seemed to have believed that if Christ were alive in the 1850's, He would most certainly militate in the ranks of those who wanted a liberal constitutional government. He used a slightly less radical way of making exactly that same point at the congress of Catholic activists that took place in 1863 at Malines, in Belgium, where he stressed the absolute necessity, "under modern conditions", of the acceptance of liberal definitions of such tendentious terms as "freedom" and "separation of Church and State".

Montalembert addressed that congress on the importance of abandoning any and all reliance on privileges and State protection in the defense of Catholicism. He admitted that coercion had played a necessary role in the past, but insisted that its historical success in establishing Christian order and creating mature, adult, Christian men dictated the need to put it aside in modern times. Catholics, he concluded, must realize that liberal freedom of expression had now become the refuge of the weak and the helpless against the strong and the wicked. Religious liberty and the separation of Church and State now actually provided a superior basis for sound Catholic action than that offered by civil protection in the past. A proto-liberal freedom of conscience, he argued, was already the underlying cause of France's glory in the arts in the seventeenth century. In contemporary France, it was responsible for the positive attitudes manifested towards Catholicism during the Revolution of 1848. Retention of non-liberal systems and practices in the nineteenth century,



## CRUSADE

Montalembert insisted, would merely promote further revolution.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, cooperation with liberalism, was the Church's—and, in fact, the counterrevolution's—greatest shield against violent change. The sole hope of counterrevolution, in other words, was reliance on the defense offered by one of the moderate pillars of the Revolution itself. Critics listening to his fervent expression of prophetic certainty at Malines wondered whether Montalembert allowed anyone to question his interpretation of the current situation, and whether they, as Catholics, had the right to try to correct and transform in Christ aspects of liberal constitutionalism “as is”. We shall soon see that they discovered this to be impossible. Liberal constitutionalism had to be accepted in and of itself. The pilgrim spirit came to a definitive end once a modern constitution guaranteeing liberal freedoms had become the basic law of a given land.

A spirit of openness to the conservative liberal mentality was also noticeable in certain Catholic circles elsewhere in Europe, particularly in Italy and the German countries, not to speak, of course, of Britain. This friendship for “the principles of 1789”—once again, only the acceptably “nice bits”—was often expressed in these lands in calls not simply for a parliamentary system or for economic freedom but also for a “modern liberty” even in Catholic philosophical, theological, and historical work. It is sufficient to mention men such as Ignaz von Döllinger (1799-1890), the great German Church

---

<sup>7</sup> Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 113-136, 171-223; Simon, p. 169; Rao, *Blindfold*, pp. 186-196.

historian, and his English admirer, Lord John Acton (1834-1902), to illustrate this broader liberal position.

Döllinger's speech on "The Past and Present of Theology" at the Congress of Munich in September of 1863 was a declaration of war upon authoritative ecclesiastical controls on Catholic scholarly research and publication. It was issued in the name of a liberal desire for freedom of expression paralleling similar demands for liberty in the economic realm. Döllinger implied that there had to be a revolution in the Church's Magisterium in order to aid the general progress of mankind. Hence, he argued that the teaching authority had to bend its "dogmatism" to suit the conclusions of "free" theological research—most especially if this research were undertaken by enlightened Germans, innately more industrious than leisure-loving Romans who closed their libraries much too early in the day to his tastes. Döllinger's address also represented a vigorous reaction both to Ninth Crusade support for an enhancement of the powers of the Papacy as well as its rehabilitation of speculative, systematic theology. We shall have reason to discuss these crusading themes and his criticisms in much greater detail below.<sup>8</sup>

Liberal Catholicism was not destined to remain united, in the same way that liberalism pure and simple was bound to division. Whether Catholic or secular in origin, liberals tended to veer down varied pathways depending upon either personal "choice" regarding which modern conditions seemed more pressing in their demands for accommodation on the part of believers or deeper meditation on the logical consequences of the movement's basic principle of individual

---

<sup>8</sup> Mayeur, XI, 116; also, 15-43, 113-136, 299-314; Aubert, pp. 193-211

## CRUSADE

“freedom”. Thus, those liberal Catholics most insistent upon the primary importance of personal economic freedom and fearful of the demagoguery of democracy became conservative liberals, often dropping the “liberal” part of that appellation altogether, like their secular counterparts. Others, more concerned with the spread of liberty to the mass of the population than with a fear of its general abuse, became liberal democrats. From that point onwards, they were capable of embracing the teachings either of democratic nationalism or democratic socialism. Although these varied outcroppings of liberal Catholics could then bitterly quarrel with one another, they did remain united in one common loathing for their opponents inside the Roman Church. And these opponents seemed definitively to have gained the upper hand against them during the reign of Pope Pius IX.

*E. The Intransigent Vision*

It is the intellectuals and educated activists among the opponents of the liberal Catholics who are of most interest to the present argument. Disciples of this anti-liberal school of thought and action have produced few historians familiar to English-speaking audiences. Hence, they have generally had their portrait painted by supporters of liberal Catholicism who are hostile to their basic perspective. The likeness that such liberals have rendered is not a happy one. Spokesmen for this position have been censured for their lack of Christian charity, a want of discernment, and an attempt to fossilize the Catholic mentality that leaves it lifeless in the midst of a vigorous modernity. Perhaps the most constantly reiterated theme has been their espousal of a blind, unintelligent,

"intransigence", making civilized, rational discourse with them an absolute impossibility. Intransigents have been labeled "vile", "impertinent", "ignorant", "police informers", "a fistful of pedants", "absolutist opponents of every principle of progress and liberty", and, in effect, proto-fascists.<sup>9</sup> Anyone whose understanding of the intransigents has been derived from the judgment of their critics alone must conclude that the best that might be said of such inquisitorial mountebanks and villains is that they represented another form of shallow reaction to revolutionary developments and that they were dedicated to a narrow, self-interested defense of dying privileges. As one enemy depicted them:<sup>10</sup>

...with an intransigence sometimes trembling with fanaticism {they proclaimed} their bloc condemnations of the modern world, which they saw as radically vitiated by liberal ideology, and presented as the sole view compatible with orthodoxy their political and religious conceptions of privileges in the womb of an officially Catholic State not subject to the pressure of public opinion.

---

<sup>9</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 2 (1850), 688n; I, 7 (1851), 232; Minghetti, III, 17-18; see also Mayeur, XI, 35-43, 171-345. 463-729.

<sup>10</sup> Aubert, p. 228; on intransigents and their enemies, see Jemolo, pp. 3-46; Gough, pp. 85-131, 221-308; Pellicciari, *Risorgimento da Riscrivere*, pp. 73-80, 235-236, 246; *L'altro Risorgimento*, pp. 56-60, 157-163, 171-177, all on the liberal fraud; Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 264-366, 501-569; Rao, *Blindfold*, *passim*.

## CRUSADE

Let me hasten to admit that there is no doubt that there certainly were enemies of the liberal Catholics who aptly fit this description of them. Nevertheless, the leaders and writers whom Montalembert, Döllinger, and their friends most castigated as “intransigents” did not deserve such a caricature of their viewpoint. What they actually offered was a powerful intellectual and rhetorical expression of many of the lessons learned by the Ninth Crusaders since the days of the French Revolution in consequence of their rediscovery of the full message of the Word in history. In their arguments, one finds a coherent discussion of the whole vision of acceptance, correction, and transformation in Christ of all of the teachings of God’s Creation, the disaster of abandoning this effort in order to satisfy the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is”, a devastating critique of the “alternative good story” that the members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo told about their willful goals, and precisely that kind of pilgrim opening to modern steps in the dance of life that liberal Catholics erroneously claimed that intransigents unthinkingly rejected. An examination of but two of the most important among many similar intransigent sources is sufficient to get a flavor of the entire movement.

One of these was the Roman periodical, *La Civiltà Cattolica*. This Jesuit journal, founded in 1850, received papal funding, enjoyed easy access to the Vatican, and was frequently granted the public blessing and commendation of the Holy See. It intentionally dedicated itself from its first issue to the systematic development of Catholic political and social theory, a mission that it fulfilled by providing reflective essays, satirical articles, novelettes, news commentary, book reviews, and verse on every variety of contemporary issue.

This gave it a coherence that enables it to be studied as one piece---precisely as the work of a particular school of thought. Moreover, *Civiltà* writers were influential, if not directly responsible for the inspiration of papal documents ranging from the Syllabus of Errors (1864) to *Rerum novarum* (1891), all of them central to the growth of what would be referred to as Catholic Social Doctrine. In fact, it understood development of this doctrine to be the pilgrim wave of the future: <sup>11</sup>

It will come, there is no doubt about it. A day will come in which social and juridical theory will shine forth with that certitude with which morality shines forth in the Church today, defined in precepts and canons. But before this hoped-for progress can be realized, long studies must be pursued on the nature of society; studies in which the human intellect...prepares the material for the infallible voice of the Church: that Church which leaves research and discussion to its learned ones before proclaiming {as in councils} that 'it seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us' {to proclaim a Catholic dogma}....

Such unity, persistence, and influence were to a large degree due to the clarity of the *Civiltà's* first Jesuit editors, including, most importantly, Padre Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio (1792-1861). Brother to one of the first leaders of the *Risorgimento* (the Italian unification movement), Taparelli was a follower of St. Ignatius admired for his open mind even by the Society's most bitter opponents. His work on the natural law, the *Saggio teoretico di dritto naturale* (1840-1843), and his

---

<sup>11</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 9 (1855), 390.

## CRUSADE

critique of European liberalism in the *Esame critico degli ordini rappresentativi alla moderna*, exercised an undying influence on all of the *Civiltà's* authors. Taparelli's memory was promoted by neo-Thomists throughout Europe, Leo XIII among them, as a result of his leading role in the re-introduction of Aquinas' writings into Italian seminaries after the long period of disfavor following the Reform Catholic attacks of the previous century. His reputation enjoyed further enhancement in the 1920's after the republication of his main works by the *Civiltà* and the homage of Pope Pius XI, who had translated some of his writings into German while head of the Ambrosian Library in Milan.

A second and more "popular" source crucial to understanding both the substance as well as the rhetorical efficacy of this movement was the French writer, Louis Veillot (1813-1883). Born of a cooper's family, Veillot advanced from apprenticeship as a solicitor's clerk in Paris to a career in the border region between journalism and serious literature. There was never any doubt in his mind as to who the chief influence on his thought might be: one of the first of the Ninth Crusaders. "When I was born", he explained, "Joseph de Maistre blew the trumpet and I heard it". De Maistre was an unsurpassable, indeed, even an unapproachable genius. "It is necessary to place him apart", Veillot concluded, "among the great men, almost among the prophets..."<sup>12</sup>

His early journalistic work, which began in 1831 and was aided by his initial support for the liberal July Monarchy,

---

<sup>12</sup> L. Veillot, *Mélanges* (Paris, *Oeuvres complètes*, iii series, 1933), XI, 120-121; XIII, 176.

changed drastically in the late 1830's with a journey to Rome and public profession of a renewed Catholic Faith. Veuillot's active life was thenceforward composed of two interrelated threads. One of these centered round an immense amount of literary activity, including novels, devotional works, and satirical social commentary. Perhaps most significant in this realm were his attack on the polished skepticism of the day in *Libres Penseurs* (1846) and a depiction of Catholic and modern Europe in *Parfums de Rome* (1861) and *Odeurs de Paris* (1866).

A second thread tied in with the journal *l'Univers* and the Catholic political and social action that it encouraged. *L'Univers* was founded in the early 1830's, although Veuillot's appearance on its pages and his ascension to its editorial direction dates from the period 1839-1843. Aided by his brother and several trusted colleagues, he made *l'Univers* a key instrument in the defense of the interests of the Church. *L'Univers* did for the Committee for the Defense of Religious Freedom, the nucleus of the "Catholic Party" founded in 1845, the extra-parliamentary propaganda complementing Montalembert's work inside the French legislature. Enduring numerous vicissitudes after breaking with its early support of the Second Empire, *l'Univers* ran afoul of Napoleon III's pro-*Risorgimento* Italian policy and was suppressed on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1860. Veuillot was permitted no part in *Le Monde*, a temporary successor journal, but regained his former position when government policy allowed for a resurrection of *l'Univers* in April of 1867. He continued his work until illness silenced him in 1878-1879. Veuillot's services to the Catholic cause were rewarded by his burial in the national expiatory



## CRUSADE

church of Sacre Coeur in 1883. Pope St. Pius X called him the model Catholic layman.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, the same spirit of the Ninth Crusade that had inspired Lamennais, the liberal Catholics, and many of the supporters of the Christ of the barricades nurtured this intransigent school as well. Five particular themes emerging from the common background that all these activists initially shared stand out in the regular marching orders intransigent leaders gave to their troops. Underlying all five was an insistence upon the impossibility of understanding anything regarding the universe, society, and the individual without reference both to nature's destiny "in Christ" as well as the supernatural life surging through it now, as a consequence of the Word Incarnate in history. In the final analysis, these intransigents insisted, all of life, supernatural and natural, was aimed at one common, Christ-centered purpose:<sup>14</sup>

God...has established one sole order composed of two parts: nature exalted by grace, and grace vivifying nature. He has not confused these two orders, but He has coordinated them. One force alone is the model and one thing alone the motive principle and ultimate end of divine creation: Christ...All the rest is subordinated to Him. The goal of human existence is to form the Mystical Body of this Christ, of this Head of the elect, of this Eternal Priest, of this

---

<sup>13</sup> F. Veuillot, *Louis Veuillot* (Paris, 1913), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, VI, 1 (1865), 287-288; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 218-247.

King of the immortal Kingdom, and the society of those who will eternally glorify Him.

At the heart of this theme of fruitful natural-supernatural interaction was also an ecclesiology based upon the doctrine of the Church as Christ continued in time. Although the intransigents as a whole did not necessarily fully realize it, readers of the present work know that that doctrine, and all of its consequences for the human person, was a favorite theme of the Church Fathers. A number of early nineteenth century thinkers had freshly cultivated this ancient patristic vision, especially Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) of the University of Tübingen. Giovanni Perrone (1794-1876), professor at the Gregorian in Rome from 1824-1863, made Möhler's works known to many of his influential students: Carlo Passaglia (1812-1887), Clemens Schrader (1820-1875), and Johannes Baptist Franzelin (1816-1886). Perrone was also a channel of Möhler's ecclesiology to the Jesuit editors of *La Civiltà Cattolica*: Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, Matteo Liberatore, and Carlo Maria Curci (1809-1891). And these men were intimates of Louis Veuillot, who, even if he did not necessarily drink from the same theological well, wrote as though he had done so.

In any case, for intransigent Ninth Crusaders, as for the Fathers, the Church was Christ in action on earth today. She therefore possessed a spiritual significance far surpassing her already impressive natural structure and undeniably influential historical role. Discussion of the Church in this context enabled nineteenth century intransigent thinkers to place the functions of pope, bishop, and priest in a different light than a purely juridical treatment of their responsibilities would allow; to stress their character as "other-Christ's"

## CRUSADE

laboring in the contemporary world. Intransigents underlined the same theme in explaining every other “fleshly” aspect of the Church’s activity, from the most sacramental to the most mundane. A correct understanding of the Church as Christ-continued, Matteo Liberatore (1810-1892) wrote in the *Civiltà*, would so transform one’s appreciation of her character that “the very carriages of the cardinals would change their appearance in your eyes”.<sup>15</sup> The following passages offer but a brief selection from innumerable statements over many decades stressing the same basic point:<sup>16</sup>

Christ, then lives in the Church as the principle of the life of this Church, and as a principle so joined that it yields an image of the Hypostatic Union, producing, accordingly, a human-divine life, in imitation of the life that Christ Himself led on the earth, notwithstanding the continued existence of the human elements in their entirety.

{The Incarnation} is a miracle repeated in a manner equally ineffable, although diverse, in the great body of the Church, divinized by the life that Jesus Christ lives in her, and still left with all the human characteristics, because composed of men. And thus, things are also true of her that seem contradictory, but are only opposites.

---

<sup>15</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 7 (1851), 533.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 2 (1865), 41, 42, 43; I, 2 (1850), 535; on Möhler, see Fitzner, pp. 74-121; Mayeur, XI, 5, 114, 125, 303, 659.

In this way, it can be understood that Christ is united with His Church not like any other founder with respect to a society of men...but in the way the head is joined together with the body in a man, and thus blended as the vital principle with a living thing.

A second patristic theme intimately connected with the doctrine of the interaction of nature and the supernatural, guided by a Church that was Christ continued in time, was that of a spirituality emphasizing the personal ascent of Mount Tabor to which every human person was invited; the concept of individual divinization in Christ. This, again, was a beloved topic of the editors of the *Civiltà*, who persistently argued that membership in a Church that was actually Christ meant participation in the life of the God-Man and, through Him, access to every possible perfection: individual and social, natural and supernatural. Veillot stressed the same argument, claiming that it proved that Catholicism was the sole new and truly radically force that had entered an otherwise static human history, effecting qualitative individual and social changes allowing definitive escape from the Rut Triumphant.

In fact, so strong were *La Civiltà Cattolica's* and Veillot's statements in this regard that many of their opponents misinterpreted them, bringing down upon them the charge of "idolatry". For these intransigents insisted that individual believers, through membership in a Church that was really Christ continued in time, could win a prize that "a person could scarcely conjecture in the abstract" and must be considered as potential "gods". Laity, priests, and the pope could, as individuals, become Christ Himself, "the living image of the Nazarene". "The more fully a man lives the life

## CRUSADE

of the Incarnate Word", they claimed, "the more deeply he penetrates into its unity and perfects himself". He who progresses in "Divine Life" attains to "a perfection that surpasses all that is innate in him", and becomes "a participant in Christ", becomes "in a sense, initiated into His substance".<sup>17</sup>

Intransigent encouragement of a spirituality of divinization intensified their awareness of the profound damage that had been done by supporters of Reform Catholicism in general and Jansenists in particular in seeking to bring religion down to the level of a "common sense" expression of "nature as is".<sup>18</sup> Their disdain for such a naturalist enterprise was fought, on one level, through encouragement for the anti-Jansenist moral theology of Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), the founder of the Redemptorists, which vigorously underlined the importance of persistent, Word-driven, corrective and transformative labor. Brunone Lanteri (1759-1830), the inspiration behind the lay-clerical Italian brotherhoods called the *amicizie cattoliche*, Cardinal Thomas Marie Gousset (1792-1866), Archbishop of Rheims, in his *Justification de la théologie du bienheureux A.M. de Liguori* of 1832, in France, and the Redemptorists everywhere all waged active combat for the victory of Liguorian thought. Its triumphant march was accompanied by a revivification

---

<sup>17</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, IV, 3 (1859), 176, 548; IV, 10 (1861), 25, 315; V, 2 (1862), 449; III, 12 (1858), 432; I, 2 (1850), 369, 536; VI, 2 (1865), 42; I, 2 (1850), 533; III, 3 (1856), 688; II, 9 (1855), 134; I, 4 (1850), 256-257; Taparelli, *Carteggi*, ed. P. Pirri, (Biblioteca della storia italiana recente, xiv, 1932). p. 115; see Mersch, pp. 556-573.

<sup>18</sup> Mayeur, XI, 113-168, 349-366; Cholvy and Hilaire, I, 153-196

and expansion of a variety of devotions providing flesh and blood manifestations of spiritual concepts successfully suppressed by Jansenist and Reformed Catholics of the previous era and forgotten even by most of their early nineteenth century opponents.

Nothing illustrated the hopes for the divinization of nature through incorporation into the life of a Divine Person better than the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This devotion, dear to the Jesuits, and therefore hated by the Jansenists perhaps more than any other, enjoyed an enormous rebirth in popularity wherever the intransigents gained influence. One can follow its recovery, from strength to strength, in the fortunes of the Apostolate of Prayer, begun in 1844, in the pages of *The Sacred Heart Messenger* (1861), in the ceremony of the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart in 1875, and in Leo XIII's encyclical letter, *Annum Sacrum*, of May 25, 1899. Intransigents similarly encouraged a very un-Reformed Catholic devotion to the saints, with the exaltation of Marian practices heading the list. The cults of the Sacred Heart of Mary, of Mary as Mediatrix, of the Miraculous Medal, of Our Lady of La Salette (1846) and of Lourdes (1858), along with Leo XIII's fifteen encyclicals on the Rosary and the publication of the previously ignored works of Louis Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716), all testify to the extreme importance Marian devotion attained in the course of the century, much of it due to their stimulus. Finally, the practice of going on pilgrimage to traditional holy places, a major Jansenist and Reformed Catholic bugbear, was fervently revived. Restoration of the pilgrimage to revere the Holy Coat of Trier in 1844, which attracted hundreds of thousands of participants, and the use of the very modern tool of the railroad to reach pilgrimage sites, especially

## CRUSADE

impressed contemporaries as unexpected but unquestionable signs of changing times.

Perhaps most important and anti-Jansenist of all was intransigent interest in the Eucharist as the prime means of correcting and transforming natural man in Christ. A Eucharistic emphasis led to the call for an earlier introduction to and more frequent reception of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. *La très sainte communion* of Gaston de Ségur (1820-1881) was one of the many significant works encouraging such practices. Intransigent supporters were also active proponents of public Eucharistic adoration, which spread everywhere with papal approval in the years after 1850. Eucharistic Congresses, involving processions, adoration, and theological conferences, also began in the 1870's through the work of Marie Tamisier (1834-1910), Gaston de Ségur, and others. These gradually became international affairs, the Eucharistic Congress of Jerusalem in 1893 foreshadowing the worldwide importance they would attain in the 1900's.

Intransigent dedication to the Eucharist inevitably led the movement to support the liturgical revival emerging from an admittedly quite wide variety of different segments of the nineteenth century Catholic movement. Conviction of the powerful role that the liturgy was meant to play in the life of the whole Christian community and in that of each of its individual members became a major theme for Benedictine spirituality, as the work of Dom Guéranger and his *Année Liturgique* (1841) indicate. A liturgical movement grew from its original center in Solesmes (1838) to the associated abbeys of Beuron (1862), in Germany, under Marius Wolter (1825-1890), and Maredsous (1872), in Belgium, with its great

liturgist, Gerard van Caloen (1853-1932). It was at Maredsous that the first influential *Missel des fidèles* was published in 1871, fourteen years after the last papal condemnation of such a translation of the Mass into the vernacular and twenty-six before this prohibition was quietly dropped in 1897. Eucharistic and liturgical revival were then given powerful pontifical support through St. Pius X's endorsement of early and frequent reception of the Sacrament by a laity which knew, prayed, and sang the Mass together.

A third intransigent theme building upon the earlier work of the Ninth Crusade was a pronounced Ultramontanism, an emphasis upon the role of the Papacy in every aspect of Church life, and a concomitant movement towards the administrative centralization this entailed.<sup>19</sup> Ironically, and despite its clear aim of transforming bishops into drone-like agents of government policy, we have seen that the Concordat of 1801 unwittingly assisted this enhancement of papal power. Through his agreement with Pope Pius VII, Napoleon acknowledged that the Holy See could retire and replace the entire existing French hierarchy. An eagerness to establish a substantive Roman authority was then expressed by Joseph de Maistre, Félicité de Lamennais, and the *Mennaisiens* in general. Their Neo-Ultramontanism was fed by theological considerations, admiration for the sufferings of Pius VI and Pius VII at the hands of the republican and Napoleonic regimes, concern for efficacious action in a world of ever more centralized, revolutionary, anti-Catholic political and social forces, and, as we have already indicated, deep frustration with the inadequacies of

---

<sup>19</sup> Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 113-136; C. Butler, *The Vatican Council* (Newman, 1962), pp. 44-62.



## CRUSADE

local ecclesiastical authorities. Rome was characteristically slow in signing on to the pro-papal program, cautiously encouraging aspects of it under Gregory XVI, but really only fully embracing it during the reign of Pius IX. Vatican Council demonstrated its victorious progress through the nineteenth century most dramatically, both with its proclamation of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility as well as by pointing the way to an extensive editing of canon law in a neo-Ultramontanist sense, completed only during the First World War, in 1917.

Concern for a rediscovery of the whole of a Tradition that had been obscured by Jansenism and Reform Catholicism also fed a fourth intransigent project, a revival of interest in speculative theology.<sup>20</sup> We have seen that far from being merely neglected in Catholic circles, the teaching of past speculative systems had often positively been prohibited during the course of the previous century. This gave to Catholic theological and philosophical instruction a merely reactive character. Rather than being provided a point of view that digested centuries of work by extraordinarily great minds and through which they might confront new considerations presented to them in the future, students were offered disconnected and purely apologetic arguments to answer the anti-Catholic points made by contemporary thinkers exactly as they emerged. This, in effect, left the initiative to whatever modern school of thought might be "in" during any given academic year, with discussion of it abandoned if it lost in popularity the next.

---

<sup>20</sup> Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 113-136, 349-366.

A return to the teaching of the scholastics had been advocated since the first half of the century, when men like Taparelli d'Azeglio became convinced that only a grounding in systematic, speculative Catholic thought would provide the believing student with a means accurately to sift through and judge the errors of the modern anti-religious intellect along with any of the valid points that the Jesuit himself believed contemporary thinkers did indeed often make. This work was especially necessary in modern times, Taparelli argued, since the attack on God had inevitably brought an assault on the Socratic Tradition that Christians had enthusiastically embraced and employed, making Reason a target of mindless willfulness alongside Faith.

Similar concerns motivated a number of Ninth Crusaders who are not generally considered part of the intransigent movement, including Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler (1811-1877) of Mainz, who was certain that modern social problems could be efficiently addressed in an acceptable Catholic manner if tackled logically with the kind of intellectual rigor that the scholastics had championed. Germany thus became a major center for reviving scholastic studies together with Italy. Neo-scholastics such as Joseph Kleutgen (1811-1883), author of *Die Theologie/Philosophie der Vorzeit Verteidigt*, were extremely active at First Vatican Council and would continue to exercise an ever-greater influence into the second half of the twentieth century—thereby arousing the wrath of men like Döllinger, who attacked their work as outdated and therefore dangerously obscurantist.

Although the neo-scholastic renaissance involved study of many of the different thinkers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including St. Bonaventure and Dun Scotus, most of

## CRUSADE

those engaged in it became convinced of the superiority of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and of the commentaries on his work produced in the sixteenth century by Cardinal Cajetan. Leo XIII, through his encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* of August 4th, 1879 and his patronage of the Leonine edition of the works of the Angelic Doctor (1882), gave to Thomistic studies pride of place in the Catholic world. Journal after journal, and Catholic center after Catholic center, including the great Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, began to dedicate themselves to intellectual work in this tradition, with the *Accademia romana di San Tommaso*, established 1880, providing the model for much of their labor.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the present argument, the intransigents engaged in the Ninth Crusade were charged with a sense of mission demanding immediate action. Like Innocent III in the age of the new ascent of Mt. Tabor, they believed that Christ must become king of society at large and of individuals personally, that this sovereignty alone could ensure the fulfillment of nature's temporal promise and supernatural mission, and that refusal to accept the corrective and transforming action of the Word in history could only result in both historical and eternal disaster for man.

Yes, it was true that "the Incarnate Word did not teach reading and writing", and that it is "a profanation to say that the mission of the Son of God was a mission...of social benefit".<sup>21</sup> And, no, material wealth and physical power would not necessarily be the greatest under Christ's scepter.

---

<sup>21</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 8 (1851), 270; II, 10 (1855), 314.V, 7 (1863), 267.

Nevertheless, the sight that came from Christ and in Christ, designed primarily to aid the eternal salvation of individual human persons, had enormous direct and indirect temporal consequences, placing all aspects of nature in their proper hierarchy of values as it did, and providing the benefits that came along with such a true sense of order. A civilization guided by a vision rooted in the Word would gain the power, the wealth, and the overall natural brilliance most suitable for fulfilling man's final end. It would thus be led "to the height of greatness" in the proper sense, and "the legitimate consequences, not only for the individual but also for society, for happiness both individual and social, will be for us the highest that can be enjoyed on this earth".<sup>22</sup> Civilization in its most complete, harmonious mode, capable of extending itself to all cultures without violating their essences, bringing diversity from unity, was born "on Calvary at the foot of the cross". Christ thus caused "social improvements which it would have been insane to presume possible under the heathens", "varied to infinity in its imposing entirety".<sup>23</sup>

Intransigents deemed nothing to be superfluous in this movement of all of nature, through men, in Christ, toward Divine Light, because nothing could ever be superfluous to God. When each aspect of nature played its proper role, the subordinate submitting to its superior, the superior sacrificing itself, like the Lamb, for its subordinate, then the whole of the universe manifested its desire for restoration in God. But there could be no completion of this movement here on earth, and even if there could be, for a moment, the

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 4 (1850), 467, 578.

<sup>23</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 1 (1850), 41; III, 12 (1858), 432; L. Veuillot, I, 334; III, 304.

## CRUSADE

possibility of sin would always leave it open for corruption once again to take hold. In fact, the more effectively that nature was corrected and transformed in Christ, the better it understood the fragility of its situation; the better it grasped the tremendous gift that constant supernatural assistance for the purpose of keeping its machinery in working order and divinizing its stewards really was.

Ninth Crusaders began systematically presenting such arguments against the opposing positions of the supporters of “nature as is” in works like the *Mennaisien* Olympe Philippe Gerbet’s (1798-1864) *Considérations sur le dogme générateur de la foi catholique* (1829) and the very influential writings of the Spaniard, Juan Donoso Cortes (1809-1853). The sense of urgency and drama felt by all the intransigents who repeated and expanded upon their teaching is well depicted in one major article of *La Civiltà Cattolica: O dio re colla libertà, o l’uomo re colla forza*—“Either God as King with Liberty, or Man as King Through Force”. Catholics had to correct and transform the world in Christ, or society and the individual would steadily degenerate in the hands of men, all of whom claimed that they were working for Reason, Freedom, and Progress. Many of these members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, tragically, actually believed in the truth of what they were saying. And this was why, in addition to being an especially dramatic era, the nineteenth century was also a schizophrenic age. It could not utter one word about the world that was not contradicted by the natural order that it claimed so passionately to love.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 4 (1851), 29; II, 4 (1853), 258.

Hence, the intransigent call to a joint defensive-offensive action that would build upon all the poignant experiences of the 1830's and 1840's to promote the message of the Word in history more effectively in the decades to come. Given that worldly activity was the sphere of the laity, the practical labor of conducting the work of correcting and transforming the world in Christ generally had to be its responsibility. "To give, to pardon, to make God known and loved—that is the total role of our priests; they do not look for, do not accept any other", Veuillot argued. "Our role, the layman's role, is different; we are in the world, *we play politics*, and we would like to know who will prevent us?"<sup>25</sup> The call to arms of the laity was thus very much a nineteenth century mobilization, with the original proponents of the Ninth Crusade having been the initial recruiting sergeants and the intransigents and their papal ally their enthusiastic heirs.

"Divinized" individuals were seen to be the chief agents of passing the rest of the world through the purgative process offered by the Church. As one enemy of the *Civiltà* ironically—but correctly—commented: "in a theocracy, it is God Who dominates; in the system of the Jesuits, it is man considered as God who dominates".<sup>26</sup> There would be a true perfection of the world only when it was "transfigured vitally through individuals", "by means of the individual operation of each member of the faithful", "no longer by the finger of God, but {indirectly} by that of man, divinized by grace".<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> L. Veuillot, I, 537.

<sup>26</sup> G. Gentile, ed., *La politica dei gesuiti nel secolo XVI e nel XIX* (Milan, 1911), p. 96.

<sup>27</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 9 (1855), 135, 134; IV, 3 (1859), 414-426.

## CRUSADE

Crucial to the awakened layman's activities, the editor of *l'Univers* insisted, was the development of a Catholic Press. Catholic journalism was a phenomenon "born of the needs of the Church in modern society".<sup>28</sup> Its practitioners were said to be contemporary knights battling for right in nineteenth-century garb. Veuillot was thus prepared to defend the existence of the Press not only against the attacks of the secular enemy but, on numerous occasions, against bishops who disapproved of the semi-autonomous lay role that publishing entailed.

Nonetheless, as *La Civiltà Cattolica* insisted, the Press was only one crucially valuable tool in a wider movement of Catholic Action spreading knowledge of real truths about the natural world and putting the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history into practice. France and Germany were leading the way in this regard. French and German Catholics "multiply without ceasing writings and institutions of charity". Moreover, they made ample use of the press and of political and social associations to promote them. One could not pick up an issue of a journal "that does not render us an account either of new publications written for the enlightenment of those in error, or of institutions most active in the aid of every kind of need".<sup>29</sup> In short, the pilgrim spirit was alive and thriving.

### *F. The Attack on Revolutionary "Nature as Is"*

---

<sup>28</sup> L. Veuillot, V, 358; VI, 149-166; VII, 124-129, 367-373; IX, 300-302; XI, 19-21.

<sup>29</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 9 (1852), 17-18.

This brings us to the intransigent refusal to accept the conciliatory attitude to modern socio-political developments either of the Party of Order or of the liberal Catholics, or of the supporters of the Christ of the Barricades. It should be clear by now that this refusal had nothing to do with establishing some recent date—1789 in particular—as the year beyond which no further changes dealing with temporal life were held to be acceptable. Neither did it involve some unthinking denial of a given technological accomplishment like the railroad or of a specific system of government such as a constitutional monarchy or a democratic republic.

Instead, rejection of the demand that Christ accommodate Himself to the modern world had everything to do with what was considered to be the corrupting influence of what the intransigents called “the Revolution”. What the “Revolution”, and the whole of the “modern spirit” behind it signified for them was a desire to barricade man and society in “nature as is”. And this meant a willful rejection of all of the perfections offered to civilization and the individual human person through submission to the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history. Nothing more tragic or self-deceptive could be conceived by Ninth Crusaders, many of whom felt that they, too, had once been seduced by the naturalist vision and had happily escaped from its clutches only by meditating upon what had really happened in 1848.

From the intransigent standpoint, the Revolution signified that entire retreat from the effort to ascend Mount Tabor that had gained ever-greater momentum from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries onward. The Revolution meant Marsilius of Padua; Nominalist willfulness; all those erroneous, parochial, tunnel-vision tendencies covering themselves with the mantle of the Founding Vision that had



## CRUSADE

finally been incarnated effectively in Christendom for the first time through the work of Luther and the consequences of the doctrine of total depravity. From the days of the Reformation onwards these tendencies had coalesced into a “principle of independence” from a correction and transformation deemed inaccessible to man. This principle was developed still further by the Enlightenment, both Radical and Moderate, with its call to return to the embrace of Mother Nature and its rejection of the value of any supernatural assistance to man even if this were still believed to be available to him.

In the nineteenth century, the effects of the Revolution were spread and intensified by an army of liberals, democrats, nationalists, socialists, and cultural atomists and nihilists. The final key to understanding the Revolution was, therefore, grasping its desire to see the universe not with the corrective and transforming assistance of the Word but through the eyes of the “free and independent man” operating with information from “nature as is” alone. Anyone trying to deal with human life in this manner—the manner of Isocrates—declared an insane war on God’s Creation that first destroyed Faith and then moved on to devastate all of nature’s keys to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. This mad struggle against everything that could deal with fallen nature’s problems had as its consequence the enslavement of society at large and all of its individual members to the strongest, most self-deluding, parochial, and violent contemporary will that could impose its wishes upon them. And that triumphant “will” was itself left bereft of any means of thinking or believing itself out of its ultimately self-destructive delirium.

Before moving on, it is important to note that intransigents like Taparelli did not believe that the growth of the Revolution was something that could be grasped purely on the intellectual level. History was not the product of ideas alone. If anything, it was the product of ideas that were worked on—and worked over—by men. Man's motivations could be logical and illogical, good and bad, consciously known and unconscious, varied in the extreme. Even when some ideas were indeed logically developed in history, the manner in which they were packaged and the hopes with which they were invested along the way could often be very odd and illogical indeed.<sup>30</sup>

Taparelli understood that history was filled with examples of people seizing upon some new idea while retaining older beliefs and ways of behavior that contradicted that concept fundamentally. Indeed, older ideas and the consequences drawn from traditional beliefs and ways of behavior very often exercised their fullest influence in their most developed form precisely when their sun had begun to set or their greatest challenge had emerged. Thus, a society struck by a new idea could not be said to be the product of that innovative concept alone, or even, sometimes, at all. Neither was it possible to say that the creators of this new idea necessarily expected, desired, and caused all of its future consequences. After all, they themselves were formed much more by already existing concepts, life styles, and expectations. Yes, the logic of the new idea would run its course, but mixed together with older perceptions and desires

---

<sup>30</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 2 (1850), 265; I, 5 (1851), 17-18, I, 9 (1852), 484n; A. Perego, *Forma statale e politica finanziaria nel pensiero di Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio* (Milan, 1956), p 242.

## CRUSADE

that could well blind the very people responsible for its launch to its future rational development.

This, to take but one example, was precisely what had happened with Protestantism. Its “new idea” appeared in European society amidst the ever fuller development of older Catholic beliefs and ways of behavior. Events of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries therefore reflected Catholic as well as Protestant influence, even if it was the new approach of the heretic and his “enlightened” heir that made the great splash in people’s minds. A Luther or a Calvin—and a Locke or a Voltaire—could not automatically be assumed to have foreseen or willed or caused the *precise* future development of the Revolution in all its characteristics. In many realms, they, too, continued to speak and act based on residual Catholic influences over them and in residual Catholic language.

Ironically, these men also often taught and lived under the presumption that Catholic ideas continued to shape *others*—however much, in principle, they might condemn such an influence. Consciously or unconsciously, the type of man they figured into their calculations was formed by medieval Catholic Europe. They could not predict how their calculations would be affected when men were formed by their own revolutionary ideas and structures. The *logic* of the new idea promoted by the Protestant Reformation, and then by the Enlightenment, proceeded apace; but it did so in an *illogical* alliance with remnants of Catholic convictions, perceptions, expectations, and desires that it could not really support but presumed would nevertheless somehow continue.

One could not, therefore, overemphasize the confusion in human minds brought about by the presence of Catholic remnants in a revolutionary environment. Revolutionaries who claimed to want to achieve truly revolutionary goals were held back by Catholic habits that they might not even recognize as such. Those among them who retained Catholic desires might attribute the good deriving from Catholic ways of behavior to the revolutionary ideals that actually destroyed them. Catholic words might be given revolutionary meanings while Catholics were seduced by the revolutionary co-option of their language to work toward goals destructive to the message of the Word in history. They might come to attribute the good Catholic desires they wished to fulfill to revolutionary ideas and then adopt revolutionary modes of behavior that rendered them impossible of fulfillment. The permutations on the confusion were potentially endless. Generations might have to pass before less involved observers could separate the two influences. By then, of course, the mass of the population might be so trapped in the *danse macabre* their union had engendered as to be utterly indifferent to the whole question of understanding their proper respective roles in the first place.

The Revolution, therefore, was a complexity. It was at once both logical and non-rational. If one ignored its intellectual side, he failed to see its true direction. If one ignored its non-rational character, he failed to understand the confusion by means of which it had successfully proceeded. One of the great merits of the *Civiltà*, and of Taparelli d'Azeglio in particular, was that of pointing out both factors clearly—the one, theological and philosophical; the other, historical, sociological, and psychological—so that students might grasp the disaster blocking the progress of mankind.

## CRUSADE

But, alas, complexity is one of the last things that most of our contemporaries, worn down by the daily routine of the modern *danse macabre*, are capable of grasping.

It was precisely because they believed themselves to be deeply concerned for social order, individual freedom, and the complete fulfillment of human potential on the one hand, while aware of the complexity of historical and sociological developments on the other, that intransigent Ninth Crusaders enthusiastically defended what was perhaps the most famous official statement of their position: Blessed Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors of 1864. The eighty propositions of this document ended by enunciating the impossibility of a reconciliation of the Roman Pontiff with "liberalism, progress, and modern civilization". Once again, rejection of such reconciliation did not mean a refusal to build a train track or a desire to excommunicate Catholics participating in constitutional governmental activities. It meant rejection of a definition of nature, Reason, and freedom that encouraged an ever-increasingly self-destructive war against Creation.<sup>31</sup>

Starting with the words "I am free" and their new-found spirit of independence, men began to believe in the infallibility of whatever seemed natural to them, and then to call "nature" everything that is sickness and weakness; to want sickness and weakness to be encouraged instead of healed; to suppose that encouraging weakness makes men healthier and happy; to conclude, finally, that human nature {conceived of as sickness and weakness} possesses the

---

<sup>31</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 6 (1851), 497-498; III, 5 (1857), 17.

means to render man and society blissful on earth, and this without faith, grace, authority, or supernatural community...since "nature" gives us the feeling that it must be so.

The truth is that the universe is the work of an infinite wisdom whose nature no man can change, although he may be free to deny it. The nature that man denies in thought and doctrine he also then denies in practice. A man's struggling with nature is an insane war against God, wherein the mortal cannot hope to triumph, but, rather, is certain to be defeated. To concede, therefore, to all men the freedom to wage this war, to blindfold their eyes so that they may not see their sores, their defeats; to concede the freedom of error to oppress the truth, may well be the momentary delirium of blinded intellects and the suicide of frenetic societies; but it can never be the durable basis of civilization, never the hoped-for foundation of a new society.

It meant the dissolution of social order and the consignment of the community into the hands of mindless force;<sup>32</sup>

Let us say it then frankly: all social unity must collapse and be routed as soon as the Protestant principle is introduced and reigns therein. And the reasons all reduce to one. Admitting the Lutheran principle, it is impossible to have any true idea of

---

<sup>32</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 2 (1850), 265; I, 5 (1851), 412; I, 2 (1850), 406.

## CRUSADE

right. Protestants may well be able, owing to logical incoherence or by accident, to admit some principle of right in their society. But this will be the effect of a habit, of an accident, of a lack of reasoning, of natural honesty in their inclinations, or of some other similarly fortuitous conditions affecting this or that individual. But the nature of the Protestant principle, that nature which sooner or later finally produces its inevitable effects, renders absolutely impossible the idea of right, and, in consequence, of social unity.

...No, there is no more unity for this destructive demon. The mind was liberated, through freethinking, from the yoke of a God who speaks to man; through individual criticism, from the yoke of reason; through Popular Sovereignty, from that of any authority; through the right to suicide, from the yoke of all fear. Any society – the communion of the soul with God in the Church, of the people with their prince in the polis, of a wife with her husband in the family, of the body with the soul in the individual – is devastated any time social bonds are measured against the impulse of a passion, against a “right”, against a desire for pleasure. Each society is devastated in its primary governing entity. It is thrown into the hands of a crazed man whose will is arbitrary. This is the ultimate consequence of the Protestant principle of independence.

...Force. Let us say it straightforwardly. Let us repeat it with daring. Force is the only social instrument left

to the Protestant who wishes to be logical. And since the sole means of salvation becomes a right in society, the right in Protestant society is force.

It meant a "freedom" that was nothing other than a license for the strong to oppress the weak:<sup>33</sup>

And the truth is that this freedom, as any other unlimited liberty not circumscribed by anything, is nothing other than the privilege agreed upon for the strong to assassinate the weak. In this case, the freedom of the strong party is offended, since he is given the arbitrary ability to abuse his faculty, and the freedom of the weak party is offended, as he remains the undefended victim of that abuse.

If only the true lovers of freedom had a little judgment! How they would love and revere the Church, the Pope, the Encyclical, the *Syllabus*, and any document of the Catholic Church, which is the sole moral force that tempers both despotism and libertinism.

...Far from opposing the true conception of liberty (and who could oppose a thing naturally dear to every man?), we have adopted for ourselves the task of solidifying it and purging it of those false principles that, while retaining the name of liberty, destroy it in its substance.

---

<sup>33</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, III, 1 (1856), 387; VI, 1 (1865), 222-223; VI, 5 (1866), 9-10.



### *G. The Validity of All Forms of Government*

It was also because of the central importance of the presence or absence of the independence principle informing the spirit of the Revolution that the intransigents refused to divinize any one particular form of government. Yes, the man of *Reason* might have grounds to argue that historical and sociological considerations made one regime preferable to another in a given land. Still, the only thing that counted from the standpoint of the man of *Faith* was whether or not the system in question was or was not open to correction and transformation in Christ. To be "Catholic above all else" was a motto for the entire movement; everything aside from this was secondary or even indifferent in significance. Louis Veuillot, despite his later, *rational* decision to support a restoration of the legitimate monarchy, stated the conclusions of the believer well. "In the midst of a Europe agitated and upset by the clash of all systems", he wrote in 1848, and could equally have asserted thirty years later, "the Church is not especially absolutist, or monarchist, or republican: she is the Church".<sup>34</sup>

...we reserve our homage and our love for the authority truly worthy of us which, coming out of the present anarchy, marching towards the new destinies of France, a cross in hand, will make it known that it comes from God....We are only entirely hostile to the radical source of disorder, to impiety, to the vitiation of doctrines, to the frightful degradation of morals.

---

<sup>34</sup> L. Veuillot, III, 381; 1, 429; IV, 272-275; V, 493-502.

If one took Pretenders such as Don Carlos in Spain and Henry Bourbon in France and placed them at the head of legitimate Catholic monarchies, well-founded hopes of good government could be entertained. "Who", Veillot asked after the revolutions of 1848, "would not prefer to live under the absolute scepter of Saint Louis than under the fraternal musket of the democrats of Rome, of Berne, or Vienna, or of Paris?"<sup>35</sup> But if one deprived a monarchist state of this Catholic driving force and substituted a modern naturalist kingdom in its place, the tables drastically turned against it. Intransigents firmly insisted that it was precisely many of the statist measures of Louis XIV that prepared the way for revolutionary despotism, that Louis XVIII's cooperation with liberalism was as disastrous as Lamennais had indicated, and that the Enlightenment-tainted legitimism of the nineteenth century in general was doomed to flub the most favorable opportunities for strengthening monarchical rule:<sup>36</sup>

Re-establish the legitimate monarchy, give it a Chamber elected in the most favorable conditions, made up only of the most zealous legitimists themselves; let them impose upon the press draconian laws: there will be an opposition in several months, a Revolution in several years, if it takes that long.

"If there are no more Catholic princes", Veillot concluded, when troubled by news of a retreat from the proper religious

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 374; X, 454-460; XIII, 15-18; XII, 413-415.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 314; V, 15-22; IV, 353-363.

## CRUSADE

spirit in the Spanish Carlist camp, "what concern to us are princes!"<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, the same statements were made with regard to republican or democratic forms of government as well as monarchical regimes. If one placed a Garcia Moreno (1821-1875), the zealously Catholic Ecuadorian president, at the head of a republic, Veuillot wrote, no man of Faith could complain that the structures of government somehow made his work impossible. It was the spirit and not the letter of the law that counted:<sup>38</sup>

There is the conspicuous and supreme feature that places him beyond comparison: a man of Jesus Christ in the public life, a man of God! A little southern republic has shown us this marvel: a man sufficiently noble, sufficiently strong, and sufficiently intelligent to persevere in the design of being what one calls a 'man of his times', of studying its sciences, accepting its ways, knowing and following its customs and its laws, and nevertheless not ceasing to be a correct and faithful man of the Gospel; that is to say, a correct and faithful servant of God. Moreover, making his people the same thing when he took control of it; a people correct and faithful in the service of God for all peoples of the earth.

---

<sup>37</sup> Louis Veuillot, X, 44.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 189; III, 374; II, 353; III, 197-201; I, 246-250.

Let the democrats be good, just, fearful of God: Democracy is the most beautiful government men can give themselves. Let the democrats be wicked, proud, impious: the society that they will form will only differ from hell in hell's being eternal. This can be said of all the schemes tried among men to reconcile the necessary rights of governors and the inalienable right of the governed. They have been good or evil insofar as the one group or the other have had more or less the feeling of their reciprocal duties.

We have said it and we repeat it: a new era begins, fruit of the long revolutions that have troubled us. Democracy arises and the Church is there, like the mother around the cradle. She protects this infant that has so many enemies, she tries to enlighten this prince that has so many flatterers. Harsh and dangerous education no doubt! But the Church has made others, she has disciplined illegitimates as savage, she has tenderly served and faithfully loved more ungrateful pupils. Will she succeed nevertheless? God knows! If she does not, one trembles to contemplate the future of the world. What will become of these peoples corrupted by independence and each day more rebellious to all authority? What to expect of these unrestrained desires, these mad ambitions, these greedy passions, if not the infinite miseries of an anarchy without end, of a despotism without chains, of a war without respite?

### *H. The Attack on Liberalism*

## CRUSADE

Faith indicated that all systems open to correction and transformation in Christ were acceptable in and of themselves. The Church had no writ to mandate one ideal form of government that alone could provide a global supply of good statesmen to ensure an opening to the Word in the changeable earthly realm. Nevertheless, human Reason definitely played a role in this enterprise, pointing men, as it did, to an examination of their country's history and socio-political conditions for help in regime hunting. Examination of such conditions would demonstrate how the general need for social authority had been "incarnated" within that land under its own particular circumstances in its own peculiar institutions. That historically incarnated authority was the one that the rationally awakened Christian man should most try to shape and guide. Destroy this incarnated form, or render it impotent, and all hell would most likely break loose, to the detriment of the temporal common good as well as the proper performance of the pilgrim dance of life.<sup>39</sup>

Destruction or emasculation of incarnated authority was one of the specialties of the Revolution.<sup>40</sup> It worked to this end in a variety of ways, the first of them being the willful insistence of many of its proponents upon the universal validity of a single, ideal political system, applicable everywhere, regardless of historical and sociological circumstances. Obviously, radical and moderate

---

<sup>39</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 3 (1850), 19-24, 221-224; II, 4 (1853), 31-35; II, 10 (1855), 5-16, 241-256; III, 3 (1856), 369-378.

<sup>40</sup> Previous footnote; Also, I, 2 (1850), 36-48; L. Taparelli d'Azeglio, *Esame critico degli ordini rappresentativi nella società moderna* (Civiltà Cattolica, Two Volumes, 1854).

revolutionary factions debated what this form should be. Since 1815, however, the more moderate, liberal faction, backed by the economic strength of a bourgeoisie enriched more than ever before by the Industrial Revolution, had dominated. We have seen that this faction wanted to secure the benefits that the men of wealth had gained through what they called "the liberties of 1789", but, of course, without the violence of the Reign of Terror. They proclaimed a readiness to work with existing social authorities to do so. All they sought from the existing legitimate rulers of Europe was the creation of a constitutional system of checks and balances with a parliament elected on the basis of a limited suffrage modeled after that of England in order to satisfy their desires. This, they insisted, was nature's most obvious common sense tool for proper governance, assuring order and progress at one and the same time.

Intransigents generally believed that such a constitutional system was the most suitable in Britain, but, once again, only due to specific historical and sociological circumstances. For the validity and effectiveness of the English system in England told rational men nothing of its potential career in France or Italy. Despite all precautions, a dogmatic and an a-historical promotion of this one ideal government in a given land could work to emasculate social authority and render it incapable of performing the task of guarding community interests effectively. This would tempt the strong, the ambitious, and the wicked to take advantage of the confused leadership that was created to manipulate the State and society to serve their private interests. All those "lovely correlations of reciprocal rights and duties traced on paper" described by liberal constitutional theorists would have nightmarish consequences masquerading the reality of who

## CRUSADE

was wielding which powers to do exactly what.<sup>41</sup> “What does the parliamentary regime in England and America matter to us”, Veuillot asked; “it is necessary to see what it has done, what it is, and what it can become here”.<sup>42</sup>

...all this lovely mechanism, which functioned so easily and so philanthropically in the inventor’s study, seems, before long, to be wicked in its use; it becomes disordered, it spreads terror and death around it. Before long, no more remains of it than a pile of debris on a heap of corpses around which, from all points on the horizon, come running the beasts of prey.

Intransigents knew that there were honest believers in the value of a constitutional system. Unfortunately, they argued, liberalism, shaped as it was by the spirit of the Revolution, turned what was an intrinsically acceptable form of government into something unacceptable and dangerous, even in the very lands where historical conditions made that system both suitable and even necessary. Taparelli discussed the reasons for this in great detail in his *Esame critico degli ordini rappresentativi alla moderna*. In doing so, he developed arguments found not only close at hand, in the works of Joseph de Maistre, but also others with which we are long familiar, from the days of St. Isidore of Seville. Such considerations all led to the same conclusion: despite the

---

<sup>41</sup> L. Veuillot, V, 339-340; L. Taparelli d’Azeglio, *Un carteggio inedito*, pp. 87-88; *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 6 (1851), 506-507.

<sup>42</sup> L. Veuillot, IV, 363; V, 339-340.

good will—or, to be more accurate, the ideological blindness—of some believing liberals, the whole revolutionary liberal vision worked to secure the victory of a wealthy oligarchy to the detriment of the rest of society. Worse still, from its honest supporters' standpoint, it did so in a fashion that opened the lands under its control to ever more radical, partisan, and ultimately despotic manipulation. As Liberatore wrote, in criticizing one Parisian opponent of the Syllabus of Errors: <sup>43</sup>

The Pope wants freedom as much as you do, if not quite in the same way, M. Yung. What man does not desire freedom? Freedom, however, is only a name now. In fact, everywhere liberalism reigns we have slavery and oppression...Dressed in all colors, liberalism is in reality always tyrannical, and, what is worse, hypocritical. In one word, the Church is not the enemy of freedom but of liberalism, which is the enemy of the Church no less than of freedom.

Liberalism achieved these results first of all due to the fact that its underlying Whig spirit was rooted in the anti-social, anti-authority vision of the principle of independence as transmitted by the Moderate Enlightenment through Locke. However much toned down for the sake of good taste, it emerged from the same doctrine of total depravity and conviction that individuals were at sea on their own in a natural world of struggle as described by Hobbes. Unlike the author of the *Leviathan*, however, the liberals saw the power of the State as more of a danger to their property rights and

---

<sup>43</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, VI, 1 (1865), 222-223.



## CRUSADE

personal security than the rapacious desires of their weaker fellow men. In fact, the way that many liberals spoke about social authority made it seem that any coercive action involving any limitation on an individual's liberty was regrettable; as though a single chain on personal freedom destroyed it altogether. This, Taparelli insisted, was a manifest absurdity:<sup>44</sup>

This inference...could be applied to everything a man has on earth and that is governed in society by authority. The language of the citizen, we could say, becomes useless, as soon as the sovereignty of the State can prohibit contumely and curses. Human action is destroyed from the moment that robbery and homicide are prohibited. The home is done for when it cannot be used to organize plots and fires. In sum, if the governor has the right to order society, if he possesses power, society becomes valueless {for the liberal}.

On the other hand, the State was there as a fact of life that liberals must confront, just as the Papacy had been present as a nightmarish reality for Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham. Moreover, it was a "real presence" that could be seized by Catholics on the one hand and the kind of Radical Enlightenment supporters who had dominated during the Reign of Terror in France and initiated Rousseau-inspired changes threatening to bourgeois property on the other. Such a prospect dictated efforts to invent a State authority whose

---

<sup>44</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 3 (1853), 423; I, 9 (1852), 467-484.

ability to seek something called "the common good" was restricted. And it required a State in possession of governmental structures reshaped to ensure protection of liberal interests alone. Some of the intellectuals involved in the movement saw those interests as boiling down to a general principle of freedom that had to be nurtured gradually, without violence, so as to prevent destructive obscurantist reaction against it as it grew and its consequences expanded. However, the moneymen supporting liberalism understood those interests to mean making the world safe for personal property and its exponential multiplication alone.

A State whose authority could not really be rooted in God or the fraternal nature of man as such had to be justified on the basis of contractual will alone. This, by the nineteenth century, entailed rooting it in the principle of "popular sovereignty". But popular sovereignty, taken literally, could also entail a democratic system that might still yield a Catholic or radical victory. Hence, the need to underline differences between "adult" and "childlike" elements in the population, the first, clearly ready for participation in government right now, the second, requiring a tutor or proxy to speak for its "will" until such time as it matured, became true to its real nature, and thus proved capable of exercising a salubrious influence over society. Such a distinction led directly to the need to limit the vote to that small group of educated and wealthy men who knew what was best for an ordered progress permitting the "children" of the social order to grow to adulthood. Yes, the People as a whole ruled. But the now "active", "adult" population had to serve as the Defender of the Peace for its "passive", "childlike" brother, as the latter strove for maturity against outside forces ready to

## CRUSADE

destroy it. Active, adult citizens had to do so in order to break childlike popular subservience to past tyranny on the one hand and temptation to use the evil tools of the wicked governments with which it was most familiar to pursue impassioned radical goals on the other.

But there was another problem to resolve. Once again, one was not working with a *tabula rasa* in creating the liberal State. An already existing executive authority might seek to thwart the desires even of a limited electorate. Moreover, the environment in which liberals lived was still rife with Radical Enlightenment ideas that might yet succeed in obtaining a democratic suffrage electing a legislature ready to mandate attacks on economic freedom. Such real threats dictated various constitutional protections; checks and balances designed to thwart promotion of anti-liberal projects and guarantee the propertied oligarchy's continued control of political and social life, even in the face of monarchical or democratic opposition. Such protections included hemming in the executive authority with a thousand restrictions. They involved creation of a legislature that, even if democratic, was elected by individual atoms, separated from their manifold natural subsidiary societies, and therefore as little representative of human persons "as a calf...by that heap of macerated flesh to which it is reduced by the knife of a butcher".<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, should all else fail, they required a judiciary empowered to cashier any unwanted, anti-liberal actions of its wayward sister branches of government.

All of this was indeed of immense assistance in maintaining oligarchic control, and in both hidden as well as

---

<sup>45</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 2 (1850), 135; II, 3 (1853), 618.

open ways. Men always psychologically treated the executive as "the ruler" and praised or blamed it for political and social developments. If the executive did not have the necessary authority to promote the common good, private interests were free to step into the breach and manipulate society to the detriment of the population at large. While these particular wills did what they wished, appeals and complaints would continue to be directed to the existing, façade-like executive, as though it were really able to work for the protection of society. In other words, while private interests robbed the bank, the distrusted but impotent executive would take the rap for their crimes.

Moreover, a legislature elected by isolated individuals, even a democratically elected one, if uprooted from the historical and sociological corporations that gave real influence to the otherwise weaker parts of the population in the past, was much more easily controlled. It could be rendered harmless by everything from the better organization of a well-funded liberal party to outright bribery of populist-minded deputies.

Finally, a liberal judiciary standing guard over the "spirit of the laws" would make sure that a strong executive and an outraged legislature could do nothing to harm the "true" popular will – namely, whatever needed to be done to protect bourgeois property, wealth, and the total freedom to use it as the individual man of means saw fit; whatever might ensure the "triumph of individual and collective egoisms", and the "mercantile and savage spirit" of the utilitarian Benthamites.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> L. Veuillot, XII, 359.

## CRUSADE

Generally, Taparelli argued, liberals could count upon the intellectual inertia of the population to treat what was a purely conventional law based upon the manipulation of power as though it were somehow really written into the nature of things. If, however, some men began to call upon moral philosophy and spiritual truths as guides to State action, liberals then emphasized the need to maintain an Iron Wall of Separation between such considerations and the necessarily purely material concerns of the government and its coercive powers. Unfortunately, Taparelli insisted, such a separation contradicted the holistic character of the human person, which made a clinical division of soul and body utterly impossible. And ultimately it was not wise even for the liberals to insist upon this split, since it underlined the fact that the "laws" of their constitutional government were merely changeable, conventional decisions based upon nothing other than will and power configurations:<sup>47</sup>

Man being essentially one, though composed of two substances, whoever commands man must of necessity influence both parts substantially composing the same individual. To exclude the Church, therefore, from commanding the body, and the State from obliging conscience, is a separation against nature. The two powers will always find themselves on the same field, either united for the purpose of order, or combating and triumphing over one another.

---

<sup>47</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 7 (1851), 263; 255.

Those, therefore, who through hatred of the Church or out of a desire for unlimited freedom, promote separation cannot do anything other than permit either full anarchy of consciences or chain them under material force.

He who does not want to make use of spiritual means in temporal matters, does not know what the world is, and what are the constant relations of the two substances that God has used to compose it. He does not understand the action of God on the earth. He does not know that which he himself does when he invokes for his use "justice" and "right". He pronounces, in sum, an absurd and incomprehensible proposition, while he imagines that he pronounces an irrefutable axiom.

But what if open and persistent protests were actually made against a bourgeois triumph of the will on the part of the poor and the democratic majority? Then, once again, as in the following statement taken from an Italian liberal, the argument of the need for an active, adult tutorship of the passive, childlike masses was evoked:<sup>48</sup>

'Each people has the right to govern itself. The people is defined as that minority which thinks the way that I do; all the rest who wish to enjoy the fruits of peace must be illuminated as we are. Until they are illuminated, their vote has no value.' Can he express with more splendid candor

---

<sup>48</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 1 (1850), 273n.

## CRUSADE

the theory of a despotism of a small faction over a whole people? If the 'obscurantists' made this discourse calling themselves alone the active and intelligent population, God knows with what invectives they would be excoriated.

Some, of course, would still not be silenced by a return to this aspect of the liberal "good story", but even then there was an answer available. As intense opposition to liberal hypocrisy grew, the desperate, irrational willfulness underlying a system that claimed to detest the use of State authority intensified along with it. Such willfulness explained why the supposedly wicked organs of government were readily mobilized to censure Catholic journals.<sup>49</sup>

You see, dear readers, the strange and deplorable antinomy! Those who profess freedom of opinion chain liberty, because they would sacrifice their material interests if they did not. We, who profess in theory that opinions do not have to be free, sacrifice both our theory and, with it, our material interests as well. Oh, truly, the children of darkness are more prudent!

And it also explained why otherwise dreaded mobs were stirred to action should liberal constitutional machinery somehow fail to do what it was supposed to do with apodictic certainty.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 6 (1860), 666; also, III, 7 (1857), 19-35.

<sup>50</sup> L. Veuillot, VII, 131.

There is no hope of winning by discussion should the majority hold firm against sophisms, ruses, threats: then the windows of the gallery, which are always arranged to look out onto the street, are opened; one cries to the crowd that the majority is betraying the people, that it wants to enchain it, that it wants to brutalize it. The crowd enters, it howls, it boos, it breaks, it silences, it votes: a street carries the motion above all the contrary voices, the majority is changed, and the law is made.

All this confirmed the Civiltà's basic argument: either God was King with Liberty, in a system open to the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history, which taught that it was the truth that made men free; or Man was King, through the force lying behind the whole of the vision of "nature as is" – from the time of Isocrates to that of modern liberalism.<sup>51</sup>

While man commands, nothing can reassure the conscience of the subject who obeys, neither with regard to the truth presupposed in the command, nor with regard to its justice. Obedience without such persuasion would not be the obedience of man, because not rational, and, therefore, not voluntary. It cannot, therefore, be obtained without the force either of arms or of deceitful intelligence. The liberty of the ruled, either violated or deceived, will always be

---

<sup>51</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 3 (1853), 618.



## CRUSADE

tampered with. Therefore, while man is king only as man, he will govern with force.

*I. Liberal Invitation to Further Radicalism*

Even at its most sincere, liberalism was constructed upon an erroneous faith in the individual's ability to achieve man's end in life on his own. Emerging out of a secularization of the principle of independence preached in religious form from the mouths of the sixteenth-century heresiarchs, it treated the human person as though he were a self-sufficient entity, a citadel threatened only by evil that came from outside its walls. Outside evils included the authority and machinery of Church, State, and corporations that disturbed a bourgeois oligarchy's ability to pursue its utilitarian materialist desires freely. Liberalism, as the modern Defender of the Peace, weakened all of these, accordingly.

But other representatives of the Revolution could, in fact and not just in fearful theory, operate successfully with the same principle of independence in the world of weak social authority created by the liberals for the attainment of their more radical goals. Democrats, refusing to accept the designation of the mass of men as immature, childlike subjects requiring the tutelage of active liberal citizens, could indeed succeed in satisfying their demand for political liberty for all. When they did so, however, they opened themselves to a further development of the inner logic of the independence principle in a way that involved infinitely more profound political, social, and cultural changes.

This involved the work of proponents of "freedom" who did not think that the wickedness of social authority was

something limited to interference with individual economic freedom. Under their more radical guidance, Church, State, corporations, and even individual parents of families themselves had to abandon authoritative control over one or the other or even all aspects of personal human activity entirely. Some such freedom fighters, the most radical of all, could not bring themselves to endure the despotism of purely internal intellectual authorities either. They felt obliged to eradicate the tyranny represented by standards of beauty, conceptual truths, and the very structure of logic and linguistic forms as well. Each individual freedom fighter might disapprove of the increased zeal of his next most radical brother-in-arms. None, when accepting the basic disdain for authority implicit in the principle of independence, could develop a convincing rational ground for limiting this social wreckage. Cry all that moderate liberalism or a purely political democratic ideology might do, it cried against the consequences of principles that it had established.<sup>52</sup>

Devastating as this expanding liberation was from the standpoint of those open to the corrective and transforming mission of the Word, worse, still, was its proponents' demonstrated recourse to a pseudo-fraternal spirit to form pseudo-corporations—parties, sects, and terrorist organizations—to achieve their goals. Incited by a given passion—and liberalism's principle of independence potentially blessed and divinized them all—the “party” that each group formed rushed for control of the arms of the weakened State, insisting that it was transmitting into action

---

<sup>52</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 2 (1850), 391; I, 4 (1851), 29, I, 6 (1851), 497-498; II, 4 (1853), 29; III, 5 (1857), 17; V, 10 (1863), 43.

## CRUSADE

the "will of the People" to effect whatever particular liberating change it supported.

Opposition, even from a numerical majority, caused no special difficulties for the party in question. As with liberals, it merely indicated to it the lamentable persistence within the population of the influence of former "real" authorities. These, of course, were, by definition, totally tyrannical and unacceptable. Such forces had clearly drugged the People into expressing what was actually not its will at all. Popular "opposition" to the party was thus actually a subconscious plea to crush the remaining oppressors of the individual. Less radical attacks of the early nineteenth century, the intransigents lamented, thus fertilized the soil for the egotism, passion, and off-handed injustice characterizing the fanatical assaults of its later decades. Contemporary madness was explicable after one visit to the schools created by the liberal State but yesterday. The carts carrying the moderates to the embrace of the guillotine rolled through the streets resounding to the hymns of liberty that these partisans of a prudent Enlightenment had themselves first composed.

Insofar as purely political protections could be found against the pretensions of parties seizing control of State machinery, they had to be based upon the existence of independent centers of authority from which resistance could be mounted. The multiform corporate life inspired by Catholic recognition of the goodness of association and authority could—and had—given birth to this type of protection in the past. But liberal insistence upon the need for an ever-greater atomistic freedom had destroyed this efficacious corporate order. Revolutionary liberal governments of the nineteenth century, eager to defend

materialist man from spiritual despotism and individual property from social controls, had dismantled the authority of the oppressive corporate society that thwarted the exercise of oligarchic "freedom". They thus left the liberal State as the sole remaining viable power in society. Once this power was seized by more radical partisan elements to strengthen immeasurably and do with what they willed there would be no effective force left to prevent them. Hence, the liberal system ended by handing the "free individual" over to confront a partisan "pseudo-State", guided by the strongest wills, capable of doing whatsoever it pleased---in *his* name, and even against *his* will. This permitted an ever more radical "horde of Janissaries" to impose upon an entire population "by means of the cudgel, the code of its follies".<sup>53</sup> And, barring a rejection of the basic revolutionary principle of independence lying behind this development, society was left with no way to fight or think itself out of its dilemma:<sup>54</sup>

Bonaparte reestablished religion in spite of freedom: if he had wanted to undo that which he had done, would he have been prevented by freedom? By the freedom of the Church, yes; that is to say, if there were found enough priests and Christians to resist him at the peril of their fortune and their life. By political freedom, no.

All societies at all times have seen wickedness and wicked people, ambitious and oppressive men. But

---

<sup>53</sup> L. Veuillot, III, 164.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 331; *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 11 (1852), 438; I, 2 (1850), 540-541.

## CRUSADE

when such wickedness and oppression were only born from the passions, the guilty man, free as he was to dominate his passions through the use of reason, began to come to his senses almost as soon as he put his mind to it. Modern society in contrast, entertains principles and theories that are at the root of the evil. Hence, the more a man reasons, the more he is constrained to oppress society; and, vice versa, the more society is oppressed, the better logicians the oppressors are. Thus, resolute Protestants were better logicians than groping moderates; rationalists, better logicians than Protestants; atheistic communists...better logicians again than rationalists.

Now I {Liberatore} have demonstrated one hundred times in the course of these articles that pagan civilization is a regression for humanity, its liberty entailing the most shameful slavery and the liquidation of the human personality, absorbed by the omnipotence of the God State. Therefore, even without my saying it, anyone can see by himself that modern liberalism, under the fiction of promoting liberty, tends to destroy it; under the shadow of desiring progress, it desires barbarism...It is not an aversion to liberty or sympathies for despotism that lead the Church to fight their wicked efforts...Rather, it is the love it feels for true liberty, its native repugnance for all kinds of despotism, the mission it has from God to save the personal independence of man that inspires it, and urges it to such a battle.

One of the “liberating” forces that exploited the weakness of liberal society to form conspiratorial organizations, seize control of the State, and then make a totalitarian use of its machinery in the absence of corporate opposition was that of nineteenth century nationalism. Nationalists could not endure the rule of one ethnic group over another even when that rule was good and efficient. Each distinct ethnic nation had to be totally “free” of any outside “tyranny” even in obtaining the common good. Unfortunately, attaining this “national freedom”, as the case of the Italian *Risorgimento* demonstrated, involved promotion of morally wicked political assassinations, unjust wars, and the destruction of those religious beliefs and cultural customs that were precisely deemed to be at the heart of the popular heritage by Catholic opponents of nationalism. No matter. Once again, the childlike population had to be forcibly remade in order to become true to its “real self”---as dictated by the willful, prophetic, “adult” nationalist. As one of the Ministers of Education of the new Kingdom of Italy said:<sup>55</sup>

But among us, the citizen is the property of the State. The law of conscription binds him to the soil of the fatherland during the most florid period of life. The State has, therefore, the right and the duty of exercising over him an almost parental tutelage. It scarcely would be able to hold itself responsible to the laws of the country if it had been delinquent, or permitted its moral or political education be perverted by others. It would only half understand

---

<sup>55</sup> *Il Cimento*, V, 12 (1855), 1079, 1080; on racial engineering, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 2 (1850), 540-541; II, 9 (1855), 383-384.

## CRUSADE

the office of legislator if it did not claim for itself the domination of education.

Nationalism, as far as the intransigents were concerned, was a truly vicious development of the principle of independence. Another, which was considerably more understandable, was that of modern materialist socialism. Contemporary socialism was in many respects a totally rational—though erroneous—reaction to problems created by the bourgeois oligarchy standing behind revolutionary liberalism. The Revolution, in barricading itself in nature alone, had cut society off from the corrective and transforming message of the Word. It thus completely misunderstood human personality, man's purpose in life, and the means of fulfilling his temporal and eternal happiness. Revolutionary liberalism interpreted the naturalism of the independence principle in an individualist manner, with an emphasis upon a personal "freedom" that destroyed man's social character and ensured the triumph of a materialist and ultimately self-destructive elite over the weak mass of the population. This explained the existence of the factory that Veillot visited at the beginning of his career as a Catholic journalist. Its "free" owner and wife supported all the politically correct liberal causes. Meanwhile, its "free" workers slaved day and night for a pittance in suffocating conditions salubrious only for the machinery, with their only certainty in life being the awareness that one day, broken in spirit, when sickness or old age dictated, they would be put out to pasture like exhausted beasts, "free" to die whenever

their bodies chose to do so.<sup>56</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, lamenting the miserable conditions of most modern workers, insisted that a Church loyal to the fullness of the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history could never accept such an anti-social "freedom":<sup>57</sup>

What a horrible train of woes accompanies {workers}, and what horrible physical and moral miseries so many thousands of unhappy men suffer and perish from in manufacturing centers. Damned to machines and mines, they are sacrificed to the luxury and cruel gluttony of a small number of speculating capitalists!

An immense mass of adults bury themselves ever day in caves of fossilized carbon to eke out just a little more of existence while they choke on pestiferous fumes. And an infinite number of children standing amidst the racing machinery of sweet-smelling factories stupefy their minds and ruin their health as they throw a piece of cotton or wool amidst the burning embers, with no other result than that of not dying straightaway of hunger.

The spirit of the century does not occupy itself with anything other than commercial utility and political greatness. It only desires comfort in physical life and movement in commercial life. Laws

---

<sup>56</sup> L. Veuillot, I, 163-166.

<sup>57</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 11 (1852), 607; II, 1 (1853), 407-408; III, 2 (1856), 650-651.



## CRUSADE

must be made in favor of the rich, and the populace must be given a great deal of labor and little bread. If the rags of the poor and the sighs of the hungry bother the indolent rich who pass by in groups through crowded streets, the spirit of the century takes from the beggar the liberty to beg and punishes him for being hungry. If a missionary arouses remorse in a rich man by preaching the reality of hell, if a procession crosses the rich man's path, if a burial troubles his thoughts, if a bell takes possession of his ear, the spirit of the century demands that bells, funerals, processions, and preaching be prohibited. The spirit of the times, in sum, would have the clergy limited, like hermits, to prayers and blessings spoken in the clouds. It wants joyful free men to dance and divert themselves on earth. Now this progress, this spirit of the times, and accommodation of it...is impossible for Rome...{to accept}.

Such horrors gave a semblance of justice to socialists who appealed to the same principle of independence as their liberal oppressors:<sup>58</sup>

I accept that excuse for what it is worth, and I say that the unbelieving poor man can equally use it for himself. He also has become a philosopher, and his philosophy only obliges him when and how well it seems to him to observe the precept which commands him to respect the property of others.

---

<sup>58</sup> L. Veuillot, III, 306.

It permitted them, in seeking to be freed from the social tyranny exercised over them through the authority of the individual property owner, to appear as legitimate agents of God's vengeance:<sup>59</sup>

With the total suppression {of guilds} the artisans lost their political and civil importance. The whole class fell into oppression plain and simple. Workers—individuals on their own and divided—lacked hierarchy and organization. Irritated by their oppression, they rose in revolt, associating themselves anew with that spirit of insubordination and vendetta that today disturbs society and humbles governments.

It even aroused sympathy for their usurpation of the State machinery created by liberalism and its subsequent transformation into a tool for completing their own work of "liberation"—namely, by destroying the oppression brought about through uncontrolled private ownership of property for once and for all:<sup>60</sup>

Catholicism created in all states a multitude of living forces that united individuals in powerful and durable associations, and placed them under shelter from the oppression of power. Protestantism and philosophy demolished all these fortresses of liberty one after the other. Nothing has remained facing the

---

<sup>59</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 10 (1852), 230.

<sup>60</sup> L. Veuillot, III, 304.

## CRUSADE

state but individuals impotent in defending themselves against it. Now the socialists propose recognizing that the state has the same rights over individuals that Protestantism and philosophy gave it over those moral persons {i.e., the network of corporate societies} that it killed one by one. This is logical: why should it not absorb individuals like it has absorbed all the rest?

For all the above reasons, the intransigents condemned the call of the Party of Order to support liberalism as though it were the bulwark against "true" revolution as a monstrous absurdity. Far from being a block on demagogic socialism, it was the bourgeois liberals, with their "moderate" use of the principle of independence, who were the original and primary catalysts for radical change of every variety in the nineteenth century. It was they who weakened all social authorities, allowing any number of private, partisan, unnatural groups to conspire together to seize the machinery of the State to do with what they willed without fear of effective opposition. It was they who first gave the socialists the idea for stealing property from its legitimate possessors by cooperating and delighting in the robbery of the goods of the Church in 1790. It was they who aroused a spirit of rebellion that the People as such, when left to their own devices, did not really feel.

"The Revolution is not popular", Veuillot concluded; "it is bourgeois. It is the bourgeoisie who made it, has defended it, restored it, continued it, and who, for the unhappiness and ruin of France, will finish it if it can. For fifty years, the assemblies arising from bourgeois suffrage have been

revolutionary; they made 1830 and 1848.”<sup>61</sup> Liberals could call themselves “conservatives” all they might want. In doing so, they merely evoked bad memories of legitimists who used the same term, without realizing that it was not their “moderation” or the specific form of government that they supported that determined the shape of things to come. It was the spirit of the Revolution itself that did so---the spirit of the Revolution, with its refusal to recognize the need for individual and social man to be corrected and transformed in Christ. And this spirit, modern legitimists and liberals, in some way, in every country, all shared as one.<sup>62</sup>

Those men have been labeled *conservatives* who, since 1815, have formed the parliamentary majorities that have been seen to fight the revolution, but *for the profit of the revolution*. The conservative majorities have not conserved anything. Gradually they have delivered everything and have themselves been delivered to the violent minorities that they have seemed to combat, but to which, in reality, they submitted.

### *J. Thesis and Hypothesis*

After the disillusioning experiences of 1848, intransigents felt the need for a more profound meditation on exactly what might need to be done to build a society that was truly open to the full teaching of Christ. This led to their embrace of the distinction that some contemporary Catholic thinkers had already developed; a distinction between what was referred

---

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 384.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 236.

## CRUSADE

to as the *thesis* and the *hypothesis*. So long as the principle of striving for a Catholic society – the so-called *thesis* – were to be firmly maintained, a wide scope for tactical experimentation – the *hypothesis* – in pursuit of practical victory was permitted. Should experimentation threaten the purity of the Catholic principles involved, retreat into Catholic fortresses could take place. Still, this would only be proper if it were done to recoup strength to sally forth anew when fresh opportunities for ascending Mount Tabor came down one's path. And in this enterprise, a pilgrim spirit, ready for new steps in the dance of life, would definitely always be required.<sup>63</sup>

Intransigents argued that a primary focus on the thesis in their time was very much needed. This was because of the obvious confusions that had emerged out of the effort of so many contradictory groups, both naïve and ill-willed, to cooperate with one another during the recent spate of revolutionary activity. Catholics clearly required a firmer grounding in their own Faith and its unique political and social considerations. Not only did this demand authoritative doctrinal teaching, but a frank, hard-hitting, and consistent Catholic journalism operating on a much more popular level as well.

Adoption of a conciliatory spirit in the midst of the confusions revealed by the Revolutions of 1848 would be a miscalculation of cosmic proportions: it would sacrifice the souls of existing believers in the gamble for some uncertain future *entente* – a strategy equivalent to a medieval embrace of the *malitia* before experiencing the changes brought about

---

<sup>63</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 1 (1850), 647-648; V, 8 (1863), 134-149.

in their ranks through the work of Cluny. The contemporary enemy already had tremendous advantages in the spiritual combat that had to be waged. Catholics found that they unconsciously used his language and teaching methods and were susceptible to sweet blandishments from him at every turn. It was therefore most important, at least to begin with, to adopt all legitimate weapons to save the home camp from infection, subversion, and demoralization. "We are fighting a war", Veuillot concluded, aptly summarizing the concerns of such sister journals as the *Civiltà* as well, "wherein it is always necessary to burn one's ships":<sup>64</sup>

We see them in the schools, in the midst of a young generation that they water without scruple with all the poisons of error; they have audacity on their faces, mockery in their mouths; they permit us to believe that they have atheism in their hearts. We count their victims by the hundreds, and in our souls themselves there stirs a remnant of their poisons. May God convert them tomorrow! Our task is to escape them today.

Finally, will we, out of respect for a small number of mad or wicked men, who, being devoted to the propagation of evil, will always cry that *they* are being injured when one attacks evil, suffer it to pass and circulate insolently, to carry demoralization along with error into minds, so that the spirits that it will darken will not be able to recover the light; so that the

---

<sup>64</sup> L. Veuillot, I, 459, 462; VI, 372; also, I, 427-430, 529-541; V, 168-261.

## CRUSADE

Church, defamed, will not find an immediate defense?

Enunciation of firm positions would prepare bewildered and wavering Catholics for coming battles. "If our voice is not able to make a believer out of an unbeliever", Veuillot argued, "it can make an apostle of a believer, like the stories and good examples of war, like the sound of the trumpet makes a warrior of a soldier".<sup>65</sup> Ultimately, however, intransigent concern for the thesis was dictated not by any purely utilitarian considerations but by simple sense of duty. The Catholic's obligation was to proclaim the truth, in season and out of season, and to allow providence to take care of the rest:<sup>66</sup>

The truth is attacked, it is necessary to save our brother; the land of servitude is evil, the faith is lost therein, the soul is oppressed therein. It does not matter what floods and what dryness separate us from the land promised to our ancestors, and it is necessary to flee servitude. A way will open up under the waves; manna will rain down in the desert!

Besides, a continued focus on reconciliation with the supporters of modern revolutionary naturalism ignored one other clear lesson of 1848: the fact that Reason played no role

---

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 538.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 459.

in their calculations. For willful pride alone was at the center of naturalist man's politics:<sup>67</sup>

...{F}erocious pride is correctly the genius of the Revolution; it has established a control in the world which places reason out of the struggle. It has a horror of reason, it gags it, it hunts it, and if it can kill it, it kills it. Prove to it the divinity of Christianity, its intellectual and philosophical reality, its historical reality, its moral and social reality: *it wants none of it. That* is its reason, and it is the strongest. It has placed a blindfold of impenetrable sophisms on the face of European civilization. It cannot see the heavens, nor hear the thunder.

Veillot satirized the type of irrational, willful, and ultimately ridiculous liberal who condescended to "dialogue" with Catholics under current circumstances in one frequently cited passage from *Les Libres Penseurs*:<sup>68</sup>

He is the author of {a} volume, he speaks in it of everything: there lies a title to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. It is here that the debate between Leibnitz and Bossuet is definitely settled; it is here that the hidden motives of Descartes are revealed, and that the secret incredulity of the simple Malebranches is demonstrated as clear as day. Here, too, the final word on Voltaire is pronounced, and

---

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 45-46.

<sup>68</sup> L. Dimier, *Les maîtres de la contre-revolution* (Paris, 1917), pp. 287-288.



## CRUSADE

one sees in it how the author of *Candide* is more spiritual and orthodox than the devout have cared to believe. In a certain section, found towards the middle, the master takes a very objective position in the struggle of the Church with philosophy. The Church would be wrong to complain: the young man does not hate her at all, he is rather good-willed. Without a doubt, 'the priests are not that which a vain people thinks'; there is in their doctrines and in their general character a goodness that the young man recognizes and confesses. This is not the generosity of a beginner; it is the judgment and sentence of a mature spirit. He is not at all generous; he is wise. He is not dazzled, he knows. The Church rests upon certain needs of the human soul; it has a right to these, it can go that far, but not further! Further lies the superior domain of the reason and philosophy. If the Church had the temerity to breach this limit, it would find the young man there, respectful but inflexible; he would cry to it: Stop! Do not fear that it may pass this limit. This is why he does not approve his friends who are alarmed, and who, 'in the heat of an anger more legitimate than philosophical', write that all priests are scoundrels, all pious women adulterous, the whole Catholic edifice a heap of impostures. No! Here lies exaggeration. He will deny these hyperboles. He is just, he is calm, he has studied, and he has meditated. He sees that the lower class has need of a religion and the Catholic system seems to him to satisfy better than another that need of the rabble. All this is said in an academic form,

without fault of French, without pause, without emphasis...citing Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Saint Bonaventure, Thomas Reed, Brockius, Pintus, Chopinetti, and the Third Council of Sardis. He is titular professor, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, intimate of the *Journal des Debats*. He will be married well, his books will be bought for the public libraries, and he will be deputy, royal counselor, and minister. He is called the hope of philosophy now; he will one day be called its honor. Myself, I call him a turnip.

Intransigents insisted that the price that believers had to pay to join a Party of Order that supported this kind of dialogue was simply much too high. For one thing, Catholics would be permitted by their liberal friends to pursue criticisms of those Enlightenment and French revolutionary principles that produced socialism, but they would be obliged to abandon objections to any of the very same precepts that had fashioned liberal capitalism. One would have to parrot the slogan that "obvious common sense" dictated a joint liberal-Catholic polemic versus the socialist evil, while continued Catholic anti-capitalist attacks would have to be represented as an inexplicable, pointless, peevish waste of intellectual energy, useful only to the destructive advance of the palpable Red Menace. The message would be clear: that the Church would better protect herself if her freedom were used to fight the one thing that *liberals* believed needed fighting; if the Church, in effect, became nothing other than a liberal institution supporting bourgeois enslavement to the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is".

## CRUSADE

Instead of this, the intransigents argued, a coherent Catholic response to contemporary evils had to emphasize the truth that liberal capitalism and democratic socialism were actually blood brothers; that both had exactly the same naturalist Enlightenment roots; that the arguments of the liberal capitalists had given intellectual birth to the doctrines of the socialists; that capitalist excesses had provided psychological stimulus to the desperate spirit of the June Days. In fact, Catholics had to be on *particular* guard against the Party of Order, for, despite its total unacceptability, it was clearly immensely tempting to respond to its call of the wild. For, as Taparelli himself said:<sup>69</sup>

I will candidly add that in the past I experienced in myself the force of social influences that rendered plausible and just to me many of those institutions the fallacy, insufficiency, contradiction, and iniquity of which I see today so plainly, and have seen ever since the facts of experience constrained me to bring a new light of examination to the principles that inform them.

What followed from all of this was a total break with the liberal Catholic position, which the intransigents found to embody more of a new and willful fideism rather than any ordinary, debatable, hypothetical strategy. Veuillot complained that Montalembert refused to allow any discussion of the question of the validity of cooperation with moderate revolutionary institutions whatsoever. Acceptance

---

<sup>69</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, II, 11 (1855), 176.

of the English parliamentary system was axiomatic. "He made a crime of a simple disagreement of opinion", the editor of *l'Univers* complained. Or, barring that, "even of remaining firmly of an opinion that he had shared and sometimes imposed".<sup>70</sup> Veuillot's qualms were by definition subjective, uncharitable, and absurd. The result of this liberal intransigence, Veuillot lamented, was the gradual transformation of the earlier prudential use of "modern freedom" by the Catholic Party into its unqualified affirmation:<sup>71</sup>

We said that the Church had a right to the same liberties as everybody, not that everybody had a right to the same liberties as the Church; that all the liberties that we demanded were of natural law and of divine law, good, necessary, legitimate, holy; not that all liberties that were demanded had the same character, the same title, and had to be decreed. Never was our liberty that of the liberals, still less that of the democrats, and never were they unaware of this. Whatever the danger of chilling their friendship, when accidentally and for a moment they were allies; whatever the danger of irritating them as enemies, we – M. de Montalembert and the rest of us – thought that the peril would be infinitely greater accepting or tolerating a single one of their errors. Our conscience demanded this; the interest of our party demanded this. The right tactic for us is to be visibly and always what we are, nothing more, nothing less. We defend a

---

<sup>70</sup> L. Veuillot. XI, 423.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 276; VI, 435.

## CRUSADE

citadel that cannot be taken except when the garrison itself brings in the enemy. Combating with our own arms, we only receive minor wounds. All borrowed armor troubles us and often chokes us.

In the islands of Oceania, the savages who fill the office of priests often indulge the whim of declaring that such and such an object is...*taboo*, that is to say, sacred, and from that point no one can touch it under pain of sacrilege and of death. Are we going to accord the same faculty to the *flamines* of the ideas of '89, and will everything that they have regarded with a pleasurable eye be taboo for the rest of mortals?...All revolutionary institutions and all their consequences, whatever they may be, taboo! One must be quiet and adore, or perish! This fetishism is new, at least among Catholics and conservatives.

*La Civiltà Cattolica* shared the evaluation of the situation of Catholics in Europe offered by Veuillot and *l'Univers*. Knowing this, liberal Catholics in France *ipso facto* condemned the Roman journal as equally intransigent. Montalembert, whose works the *Civiltà* was accused of "disfiguring", led the assault, continually expressing exasperation at having to deal with a mindlessly reactionary, ill-willed clique whose flaws could never be rationally corrected. For Montalembert, the Jesuit editors were "exalted, violent, gross, and servile"; "implacable, fanatical, and base"; "wicked men" whom Pope Pius IX "substituted for the honest men who had formerly pleaded his cause". These dogmatic opponents of modern ideas had tried to

demonstrate that freedom was a plague “not only in its abuses and its excesses, but in its very essence”. More evil than that Garibaldi who was determined to rob the Papacy of its rightful property, such fools entertained ideas and exhibited behavior suitable for one thing only: producing enemies of the Catholic Church. In short, the *Civiltà* did not understand that liberalism was the only possible means of obtaining the “counterrevolutionary” goal of Catholic security.<sup>72</sup>

Although there is no need to point out once more the injustice of the accusation that the *Civiltà* rejected all concern for human freedom, it is necessary to underline the complete refusal of Montalembert and most of his allies even to examine the journal’s real arguments. These were always presented to him in an excessively humble, even downright obsequious manner. The *Civiltà* constantly reiterated its appreciation of the splendid work done by militants like Montalembert, “alone and young...facing a group of Orleanist Voltaireans”. It attributed much of the success of the Catholic revival in France to them. Indeed, Taparelli went so far as to justify Montalembert’s book on *Catholic Interests*, “disfiguring” it only in the sense of not being critical enough of some of its fundamental palingenesisist flaws.<sup>73</sup>

These flaws, *La Civiltà Cattolica* eventually and reluctantly concluded, evinced that same blind, fideist acceptance of moderate revolutionary principles that always opened the

<sup>72</sup> Montalembert, *Correspondance inédite, 1852-1870* (Paris, 1970) pp. 215, 225, 339; Taparelli, *Carteggi*, 509, 538n; Montalembert, *Correspondance inédite*, 305.

<sup>73</sup> Taparelli, *Carteggi*, 623; *La Civiltà Cattolica* II, 1 (1853), 129-147, 257-269; I, 11 (1852), 496.

## CRUSADE

floodgate to further radicalization; a radicalization that ensured the victory of the strong, the emasculation of the weak, and Catholic entry into a *danse macabre* that eventually eradicated all memory and understanding of their own faith and its proper pilgrim spirit from their minds and hearts. It was this *fideist* faith in the unquestionable and divine character of liberal concerns--constitutions, checks and balances, the separation of Church and State, freedom of the press, and so on--that rendered liberal Catholics closed to rational discourse and oblivious to the succor they gave to more logical and more brutal revolutionaries. Hence, they could not see how much they, too, resembled the Girondins, singing the Marseillaise in 1793 on their way to the guillotine. Such true closed-mindedness prevented them from recognizing that they were actually also blood brothers of shallow legitimists. For, despite their differences concerning governmental forms, they, too, placed love for a specific political system above Christ.

Furthermore, this blind fideism explained why Montalembert, who was badly informed about the *Civiltà's* position and who boasted of not reading it regularly if at all, could nevertheless unceasingly condemn its editors. It explains why he refused to look at Taparelli's *Esame critico* or even to answer the Jesuit's letters begging for a critique from him. This is why he was not ashamed, as Taparelli lamented, "to abuse the weapons of publicity by turning them against persons who, remembering his former deeds, renounce the right of defending themselves".<sup>74</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, its

---

<sup>74</sup> Taparelli, *Carteggi*, 646, 371; Also, 364, 499, 509, 538n, 645n; Montalembert,

editors, and their arguments were so willfully dismissed and so much distorted that Taparelli ended by noting: “we have often asked ourselves if we have written in Sanskrit or Chinese”.<sup>75</sup> The ideas expressed in the journal, like those of Veillot, were by definition outside the realm of discussion. For liberal Catholics were always rational and always right. To question but one of their teachings was an infallible sign of irredeemable obscurantism.

*La Civiltà Cattolica* and *Le Correspondant* did, on one occasion, enter into a discussion of principles—much to the dismay of most liberal Catholics. Despite the expressions of civility and fraternity on both sides, one can easily see that this dialogue had no chance of success. The Roman journal once again insisted that participation in the modern naturalist *danse macabre* had led its opponents to value liberalism above the teaching of Christ, and that the Catholics who followed them down this pathway became hopeless schizophrenics. They publicly proclaimed Catholic doctrines but simultaneously believed and repeated liberal ones as well: the obsession with freedom as an end in itself; the fear of reaching definite conclusions that would become “authorities” guiding individuals’ lives; the treatment of sin not as a reality in and of itself but only as a by-product of non-liberal political systems and oppression; the conviction that the mechanics of liberal government and not the struggle of individuals for sanctity were responsible for justice, a superior culture, and personal happiness; and, finally, the inability to conceive the basic truth that sinfulness might

---

*Correspondance inédite*, pp. 215, 225; *Carteggio Montalembert-Cantù*, pp. 107, 112-116, 166.

<sup>75</sup> Taparelli, *Carteggi*, 371.



## CRUSADE

wreak havoc with a constitution---especially a constitution administered by haughty men who laughed at checks and balances and mocked the childlike masses who hailed their own enslavement as the pinnacle of liberty.

Would the liberal Catholic ever recognize his schizophrenic character? The *Civiltà* doubted so. His proclamation of personal infallibility made it possible for him to baptize the Revolution, call it Catholic, and then exchange the authentic Catholic dance of life for the *danse macabre*. Moreover, his allies from the “practical”, non-Catholic, liberal bourgeoisie assured him that this was the only pragmatic thing for a serious believer to do. Such outside liberal opinion was important to him, because pleasing it had become his overriding concern. He stood in awe of true liberalism even while he remained a member of the Church and could not quite give himself over wholeheartedly to revolutionary principles. In fact, he almost seemed to regret not being able to become more non-Catholic.<sup>76</sup>

Intransigents also deplored the liberal Catholic ideas encouraged by Ignaz von Döllinger. Döllinger was symbolic in the *Civiltà*'s mind of the arrogant, acerbic, and increasingly chauvinistic spirit that had invaded much of European thought in the nineteenth century. He was also representative of the liberal exaltation of the raw act of freedom—behaving without restraints—over the purpose of freedom: the conformity of man to Christ, his proper end and guide. For Döllinger, like every supporter of the spirit of the Revolution, placed a distorted importance on means—free, rational

---

<sup>76</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, V, 10 (1864), 48-58.

inquiry, in his case—over and above their just end: possession of the Truth.

Should his liberal Catholic school triumph, the *Civiltà* feared, the natural use of the intellect, developed through “free” research and “freedom” to publish, would be perceived as being more valuable to Catholicism than the supernatural corrective and transforming authority of the Word Incarnate. But this was just the beginning of the resulting nightmare. For we have seen that the Roman journal believed that respect for the authority of the Word in the Church was itself historically responsible for building confidence in the value of Reason in the first place. A victory for the Döllinger school of thought would therefore mean that the endless groping of the theologian, always beginning his work over and over again from its starting point, would be prized more highly than an actual definition of any truth, natural or supernatural. Döllinger’s liberal revolution would thus be a revolution of ignorance, a revolution that would give the ignorant but proudly “free” theologian the status of a witch doctor, whose ideas and actions could never be criticized. As Kleutgen wrote to the Canon Moufang (1817-1890), a leader of the neo-scholastic school in Mainz, soon after the publication of the *Syllabus*, Rome was convinced that German theologians of the liberal Catholic Döllinger faction had forgotten the very essentials of their science. They had pitted their raw act of academic freedom not simply against the arguments of another “school of thought” but against crucial aspects of the fullness of the Christian message; a

## CRUSADE

message essential to the defense of the dignity of the human mind in general.<sup>77</sup>

*K. The Attack on the Christ of the Barricades*

Liberal Catholics were not the only troublesome opponents that intransigent students of the Catholic “thesis” had to confront. There were also the supporters of the “socialist” Christ of the Barricades to answer. Again, given the nineteenth century victory of the liberal revolutionary vision, intransigents in no way found their appearance on the socio-political scene to be either surprising or irrational. Still, they were problematic from the standpoint of the *catholiques avant tout*, and for two specific reasons.

One was their romance with democracy, conceived of as the absolute requisite for a legitimate political order. The Catholic Party, as Veuillot complained at the height of their influence in France in 1848, “has not worked twenty years to extirpate monarchical idolatry to seed it anew; it will not now seed that other idolatry, no less dangerous and degrading, that has justly been called the democratic idolatry”.<sup>78</sup> This idolatry was manifested through the tendency to use the word “democracy” as a talisman to convince Catholics that the “will of the People” could never be in conflict with the Faith; as though experience had not shown that “democracy”

---

<sup>77</sup> H. Schauf, *Die Ekklesiologie des Konzilstheologen Clemens Schrader*, S.J. (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1959), p. 11; *La Civiltà Cattolica*, V, 9 (1864), 385-402, 663-676; V, 10 (1864), 27-38.

<sup>78</sup> L. Veuillot, III, 424.

meant wildly varied things to different people with opposing ideological obsessions:<sup>79</sup>

Alas! If one at least told us with what kind of democracy Catholicism must reconcile itself! Since, as we have noted, democracy is not one thing, one party, but a word; a deceptive word under which one hundred different parties, all irreconcilable enemies of one another, take refuge and are torn apart.

Supporters of the Christ of the Barricades then made compromises with this undefined democracy that seemed, in practice, only to involve unhappy Catholic concessions to the naturalist *Zeitgeist*. These concessions were then declared a necessary response to the “new needs” that the leaders of the movement, as a freshly awakened intellectual oligarchy, alone could somehow grasp. Veillot found this modern elitist faith and fetishism to be particularly strong and offensive among the editors of the democratic Catholic journal, *l'Ère Nouvelle* :<sup>80</sup>

Does one discuss? It agrees with us on the facts, the doctrines, the final ends. At least it does not indicate others. And, nevertheless, it concludes in such a way that all Catholics are astonished or are grieved, while their enemies cry ‘bravo’. It has a way of criticizing the revolution that does not make it lose the friendship of the warmest of revolutionaries at all.

---

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 379-380.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 382-383, 459; Also, 161-165; on *l'Ère nouvelle*, see Meinvielle, pp. 252-253.

## CRUSADE

“What! New needs! For new needs, one requires new dogmas! Therefore, the supposed Christian revelation is not complete! Humanity has marched and Christianity remains stationary. Thus, Christianity is not divine! Democracy responds to the new needs of the world: thus true Christianity is democracy. Here is their argument. Why not cut short this dialectic by telling them {the revolutionaries} straightforwardly that the new need of humanity is simply that of putting into practice faith, hope, and charity?”

But democratic ideology was obviously only one of the evils afflicting the Christ of the Barricades vision, especially after 1848. For democratic socialism, in the decades that followed the revolutions of that year, more and more reflected the same naturalist mindset as liberal capitalism. Human beings, to the developing socialist mind, were nothing more than individual machine parts engaged in conflict on the basis of their economic interests. The goal of this ever more dangerous modern socialism was simply that of combining these exploited individual machine parts together in order to become an exploitative class mechanism in its own right, crushing the natural and just individual right to private property in the process. Espousing the same soulless materialism as capitalism, the late nineteenth century Socialist Movement equally misunderstood the life of the spirit, the real character of the person, and the final end of human life. If capitalism destroyed property for the bulk of the population in the name of the individual's unlimited freedom, socialism---in its role as a legitimate avenger of the weak gone amok---did so under the banner of the community

and its concerns. Support for revolutionary socialism as the answer to revolutionary capitalism was a tragic dead end that no student of the Catholic thesis could ever believe acceptable to the mission of the Word in history.<sup>81</sup>

### *L. A Word Drenched Catholic Social Doctrine*

No, rather than a Christ of the Barricades, born of an understandable reaction to the evils of liberal capitalism but still steeped in naturalist errors of an all too similar variety; rather than a palingenesist democratic ideology enamored of a vague utopianism easily manipulated by word merchants for their own willful purposes; rather than any of this, what was required to deal with the legitimate problems of an industrial age was an investigation of the Catholic “thesis” that would yield a fully Catholic Social Doctrine dealing properly with political economy. Given its importance for the future, let us explore in detail exactly what such a Social Doctrine would entail--and from its earliest roots in the pre-Christian Seeds of the Logos.

Western civilization grew to maturity in emphasizing the existence of an objective order of nature, the importance of individual freedom within that order, and the need for individuals to be enlightened as to the character of nature and freedom through the guidance of authoritative societies like the family and the State. Sacred and secular thinkers together argued that individuals, left to their own devices, simply could not properly see all that they had to see in order to understand either the objective order of things or the essence of human liberty. Individual knowledge and personal

---

<sup>81</sup> Billington, pp. 287-305, 367-385.

## CRUSADE

freedom could only be perfected though life in community. Social beings alone could become wise and free. Unaided, anti-social individuals could possess but a fragmented, flawed science of nature and knowledge of their place within it. They would thus be condemned to use their liberty to destroy themselves as well as the people around them.

We have shown that such ideas, while already shaped by the ancient Greeks, really only gained sociological influence due to the impact of the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history. Christ provided supernatural teaching and medicine to heal the weaknesses and flaws of a natural world that had chosen to mar itself through sin. His message confirmed an order and purpose to Creation that even the best of non-believers were tempted to question intellectually and to contradict in practice. His labors for the salvation of human persons underlined the central value of the individual to the plan of God. His demand for individual submission to Him and to His Mystical Body placed a supernatural stamp upon the importance of authoritative communal guidance of men. Christ taught that it was only through full membership and participation in supernatural society—only, in effect, by choosing to see Creation through God’s eyes—that individuals and societies could fully understand nature and use it fittingly. The Incarnation gave men the ability to use nature to serve the God who had created it to the utmost degree, raising their consciousness to the intrinsic value and responsibility of all of nature’s specific tools, from its sciences to its temporal authorities, as it did so. *Without the supernatural grace of God, imparted through a socially powerful Church, individuals could not suitably understand and exploit what*

*they seemed to be capable of knowing and putting to use even on purely natural grounds alone.*

Enlightenment thought was flawed precisely because it violated all these western philosophical and Catholic theological precepts, thereby blinding its proponents to the truth. Its atomistic freedom reduced men to precisely that unaided, anti-social condition which the previous development of our civilization had condemned as parochial and self-destructive. Its naturalism compounded the problem by prohibiting consideration of God's plan for His Creation and man's eternal destiny in secular matters as unpardonably invasive. Enlightenment man thus lived and acted in a world whose every basic daily activity, both mundane and serious, was cut off from its final purpose.

In consequence, the "sciences" produced by Enlightenment freedom and naturalism were studies that uncovered nothing other than the laws of an incomplete nature, and a fallen one to boot. These sciences were then studied for incomplete, fallen reasons---chiefly to gain unwarranted power over the world and to provide some immediate satisfaction perceived as being good by flawed individuals. Such "sciences" obstinately refused to admit the possibility of learning how to change and heal nature through reason, revelation, and grace; they dedicated their practitioners to the encouragement of limitation and weakness. Ideological and arrogant in their self-sufficient rationalism, they closed themselves off to all criticism of their errors and responded to rational evidence in irrational ways. This irrationality was reflected in their appeal to the need to submit to the dictates of an unexamined "common sense". It appeared in their frequent calls for a "consciousness-raising" that would transform the unenlightened creatures who



## CRUSADE

rejected their vision into men who were finally able to distinguish natural “facts” that were acceptable from those which were strictly *verboten*. It was obvious in their sophist reliance on psychological and rhetorical tricks rather than rational tools to influence the mob and trump their opponents. Highest on the list of these ploys was their call to consider the respective financial success rates of those individuals and nations skilled in exploiting a world governed purely by the standards of unrestrained Original Sin compared to those who were not.

All Enlightenment atomists and naturalists taught flawed, iron-clad, materially satisfying “scientific laws of nature” to which they demanded unquestioning submission from the Church and Christian believers along with everyone else. Nevertheless, we have seen that they differed greatly as to what these laws were, merrily lambasting their fellow *illuminati* with as much rhetorical disdain as they did the members of the retrograde Catholic community. Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) of Prussia and Count Camillo Cavour (1810-1861) of Sardinia saw that the rules of *Machtpolitik* yielded their states an immediately greater power and wealth than any nation following the guidelines of a St. Louis IX or a Pius IX might expect. Therefore, they insisted that Church doctrine bend to its “natural laws” and political science. Piety could be no excuse for neglecting the demands of a *Machtpolitik* whose victories might even still be presented to believers by Pietists like Bismarck as actually reflecting the higher will of God Himself. Sexual libertines had proof positive that the unrestrained pursuit of physical satisfaction could result in much more immediate carnal rewards. Therefore, Church doctrine had to bend to accept

the "science" of seduction and perhaps encourage experts to raise the sexual consciousness of religious critics to make them, too, act more "naturally".

Hence, it was no surprise that liberal bourgeois capitalists witnessed the way in which the totally free market produced vast wealth for clever entrepreneurs and therefore proclaimed naturalist economic science to be an infallible guide before which western philosophy and Catholic theology must kneel and worship. Regardless of differences in emphasis, the "free" individual operating under the spell of all of these "sciences" was everywhere the same: a self-limiting, parochial being; a willful, passionate child who specialized in learning how to get more toys for himself than the other kids around him, regardless of whether he needed or benefited from them. He wanted what he wanted when he wanted it, and no better informed parent was going to force him to give up his rattle and learn the meaning of true knowledge and virtue.

Atomistic liberalism, justifying an individualism which sinful men quite eagerly aimed towards material ends, provided the capitalist with his ticket to a destructive journey across nineteenth-century Europe. Capitalism as a whole then firmly insisted that eye had not seen nor ear heard the benefits that would result from economic liberty; from submission to the law of supply and demand. The weakened State either collapsed before its desires or became its ideological tool. Justice, to the capitalist, was but the assurance that the economically defenseless, along with those lacking a purely economic ambition in life, received no protection from his demands. The European continent was littered with the results of his "freedom".

## CRUSADE

Believing the above description with all their hearts, intransigents argued that what Catholics needed in their own day was a much clearer political and social vision recognizing the two central truths that no modern naturalist promoting the cause of “business as usual” would ever accept: first of all, man’s simultaneously natural and supernatural character, the former requiring the correction and transformation provided by the latter; and, secondly, his real existence as both an individual and fraternal being, with private and communal concerns. Both these truths were crucial to confronting the “social problem” brought about through the Industrial Revolution, which the intransigents recognized to be the most explosive issue of the age and which, as we have seen, they were convinced both liberal capitalist and socialist partisans failed miserably to understand. Any thinker formed by the Socratic Tradition and the corrective and transforming message of the Word would know that he could not base his knowledge of the functioning of the economy upon his unaided, atomistic reason and desires alone. He would realize that his economic reasoning and decisions must be informed by the deeper wisdom gained by actively living under the authoritative guidance of the family, fraternal and professional organizations, and the State; by accepting the supernatural moral authority of the Church; by ultimately seeing economic needs through the eyes provided by all of nature’s tools and those of nature’s Creator and Redeemer as well.

Such an economist would enter into his studies with his eyes wide open. He would be aware that his discipline was not merely the science of gaining wealth but of gaining wealth in union with all other natural and supernatural

requirements for attaining the good life. He would understand that he could not promote behavior that might, at least in the short run, make men wealthier, if it would be better for them and for their neighbors, in the long run, to act differently. Again, he would recognize that what this "better" meant would have to be defined by taking stock of a variety of factors that the collective natural and supernatural wisdom of the ages deemed to be important: a balance of agriculture and industry; neighborhood stability and access to the necessities of life; stewardship of the environment; defense of deeply-rooted customs and the beautiful achievements of high cultures; the demands of justice and charity; the need to transform all things in Christ so as to aid man's quest for eternal salvation. The truly wise economist would teach that men were not free to gain wealth obtained at the expense of leveling the Roman Forum to create more parking spaces for easier shopping at the supermarkets of the Eternal City; of turning patriotic celebrations and sacred festivals into nothing other than elaborate occasions for purchase and consumption; of marketing whatever might satisfy the wishes of revelers participating in a Gay Pride Week. Simply put, the truly wise economist would see that man did not live by bread alone, nor did it profit him if he gained the whole world and lost his soul in the process. And he would encourage wise social authorities to use all their strength to oppose the victory of economic materialism, even if this were democratically, but mistakenly, supported by ninety-nine per cent of a given population.

By now, it should be clear that the kinds of Catholic criticisms represented by journals like *La Civiltà Cattolica* had nothing whatsoever to do with a desire to return to some idyllic, pastoral past on a feudal manor filled with altruistic

## CRUSADE

barons and voluntarily servile peasants. It was not at all concerned with adulating the personal early morning collection of eggs or the milking of cows. Intransigent criticisms were partly the product of a philosophical, historical, and sociological study. But, more importantly still, they were the result of a militant, revived understanding of the meaning of the Word in history that battled coherently all declarations of independence from God's creative and redemptive plan, including those concerning economic methodology and morality. Thinkers involved with developing a Catholic Social Doctrine realized that capitalist investment in modern industry was yielding a greater productivity than man had ever known before. A number were fully aware of benefits emerging from industrialization. And they were also convinced that having entered down its pathway there was no easy, charitable way out of it either. Its machinery, once activated, was relentless in its demands.

What these thinkers wanted was what they indeed got: a basic clarification of the difference of the Catholic from the revolutionary spirit in economics. This began, appropriately enough, with that general symbol of the enunciation of the Catholic thesis: Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors*. For the fifty-eighth error attacked in its assault on the whole of modern naturalism was the one that claimed that "no other forces are to be recognized except those that reside in matter, and all the rectitude and excellence of morality ought to be placed in the accumulation and increase of riches by every possible means, and the gratification of pleasure".<sup>82</sup> And what the *Syllabus* dealt with "negatively", by condemning the unacceptable

---

<sup>82</sup> *Syllabus of Errors*, n. 58.

positions of Catholic opponents, Leo XIII (1878-1903) approached "positively", outlining, in encyclicals like *Rerum novarum* (1891), the necessary underpinnings of a truly Word-friendly economic order.<sup>83</sup>

It is true, as critics of the Catholic Social Doctrine now taking shape have noted, that this positive teaching is in many respects a very sketchy and flexible one. It does indeed allow for a kaleidoscope of practical responses to modern economic conditions, ranging from calls to scrap the liberal capitalist system entirely to acceptance of the basic framework that this system has created and vigorously maintained as a prudential necessity. Still, there is no doubt whatsoever that the Church deemed the "intransigents" to be correct on one absolutely crucial matter: the importance of rejecting the principle of the unrestrained free market as a morally reprehensible standard that understood neither man's simultaneous individual and social character nor his need to satisfy his supernatural as well as his temporal destiny. This rejection rings loud and clear through every papal statement on political economy. To paraphrase a certain American Catholic weekly, the Church decided that no one could be a sincere Catholic and a supporter of the unrestrained free market simultaneously. Such a supporter would write himself out of the Catholic camp by his purely natural and individualist vision of life. He would do nothing

---

<sup>83</sup> E. Gilson, ed., *The Church Speaks to the Modern World* (Image, 1954), pp. 1-28, 205-240; S. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Cornell, 1996), pp. 257-264; Mayeur, XI, 441-497; Aubert, p. 487; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 208-334.

## CRUSADE

other than serve as a conduit for a socialist reaction of equally reprehensible spirit.<sup>84</sup>

### *M. Culture Wars*

Although the intransigent position gained an effective dominance in the life of the Church after 1848 and played a major and direct role in her teachings involving politics and social justice, this by no means freed it from continued and quite influential opposition even inside the Catholic camp. Yes, it is true that the *Syllabus* caught the majority of liberal Catholics off guard. And, indeed, most of them took its publication as a deathblow to their movement. Montalembert saw the *Syllabus* as a vindication of Veuillot, who happened to be in Rome at the time of its release. He also expressed a passion to chastise with “an avenging whip the brazen faces of these Jesuits of the *Civiltà*” for their part in inspiring such a document.<sup>85</sup>

But Msgr. Dupanloup, the Bishop of Orleans and a liberal Catholic stalwart, did not lose heart. Encouraged by various friends in the curia who claimed that both the pope and Cardinal Antonelli (1806-1876), the Secretary of State, wanted the *Syllabus* to be interpreted contextually and prudentially, he decided to intervene to save the day for “openness” to the modern world. He did so by transforming a planned essay criticizing the Franco-Italian Convention of 1864 – a political agreement concerning the removal of French troops from

---

<sup>84</sup> Rao, *Blindfold*, pp. 39-71, 138-148, 179-182; Launay, pp. 95-106.

<sup>85</sup> Montalembert, *Correspondance inédite*, p. 305.

papal Rome—into a liberal Catholic interpretation and “defense” of the *Syllabus*.

Dupanloup’s pamphlet was a masterpiece of liberal Catholic equivocation; a good story if ever there was one. He actually appealed in it to the *Civiltà*’s thesis-hypothesis distinction, which he repeatedly attributed to the journal by name, claiming to share the same approach as that truly pro-*Syllabus* journal. But Dupanloup’s definition of thesis and hypothesis was very different, in fact, from that of the *Civiltà*. He made it appear that the evil castigated in the *Syllabus* was the exaggeration of good liberal hypotheses—e.g., Belgium’s wonderful liberal government must immediately exist everywhere—when the difficulty really concerned liberal definitions of freedom and progress which, while always erroneous, might nevertheless have to be tolerated in practice—e.g., Belgium’s evil separation of Church and State might have to be endured in order to avoid civil war in that specific country. The spirit of Dupanloup’s pamphlet was one of sighing over a temporary inability to be “modern” everywhere, whereas the spirit of the *Syllabus* was that of lamenting the need to be liberal anywhere, in view of the eventual state of enslavement to arbitrary will that this liberalism ensured.

Dupanloup’s pamphlet reached Rome on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1865, accompanied by the blessing of Msgr. Chigi, the nuncio in Paris. It was indeed warmly received, although liberal Catholic claims that it became the official interpretation of the document are absurd. Pius IX himself said that no popular pamphlet of this nature could be looked to for a precise definition of the meaning of the *Syllabus*. Moreover, the letter of praise sent to Dupanloup by Francesco Mercurelli, the Pope’s Latin Secretary, was similar if not practically identical



## CRUSADE

to the large number of others he sent to persons who had written essays in support of the Syllabus that offered interpretations completely opposed to that of Dupanloup.<sup>86</sup>

But the truths of the matter are insignificant. Liberal Catholic claims concerning Dupanloup and the *Syllabus* are still generally believed to be true today. Dupanloup effectively turned a *pro forma* approval of his pamphlet into the argument that a pope whose “hands were tied” really favored liberal Catholics in his heart of hearts—and that this meant that one day in the future the validity of liberalism would again be made manifest. Dupanloup succeeded partly because his arguments were so sophistic that they even confused and temporarily convinced *La Civiltà Cattolica* itself—at least until Veuillot enlightened it.<sup>87</sup> But, more importantly, he succeeded because the *danse macabre* was dragging so many people into a revolutionary way of life that for a large segment of the Catholic population the very possibility of grasping a truly *pro-Syllabus* argument was rapidly fading away.

In France, liberal Catholicism gained support from continued proponents of Gallicanism. This might seem surprising, given the role played in the movement by Mennaisiens like Montalembert. After all, Gallican bishops had been deeply angered by the assault on their seminaries and their liturgies by the Ultramontanism that the disciples of

---

<sup>86</sup> C. Schrader, in *Der Papst und die Modernen Ideen*, ii, 1865), front page; A. Pélage, *Quanta Cura*, (Paris, 1865), pp. 83-85; N. Blakistone, ed., *The Roman Question* (London, 1962), p. 307; Rao, *Blindfold*, pp. 196-198.

<sup>87</sup> L. Veuillot, *Correspondance*, viii, 214; also, 210-212.

Lamennais, Montalembert included, had stimulated. Such bishops, however, generally supported French governmental policies, whatever they might be, and this, in fact, had been one of Lamennais' chief complaints against them. Therefore, when the Second Empire entered the lists against militant, anti-modernist intransigents deemed dangerous to the projects of Napoleon III---which included assistance for the Italian *Risorgimento*---they were gradually able to make common cause with their former enemies within the now bitterly divided Catholic Party.

Although most Gallicans tended to be restrained in their outright opposition, some, like Henri Louis Maret (1805-1884), were quite openly eager to fight attempts by the intransigents to free the Church and Catholics from complete submission to local civil law. Nominally Catholic bureaucrats, alongside those of Jansenist mindset who lamented the turn of the tide against either naturalism or enlightened piety, joined them. The situation improved, from the intransigent standpoint, for most of the 1870's. This was due both to a sense of national humiliation after the defeat at the hands of Prussia widely attributed to the frivolity of the regime of Napoleon III, as well as to the possible restoration of a legitimate monarch, "Henry V", who was decidedly friendly to the anti-liberal cause. But it took a drastic turn for the worse with the victory of the anticlerical republicans by the end of that decade. That victory for a "Republic of the Republicans" boded ill both in terms of a revival of internal Catholic opposition to intransigent goals as well as direct anti-Catholic governmental measures.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Gough, pp. 221-308; Mayeur, XI, 501-544.

## CRUSADE

Catholic enemies of the intransigents in the German countries also remained active after the publication of the Syllabus. Just as in France, Gallican/Febronian-minded bishops augmented their number, along with moralists convinced that the anti-Jansenist spirituality central to the intransigent spirit would ensure the formation of a dull-witted, superstitious, lazy, Catholic flock, unsuitable to life in modern industrial society. Members of this alliance were not averse to calling in the secular authority to support their positions when they believed that such intervention could guarantee them an ecclesiastical victory--hence, the attempt by those who would become known as Old Catholics to obtain governmental interference to prevent the proclamation of Papal Infallibility at First Vatican Council.

Catholic and Protestant German bureaucrats who were upset by the ecclesiastical autonomy demanded by the intransigents aided the more religious minded opponents of the victorious Ultramontanist position. German liberals and nationalists in general joined together with them, both those of the Prussian dominated Empire proclaimed in 1871 as well as their brethren in the remaining Hapsburg lands who detested the revived spirit of Roman universalism and longed for Austrian union with the new Reich. Moreover, Hapsburg humiliation at the hands of Prussia forced that cooperation with Hungary that created the so-called Dual Monarchy, temporarily weakened the budding Catholic Movement, and thus gave new opportunities for liberals to flex their always very powerful muscles. In short, supporters of the Old Catholic schism, liberals, and nationalists in all the German States linked in continual calls for a "proper" secular purgation of the "errors" of intransigent disturbers of the

peace. The modern age was indeed proving to be one that Marsilius of Padua would have appreciated.<sup>89</sup>

Such efforts at purgation multiplied and intensified throughout Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, affecting Italy, the German countries, the Netherlands, and eventually Belgium and France as well. Sometimes these purgative measures focused on a single issue, especially that of education. Very frequently, however, the crisis they provoked was a universal one, striking not only at primary and secondary schooling but at the existence of the religious orders engaged in it, the ability of Church authorities to control their dioceses and parishes, the general freedom of association, and the very right of individual Catholics to speak out on any political matter whatsoever: in short, to use the German term for such activity, due to a full-scale *Kulturkampf* or "culture war" of the kind that was openly proclaimed in the Kingdom of Prussia and the new Empire that it dominated.<sup>90</sup>

Catholic reaction to these measures was often very impressive, giving hope to intransigent dreams of a powerful political and social reaction to the Revolution. Lay Catholics

---

<sup>89</sup> Blackbourn, pp. 270-310; Mayeur, XI, 659-729.

<sup>90</sup> Mayeur, XI, 463-729; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 272-283; IX, 3-134, 190-256; Blackbourn, 224-310; S. Beller, *Francis Joseph* (Longman, 1996), pp. 80-156; M. Invernizzi, *Il movimento cattolico in Italia* (Mimep-Docete, 1995); Kalyvas, pp. 1-113; E. Fattorini, *I cattolici tedeschi dall'intransigenza alla modernità* (1870-1953), pp. 3-39; P. Palazzini, *Pio IX e gli inizi della gioventù cattolica* (Circolo S. Pietro, 1979), E. Bader, *Karl v. Vogelsang: Die geistige Grundlegung der christlichen Sozialreform* (Herder, 1990); S. Agócs, *The Troubled Origins of the Italian Catholic Labor Movement, 1878-1914* (Wayne State, 1988)

## CRUSADE

were particularly incensed over school issues, which directly touched the average family. "They are not going to have it, the beautiful souls of children", Flemish peasants sang.<sup>91</sup> "The generosity and ardor of the Catholics surpassed everything imaginable", one observer of the Belgian scene reported. "Almost every Catholic meeting which I attended at that time", a witness of Austrian passion noted, "was a fiery furnace for the souls, from which a torrent of sparks and flames of holy enthusiasm was generated; a powerful forge, in which the armaments were hardened for a battle for the Cross which now threatened from all sides".<sup>92</sup> Catholics saw such liberal-fomented "School Wars" as the first step towards the complete destruction of the Church. If secularists succeeded in destroying Catholic education, one activist noted, "the church will then be a building with four walls, whose interior, as the liberals count on, will become emptier with every decade".<sup>93</sup>

Self-conscious hierarchies in various countries often called upon Catholic lay associations to fight the good fight in these battles. Thus, Belgian prelates summoned the laity to three seminal organizing congresses in Mâlines in 1863, 1864, and 1867, culminating in the formation of the *Fédération des cercles catholiques* in 1868. After collective appeals for repeal of nefarious educational laws were ignored, the organized hierarchy and laity moved on to stronger action--teachers by resigning their positions in public schools, parents by refusing to send their children to them, and priests by

---

<sup>91</sup> Kalyvas, p. 62.

<sup>92</sup> Kalyvas, pp. 97-98.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

denying the sacraments to anyone who failed to toe the designated line. A private Catholic school system was planned, and a campaign launched to pay for it. By 1880, this network was in place and had managed to garner the majority of Belgian students. Its creation provoked still more anticlerical legislation. Committees of resistance of all kinds were then formed, with the Catholic press publicizing a petition signed by 317,000 against the repressive educational legislation.

After similar episcopal action, Dutch Catholics also focused on the construction of a primary school network. One ought to note that their organizational vigor was matched, if not surpassed, by pious Calvinists. Abraham Kuyper's (1837-1920) league against school reform and his newspaper, *De Standaard*, joined with Catholics in a massive petition movement demanding repeal of the Netherland's detested 1878 decrees on secular education. At a time when the entire Dutch electorate was limited to around 100,00 voters, Kuyper's petition collected 305,000 signatures; its Catholic counterpart an additional 164,000 names.

Popular reaction to the cultural wars in Austria came with demonstrations in favor of the Venerable Bishop Franz Rudigier of Linz (1811-1884), imprisoned in 1869 for his vociferous opposition to the changes of the newly liberal government of the Hapsburg Empire. Various lay organizations came into being at this moment, with Karl von Vogelsang's (1818-1890) newspaper, *Das Vaterland*, drawing up a complex battle strategy for the future, economically and socially as well as politically.

Perhaps most impressive was the organizational fever initially excited by the *Kulturkampf* in the German Empire, leading to the formation of the *Katholische Frauenbund*,

## CRUSADE

*Katholische Mütterverein*, *Katholische Kaufmännische Vereinigung*, and a large number of youth, student, and teacher groups. Growth in the Catholic Press was enormous, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* and the Berlin *Germania* being the giants of the media. Most famous of all the associations formed after 1870 was the *Volksverein für das Katholische Deutschland* (1890), whose stronghold was the Rhineland, and whose secretaries, Franz Hitze (1851-1921) and August Pieper (1866-1942), presided over a vast membership undertaking all manner of tasks on behalf of the Catholic population.

Catholic associations seeking not just to overturn anticlerical legislation but also to replace it with Church-friendly laws often did "play ball" with the existing system, first approaching existing "conservative parties"—i.e., conservative liberals—to serve as their agents. Such parties would be offered what were in essence contracts. The network of active Catholic associations would do much of the propaganda and legwork for the election of conservative deputies to parliament, with the proviso that these, when winning office, would follow Catholic bidding on state matters touching upon religion.

Results rarely matched expectations, thereby confirming the validity of the basic intransigent argument. Conservatives were too inclined to negotiate with immovable enemies of the Catholic cause. Gradually, Catholic activists came to loathe conservatives as "doubtful friends", people who were happy to have the support of a religious electorate but only to twist that backing to serve their own narrow purposes. It thus became clear, as the Italian activist, Ruggiero Bonghi, said in 1879 that this "exchange between Catholics and Conservatives is a great error and is very suspect"; that

"Catholic feeling is not necessarily conservative, and conservative feeling is not necessarily Catholic".<sup>94</sup> Catholics were not alone in this bitterness, either. The Dutch Calvinist leader and fellow traveler Kuyper insisted that the battle being fought by all religious people was also "against conservatism; not conservatism of a specific brand but against conservatism of every description".<sup>95</sup> Although in many places they called themselves "rightists", conservatives were soon understood to be merely "liberals who had been mugged". Conservatives were men who shared with liberals the same basic Enlightenment principles, especially with regard to the concept of economic freedom, but who had simply become more cautious about their implementation in most other realms. Hence, one saw an activist temptation to move from contractual agreements to the establishment of consciously Catholic parties of their own.<sup>96</sup>

We have already noted that the first clear instance of such a venture was the "Committee for the Defense of Religious Freedom". This organization, promoted by Charles de Montalembert and Louis Veuillot's Parisian daily newspaper, *l'Univers*, elected 144 representatives to the French Parliament in the 1840's. Another example of early political development was the "Catholic Club", composed of various prelates, clerics and laymen, which took shape at the German revolutionary Frankfurt Assembly of 1848. A third initiative was the Prussian "Catholic Faction", founded in 1851 by August Reichensperger (1808-1895), his brother Peter (1810-1892), and Hermann von Malinckrodt (1821-1874) for the

---

<sup>94</sup> Kaylvas, p. 225.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.



## CRUSADE

purpose of defending the freedoms enshrined in the religious clauses of their Kingdom's Constitution and faithfully respected until the cultural war twenty years later. After 1870, these rather loosely organized factions began to tighten up. Catholics from Prussia formed the Center Party, which also functioned in the new, democratically elected, imperial *Reichstag*. The increasing severity of the *Kulturkampf* legislation from 1872 onwards made the Center Party's fortune, since the devastation of the Catholic hierarchy and priesthood during these very difficult years necessitated what amounted to a temporary assumption of church guidance by the active laity.

Belgium, in 1884, witnessed the formation of the *Union nationale pour le redressement des griefs* as a temporary "war machine against liberalism" and its secularist educational laws. Although the *Union* still desired to work with conservatives, it nevertheless aimed to "absolutely prevent the return to power of an autonomous Right, which would not take into account, as it did [not] in the past, the demands of the Catholic world".<sup>97</sup> The electoral campaign "was animated, enthusiastic, marked by religious mysticism", and helped enormously by the various Catholic associations. Results were spectacular. June of 1884 brought a triumph over the Liberals that was actually "more a massacre than a defeat", and the hated laws were repealed.<sup>98</sup>

In the Netherlands, Kuyper formed the Antirevolutionary Party, its Declaration of Principles proclaiming consistent resistance to the world of 1789. Catholics, under the guidance

---

<sup>97</sup> Kalyvas, p. 191.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

of Fr. Hermann Shaeppman (1844-1903), were by that time also building a “war machine” of their own out of a federation of local groupings. Despite enormous disagreements and even hatreds, Kuyper proclaimed the so-called *Unio Mystica* of Catholics and Protestants in 1888.<sup>99</sup> Both denominations coordinated their support for candidates. The Conservative Party broke up under the pressure, and, just as in Belgium, the Liberals were soundly trounced. Calvinists and Catholics then continued to share power, ensuring their separate, autonomous free development, though the “party” formed by the latter remained an amorphous entity until some years into the next century.

As early as 1868 the Austrian newspaper *Das Vaterland* had called for an “anti-liberal confederation” of all those who ‘suffered from the financial and material consequences of the recently adopted system’.<sup>100</sup> A coalition was indeed formed in 1887, holding a convention the following year whose importance was grasped by Karl Lueger (1844-1910), the head of the Vienna democrats. *Das Vaterland* promoted Lueger’s leadership of the coalition and suggested the name Christian Social Party to designate it. In 1890, the parliamentary leader of the traditional conservatives, Alois Liechtenstein, “grew weary of his lack of tactical success” and joined the Christian Socials. By 1897 a permanent central party bureaucracy was firmly established.<sup>101</sup>

Italy’s introduction to lay-clerical associations began with Brunone Lanteri’s (1759-1830) early nineteenth century revival of pre-revolutionary *amicizie cattoliche*. Many Catholic

---

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>100</sup> Kalyvas, p. 200.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

## CRUSADE

newspapers aided this work from the 1820's onwards, the most influential of which was *La Civiltà Cattolica*, which we have seen began publication in 1850. The creation of an extensive network of Catholic associations was regarded by most of these journals to be the only means of making the wishes of the "real country" known in the unnatural situation established by the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. This was due to the fact that that kingdom's liberal constitution limited the number of people who could vote to a miniscule percentage of the population, based upon wealth and education, and insisted that its representatives act only in an "enlightened" manner. Where Catholic deputies had been validly elected, as in 1857, in what was then the Kingdom of Sardinia, they had been excluded as unacceptable because they were Catholic and *ipso facto* unenlightened. "When we took part in elections and in many places won a victory", an exasperated Catholic witness noted, "we called down upon ourselves all manner of vexations, and our work went up in smoke".<sup>102</sup>

Hence, the real, long-lasting backdrop for the famous *non expedit*, the papal prohibition of Catholic participation in the political life of the Kingdom on the national, as opposed to local level, was not aggression against the Temporal Power. It was the recognition that participation under current conditions would be a sham. Hence, it was better to stand apart, and, as the *Osservatore Romano* noted in 1880, prepare for *real* participation in the future by temporary abstention from the existing fraudulent system. It was this that took place in Italy, where a policy of neither voting nor being

---

<sup>102</sup> Invernizzi, p. 22.

elected in a liberal system designed to harm religion was adopted, and Catholics “participated” in social life by “abstaining” from a political fraud. A justifiable temporary abstention necessarily presupposed serious work outside of legal, constitutional national politics. It was to the end of laboring effectively as a kind of parallel government that the vast bulk of Catholic organizations and local parish committees came to be coordinated by the *Opera dei congressi e dei comitati cattolici*, founded in 1874 and given its definitive name in 1881. The *Opera* met in regular congresses and aided the work of local groups through five permanent sections established in 1884: Organization and Catholic Action, Christian Social Economy, Instruction and Education, Press, and Christian Art. The second section, headed at the end of the reign of Leo XIII by Giuseppe Toniolo (1845-1918), founder of the *Unione cattolica per gli studi sociali*, was especially active and attentive to the intransigent spirit.

### *N. Christendom and the Modern Death Camp*

Let us conclude this chapter by asking what the intransigents’ appreciation of the reality of a liberation of mankind from the corrective and transforming mission of the Word under the specific conditions presented by a nineteenth century undergoing all the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution actually would mean. The contemporary picture that they painted, as one might expect, was by no means a pretty one. And they felt that it was destined to become progressively worse.

Taparelli d’Azeglio, both in his *Saggio teoretico di dritto naturale appoggiato sul fatto* (1840-1843) as well as in numerous articles in *La Civiltà Cattolica* after 1850, discussed the new

## CRUSADE

world order that he saw rapidly coming into being. This global community, he believed, was not only inevitable, given modern industrial advances, but actually, from a Christian aspect, in many ways desirable. After all, he argued, Christianity understood its mission to be a universal one, and had, historically, been the enthusiastic promoter of international order. Of course, a *just* international order would have to be one based on the acceptance, correction, and transformation of nature in Christ. This meant that any authority that it might legitimately possess would be one that was based upon the natural nations forming it. Moreover, it would have to work to perfect the national, ethnic, corporate, and individual distinctions of all of its worldwide members.

But what would happen should this global order in the making be a purely naturalist one? Taparelli did not think that one had to look far to see the consequences, since they were readily apparent already from the time of the Treaty of Westphalia onwards. International order, under naturalist circumstances, would be built upon the will of the strongest powers of the day, and it would be purely materialist in character. Rather than perfecting natural national, ethnic, corporate, and individual distinctions, it would seek to destroy them. *La Civiltà Cattolica* published a number of articles lamenting what was happening in the Far East as a result of the "opening" of China and Japan to Western domination to illustrate his point quite dramatically. Unless naturalism were defeated, Taparelli predicted a future filled with ever more intense and nationalist-inspired competition, ever-larger armies, ever-greater expenditures on armaments,

ever more brutal warfare, and—appropriately enough—efforts biologically to improve “the races” engaged in it.<sup>103</sup>

Louis Veuillot is probably the most interesting source to look to for the requisite summary of the disasters that would attend Catholic defeat in the culture wars. As far as he was concerned, the general downward spiral of the character of life brought about by modern naturalism, combined with massive industrial development and the machine like standardization accompanying it, guaranteed a gloomy future for mankind. “Everywhere”, Veuillot insisted, “the reduction of the truth has diminished intelligence, hearts, and even the instinct of life”.<sup>104</sup> Western society, stung to the quick, would soon “sail on a sea of platitudes where it will grow immensely bored”.<sup>105</sup> Men had become “barbarians of civilization”,<sup>106</sup> expressing themselves in a “jargon that would draw forth cries of indignation from the most careless writer of one hundred years ago”,<sup>107</sup> and so bourgeois in their vices that they no longer even knew how to sin with gusto:<sup>108</sup>

Between the sensualists of the past and the sensualists of our day, there is the same difference as between the great lords who ran about the world astonishing it with their prodigalities, and those sons of the enriched whose splendor and decadence one section

---

<sup>103</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, I, 9 (1852), 229-235, 244-246; II, 11 (1855), 268.

<sup>104</sup> L. Veuillot, XI, 337.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 448.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 401.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 327.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 2-3; also, XII, 416-420.

## CRUSADE

of Paris today sees. The earlier group wanted to ruin themselves and did not succumb to it; the latter calculate, they are rich, yet succumb without even having known to make a semblance of being magnificent. Everything is lacking to the poverty of our times, including the brilliance and often even the substance of the vices it would like to have.

So numb was the modern Frenchman to the call of glory that a Saint Bernard would find himself able only "to convince a hundred bourgeois to make their Easter Duty", and this, "above all if the socialists had preached there before {him}."<sup>109</sup> The only extraordinary enterprise for which he could arouse enthusiasm was that of "elevating the world to commercial and industrial civilization", which signified spreading factories, knowledge of banking, and opium to China and India. A terminus to this withering of the soul was clear: the complete abolition of the man of fiber:<sup>110</sup>

No more men anywhere! The production of man has ceased in France. Some men of more or less complete honesty, but lacking talent; some very incomplete men of talent lacking all honesty; no attachment to any truth, but the most senseless attachment to the most mad errors; no more good sense, except in damning uselessly the impotent and evil works one persists in pursuing; no more pride in the face of

---

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 186-187.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 350; XII, 360-361.

anything base, yet puerile and dangerous and even cowardly arrogance in face of all that which must be feared....

Yet France had not yet tasted the dregs of the cup of the spiritual boredom brought about by naturalist materialism. The United States had already had this opportunity, and therefore offered a more depressing example of the fate awaiting western man. America was a land that had never known the benefits of Catholic community. It was composed of individual, profit hungry economic units, "men without history, without cradles and without tombs; adventurers of both sexes who are not even barbarians".<sup>111</sup> Its cities did not resemble the European polis, because their citizens were "gathered together solely to make one another mutually sweat gold",<sup>112</sup> and because they "only place in common the flesh from which they nourish machines for making money".<sup>113</sup> It was no wonder, he answered the *Journal des Debats*, that a place like Chicago could be rebuilt as quickly as it was after the great fire, since nothing of lasting importance could ever have been lost in the conflagration. The same could be said of the entire nation, were it to disappear in some holocaust. Priests who entered this model land of insipid modernity "go to carry extreme unction to races who are dying and to some savages expatriated from Europe":<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Veuillot, XI, 333.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 333.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 34; XII, 359-360; XI, 333; V, 497.



## CRUSADE

This people does not cry for its dead. It only knows how to cry for money. Fire can grip its cities, but it devours in them neither a monument, nor an art object, nor a memory, and the money melted is not money lost at all. One draws it from the ruins; it is often even good business.

One can look at North America and the direction in which it is headed: its rapid progress, owed to the most brutalizing work, has fascinated Europe: but already the true results of this exclusively material progress appear. Barbarism, wicked behavior, bankruptcy, systematic destruction of the natives, imbecilic slavery of the victors, devoted to the most harsh and nauseating life under the yoke of their own machines. America might sink completely into the ocean and the human race would not have lost anything. Not a saint, not an artist, not a thinker—at least if one does not also call thought that aptitude for twisting iron to open pathways to packages.

Through fisticuffs and slander, by means of a thousand frauds, they {the Americans} manufacture for themselves from day to day governmental tools made purposely to be worn out quickly....They take a workman, a corporal, a buffalo herder, a pig-skinner, a speculator in newspapers; they place him at the head of the country, under safe guard; they heap outrages upon him, he allows himself a thousand improprieties, and this lasts three years {sic}, thanks to his tricks, when he has sufficient spirit to trick.

When he departs, covered with spittle, another replaces him who spat upon his predecessor, and upon whom someone else will spit. This works for them, and it will last until they have become too savage to retain the same leader for three years. They will then create dictators who will perpetuate their rule, or they will devour one another, and the loveliest republic of the world will end by being a strongly disciplined hereditary empire, or a cave and a slaughterhouse.

An article entitled *Le canon rayé*, published in 1859, noted that which could happen when an absolute revolutionary power flourished in tandem with banal modern civilization. The nineteenth century, the witness to this phenomenon, would proceed inevitably towards the establishment of a universal state, headed by a charismatic dictator, whose power would rest upon a bureaucratic elite skilled in techniques of manipulation.<sup>115</sup>

Everywhere the conqueror will find one thing, everywhere the same, the only thing that war and the Revolution will nowhere have overturned: bureaucracy. Everywhere, the bureaux will have prepared the way for him; everywhere they await him with a servile eagerness. He will support himself on them; the universal Empire will be the administrative Empire par excellence. Adding without end to that precious machinery, he will carry it to a point of incomparable power. Thus perfected,

---

<sup>115</sup> L. Veillot, VIII, 366-367.

## CRUSADE

administration will satisfy simultaneously its own genius and the designs of its master in applying itself to two main works: the realization of equality and of material wellbeing to an unheard degree; the suppression of liberty to an unheard degree.

Men ruled by this system would be much more easily oppressed than at any time in the past. Such facility would be due not so much to the fact that new weapons would give the dictator undreamed instruments of control as to the sad reality that stupefied machine man would approve of his chains, and a dull-witted intelligentsia would bless them. The subjects created by contemporary civilization were, after all, totally distinct from men of preceding generations. "These forces, which today's man possesses", Veuillot wrote, "possess him also; they engage him in weaknesses as unmeasured as his pride; weaknesses which succeed in changing him completely".<sup>116</sup> Men had been transformed into absurdities, beings unable to desire the destiny outlined for them by the Gospel, "too powerful to control the taste for pleasure". The universal Empire would enslave such creatures by providing for their most banal needs:<sup>117</sup>

The police will take care that one is amused and that its reins never trouble the flesh. The administration will dispense the citizen of all care. It will fix his situation, his habitation, his vocation, his occupations.

---

<sup>116</sup> L. Veuillot, VIII, 364.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 364, 369.

It will dress him and allot to him the quantity of air that he must breathe. It will have chosen him his mother, it will choose him his temporary wife; it will raise his children; it will take care of him in his illnesses; it will bury and burn his body, and dispose of his ashes in a record box with his name and his number.

As time went on, this task would become simpler and simpler. A decline in human imagination would entail a destruction of the taste for a variety of pleasures:<sup>118</sup>

But why would he change places and climates? There will no longer be any different places or climates, nor any curiosity anywhere. Man will find everywhere the same moderate temperature, the same customs, the same administrative rules, and infallibly the same police taking the same care of him. Everywhere the same language will be spoken, the *bayadères* will everywhere dance the same ballet. The old diversity would be a memory of the old liberty, an outrage to the new equality, a greater outrage to the bureaux that would be suspected of not being able to establish uniformity everywhere. Their pride will not suffer that. Everything will be done in the image of the main city of the Empire and of the world.

Naturalist Europe merited chastisement from non-western peoples. Her divine mission---the mission for which she had been amply supplied with material blessings---was

---

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

## CRUSADE

“to carry light everywhere, dissolve chains, awaken peoples sleeping in the shadow of death”.<sup>119</sup> Instead of fulfilling these functions, she was responsible for ruining legitimate native cultures and replacing them with a sterile, materialistic civilization, all body and no soul. Could one not expect that the technology used to expand European power might be turned against the center of this machine society? Might it not be the case that the rest of the world would come to seek in the old continent itself that which she had refused to share? “The paths are made, the frontiers are pierced, it will come”.<sup>120</sup> This prophecy was indeed to be proved true. But not before there first broke out a firestorm.

---

<sup>119</sup> L. Veuillot., XI, 339-340.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 339-340.

## Firestorm in the Kingdom of the Word

### *A. On Firestorms*

Very high on the list of the many unhappy discoveries of the twentieth century is the one that gave men the ability artificially to create a firestorm by means of aerial bombardment. Both explosives and firebombs were needed for this purpose. Still, no matter how many of these devices were tossed onto a given town, without an abundance of flammable materials and the right climactic conditions the desired effects could not be achieved. But flammable materials there were, especially in the medieval and baroque centers of many German towns, large and small. And when climate cooperated, as it did in cities like Hamburg, Leipzig, and Dresden, the results were cataclysmic.

The Mystical Body of Christ in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was to experience many “firestorms”, even before the Second World War gave to these a literal

## THE WORD

meaning. Numerous sworn enemies from the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo hurled the requisite explosives and firebombs into her bosom. Nevertheless, they could not have been so effective in doing the damage that they did had her members not also provided them with flammable materials suitable to their purpose. Although literal bombs and bombed out buildings did eventually play a role in these developments, once again, it is the question of deadly ideas and a climate of opinion suitable to their spread that is our chief concern here. Hence, our focus of attention in this dramatic chapter is the interaction of the “bombers of the words” seeking acceptance of their varied interpretations of “nature as is” with the flammable arguments and often highly flawed actions of the defenders of the corrective and transforming message of Christ. It was this interaction that succeeded in creating the cataclysmic firestorms burning through the heart of Christendom from the 1890’s onwards.

*B. The Willful Fire Bombers (1890’s-1914)*

A central argument of this book has been twofold in character: first of all, that the spirit stimulating the members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo is basically willful; and, secondly, that revolutionary Enlightenment naturalism has been the chief weapon in its arsenal in modern times. We have seen that the unprecedented violence accompanying the willfulness of the radical revolutionary movement of the 1790’s brought about a reaction against these more volatile proponents of change from both the secular and the religious world. Although the logic of naturalist Enlightenment willfulness unceasingly continued to develop intellectually,

aesthetically, and politically in the first half of the nineteenth century, it could not force its way as directly and swiftly into the heart of western life as the radicals had hoped.

Instead, as Catholic journals like *La Civiltá Cattolica* argued, naturalism conquered the West indirectly, through the agency of liberalism. Just as the “moderate”, “reasonable” approach of John Locke was the best means for gaining western acceptance of Hobbes’ vision of life as irrational, atomistic, jungle warfare, it was the path of liberalism, which seemed to many people to be one of common sense and concern for peaceful change, that served as the fatherly “front” for a filial unfolding of the underlying willfulness of the whole naturalist project.

Whether one acknowledges intellectual and political liberals as the fathers of more radical naturalist sons or not, the fact remains that the more belligerent proponents of willfulness made a spectacular comeback as the nineteenth century moved forward. Saber rattling was a much more openly acceptable behavior in all sorts of realms from the 1890’s onwards, thereby stimulating the figurative and literal firebombing of the twentieth century. The war of all against all, always implicit in the Nominalist, Protestant, Radical Enlightenment, Whig, and, yes, liberal visions of life, had by this time made of the struggle of “inflamed wills” an outright virtue wherever western influence extended.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Mayeur, XI, 441-792; Billington, pp. 386-509; Copleston, Volume VII; see, also, J. Thayer, *Italy and the Great War* (University of Wisconsin, 1964), and P. Blom, *The Vertigo Years: Europe, 1900-1914* (Basic Books, 2008).



## THE WORD

“Vitalism” – the notion that “energetic, successful action” proved the truth of one’s “ideas” – was indeed everywhere in the turn of the century air. It was called upon to serve all manner of contemporary causes, from western colonialism to radical social revolution. Parallel with it, one notices an ever more common and frank tendency to treat the intellectual baggage of any given movement as mythical—namely, as something helpful in stirring up the action, struggle, and warfare of the nations, races, or workers of the world, or useful in justifying the weaponry giving strength and vigor to a specific crusade, but perhaps not necessarily true in and of itself. Out of the struggles of life, and war, perhaps, above all else, would come purification and progress. This purification and progress would then undoubtedly clarify the meaning of existence. Barring that, it would teach the nihilist message preached with prophetic fervor by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900): namely, the pathetic and slavish absurdity of any hunt for truth and purpose in the universe. Nietzsche’s insistence that he “must destroy what other men cherish” was simply the nihilist twist on the conviction of many vitalists of the dawning twentieth century that they “must destroy in order to ensure Progress”. Both, in effect, saw the age that lay before them as one of monumental upheaval – and welcomed it with joy.

Reasons for the rise of this vitalist spirit are legion. In one sense, it was but a development of already powerful Romantic teachings regarding the importance of cultivating energetic life forces, as expressed in Catholic circles by Lamennais. Social Darwinian evolutionary theory, with its emphasis upon a “survival of the fittest” that appeared to demonstrate Mother Nature’s preferential option for struggle

and strength, also strongly aided its growth. So did the basic practical problem of reaching any kind of definitive intellectual conclusions and affecting any truly serious longed-for change in the presence of an ever-increasing number of competing rational explanations of the character of nature. For just as Voltaire reminded men that a myriad of Christian sects combating with one another would cancel out the ability of any of them to achieve a definitive victory, observers of the turn of the century scene could note the same impotence triumphing out of the institutionalized and "tame" struggle of the many nevertheless well-armed offshoots of naturalism.

New, later nineteenth century additions to this naturalist army included the racists. They found that Darwin's teaching on the overriding importance of the biological struggle for life could be plumbed for arguments proving the necessity of a jungle conflict of blood groups, just as nationalists found in it further intellectual grounds for pitting nation against nation, and liberal capitalists justification for each free individual economic agent battling against his fellow materialists. Fresh forces also included the manifold representatives of the growing Socialist Movement. This was divided between anarchists on the one hand and the mix of labor union activists, orthodox Marxists, and moderate revisionists competing for control of the Social Democratic Parties encouraged by the Second International Movement launched in 1889 on the other.

That Socialist International was divided still further in the first decade of the Twentieth Century through the theories of Vladimir Ulyanov (1870-1924). Lenin's Bolsheviki argued for taking advantage of historical opportunities to propel a population towards a communism that orthodox Marxists

## THE WORD

insisted could only arrive according to their master's scientific, Hegelian schedule. This dictated a lengthy period of liberal bourgeois capitalist development before final victory. Bolsheviks also claimed that their swifter achievement of communism required the guidance of an elite party prepared to act violently and dictatorially, in total contradiction to the peaceful, democratic advance ever more envisaged by the revisionist faction within the International.

Let us once again remind ourselves, before moving on, that even if it was a "common sense" liberalism that catapulted western man into a world obsessed with irrational energies, it was not necessarily liberals as such. Many individual liberals did not "choose" or "will" that such horrible consequences should arise from their fundamental principles. Nevertheless, the logic of their vision gave them no rational basis on which to exorcise them. However upstanding individual liberals might be, they displayed a tendency to collapse before the onslaught of an active willfulness that repelled them, but whose fires they tacitly stoked. Liberals were as helpless as the inmates of the Davos tuberculosis sanatorium in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* when confronted with the vital energy stimulating an irrational strongman like Mynheer Peeperkorn, who managed to get them all to dance voluntarily to his irrational, willful tune. In fact, the preachers of common sense were even ready to call upon brutes just like Peeperkorn to protect what they themselves most "chose" to love but were increasingly unable to justify taking up arms to defend effectively on their own.

*C. A Permanent Firebombing Propaganda Machine*

Before moving away from the fire bombers, let us take this opportunity to return, once again, to the most important weapon in the armory of the many-headed Grand Coalition of the Status Quo: the black legends and the alternative good stories. It is appropriate to do so at the beginning of the twentieth century, because that armory was now stocked to overflowing. Each and every division in the GCSQ Army was at this point well equipped with its own favorite tales depicting the nightmare brought into the life of the world by a Christianity that took the corrective and transforming message of the Word seriously. Each and every faction used these black legends and alternative good stories to promote the Garden of Earthly Delights that its opposing vision would landscape.<sup>2</sup>

Such tales, following the guidelines created by Isocrates, latched onto noble themes created by the Seeds of the Word, the Word Incarnate, and the Church in their work to correct and transform daily life. The noble themes in question were, however, co-opted to serve the specific approach of each member of the GCSQ in the overall common cause of shaping life to answer the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is”. All these themes were then linked to the kind of historical mythmaking popularized in the ancient world by Isocrates, making reference to foundation principles involving everything from Mother Nature to Christianity itself. All taught that the wicked, papal-guided, Roman Catholic Church had sought to corrupt and overturn their solid and good message. All played on the inevitable failures of

---

<sup>2</sup> Leroy, pp. 115-396 for the basic examples; also, pp. 368-396.

## THE WORD

Catholics to live up to the Christian vision to give credibility to their own willful plans for the individual and society.

Although there may seem to be a truly extraordinary variety of black legends and alternative good stories, they all, as indicated earlier in this work, basically reduce to two: either those condemning the Church and Catholics as the enemies of God as He should properly be understood, or others lambasting them as the manifest enemies of mankind. These tales had simply developed in variation and sophistication through the course of centuries. Opponents of Catholic Christianity had found multiple ways of fostering the two-pronged attack, all of them effective, even though one head of their general indictment of Catholic madness could often completely contradict another. Such wide-ranging and contradictory elements could also change and even disappear entirely from the scene, only to re-emerge unexpectedly in a later era, spreading dismay among bewildered believers who thought them long dead. Let us examine but a few examples of such clashing accusations below.

To begin with, we have seen that one finds instances in history when the Church and Catholics were indicted for “blasphemy” and even “atheism”. The Catholic crime in this regard was identified as that of worshipping a divinity sometimes described as tyrannical and at others as all too limited in character. On the one hand, the personal God of the Christians, a being who freely “invented” nature and then interfered miraculously in its life, was said to insult that true divinity that revealed itself in necessary actions dictated by an impersonal eternal calm. On the other, the Catholic deity was chastised as the parochial idol of a Near Eastern

backwater whose missionary rampage had had the impious consequence of abolishing the many valid gods and ritual practices of the other peoples and cities of the globe.

Complaints of this sort slid easily into the related one of a stubborn, impious, Christian refusal to learn what *really* could and needed to be known about the *true God*. Catholic failure in this endeavor was often attributed to the rejection of the hunt to understand God through the messages of *nature and nature alone*. For it was through the natural order that God was thus said to reveal His character, whether in the eternity and regularity of the universe, or through its infinite and adorable diversity. But then Catholics were also chastised for frustrating the search for God for precisely the opposite reasons, and actually finding Him in the natural “data base”—in a flesh and blood Jewish man from the first imperial Roman century. Worship of this petty fetish then supposedly diverted men from consideration of the infinitely more magnificent divinity reflected through the majesty of the cosmos in general and of the sun and the stars in particular.

Further contradictory accusations were frequently made regarding Revelation. On the one hand, Catholics were accused of mocking the deity and cheapening His splendor through a dull-witted effort to imprison things godly in neat and petty dogmatic packages. Still, this, once again, did not prevent other critiques from depicting a Catholic mockery of the gods in a totally conflicting fashion—not as something nearsighted and parochial but, rather, as an endeavor unprecedentedly revolutionary and Promethean in character; as an outrageous attempt to allow fetid human hands to make war on Heaven and actually touch and then reflect upon ineffable wisdom.

## THE WORD

Finally, there were specifically Christian-sounding envelopes into which the attack on the blasphemous Catholic Beast was stuffed as well. Thus, the Church could often be found reviled as an overbearing, demonic Antichrist, dedicated to a radical complication of true, simple, gospel religion; a demonic force that trampled upon Scripture, the principle of Apostolic Poverty, and the rights of local church communities. This was nuanced in Eastern Christian circles, with the Orthodox complaining of a myriad of Latin errors ranging from divergences over specific ritual actions to Roman legalism, intellectualism, and—ever more popular among Russian thinkers—failure to trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, she was frequently condemned for the exact reverse offense—that of all too consistently and faithfully proclaiming the evangelical message. Her transgression under these latter circumstances was identified as being that of preaching a hopelessly literalist vision of things divine; one that encouraged a childlike naiveté and resignation; one that shaped a submissive spirit permitting hypocritical strong men to pursue their cynical projects under the pious cover of God's name, to the undoubted horror of Christ Himself.

Denunciation of Catholicism as the enemy of man also took two separate forms, depending upon whether Catholic Christianity was reprimanded for being either too positive in its view of nature's potential or not enthusiastic enough about what could be done with the natural tools that the universe placed at man's service. Critiques of the first type were often expressed in a spiritual manner. In these, one lamented the Church's direction of believers to everlasting damnation by allowing them to think that they could actually work out

their salvation in an intrinsically irredeemable natural cosmos. Nature, for such commentators, was merely a depraved jungle, whose degraded laws men and women were doomed to follow, engaging in a war of all against all rendering reconciliation of the world with heaven an utterly meaningless enterprise.

The second reprimand, shaped by more hopeful observers of the universe, maintained that Catholicism's Revelation-and-Grace-rooted efforts to correct and transform all things in Christ were horribly insulting and destructive to the natural realm's integrity and dignity. Once again, for some such thinkers, Catholic visions of supernatural interference harmed man by depriving him of the only channels for beneficial divine influence that he really did have at his disposal on this earth—natural forces, ranging from the State to personal human "feeling", whose revelatory competence orthodox believers were said dangerously to underestimate. For others, the Catholic outlook crippled man by cutting him off from the precise, measurable progress emerging out of purely secular, scientific studies, stripped of all illusory divine concerns. Catholicism doomed humanity by replacing the hunt for real wisdom with a superstitious, magical, and ultimately insane pilgrimage to an unknowable or non-existent supernatural perfection.

Depending upon which of these approaches was emphasized, the Church and Catholics were anathematized as the opponents of everything of value to human beings: creative intellectual and aesthetic growth; economic development; individual freedom and sense of fulfillment; social peace and fraternity. Catholicism, in short, was the enemy of life and of all attempts to enjoy that power over existence which men were said to be definitely capable of



## THE WORD

exercising — if only they would consistently listen to the clear voice of the Defender of the Peace constituted by the natural world around or inside them.

Competent storytellers achieved high-minded grandeur by “seizing images” evoking the nobility of the anti-Word spirit in its tooth-and-nail conflict with a base and brutally wicked Catholic enemy. Here one found gripping, magnificent images of enduring significance, and mission statements regarding the struggle for spiritual growth, freedom, and dignity against Catholic enslavement of minds, hearts, souls, and bodies. Simplicity was added to grandeur by incarnating this eschatological battle of obvious good versus palpable evil in easily-recognizable and contrasting stereotypes: e.g., angelic popes, emperors, and kings; noble and persecuted Gospel lovers, naturalist philosophers, scientists, and economists or crusading journalists and freedom fighters on the one hand; mean spirited, obscurantist, often insane, conspiratorial, tyrannical, and persecuting pontiffs, priests, monks, mother superiors, mystics, scholastics, and all their lay slaves or cynical masters on the other.

These grand seized images, incarnated in simplistic stereotypes emphasizing the dramatic struggle of absolute Good versus total Evil, were then popularized in manifold form. Widespread effect was achieved by mobilizing and employing a mass of demonstrably appealing tools: song, novels and pamphlets; the stage; rabble-rousing, press-guided *causes célèbres*; the *bons mots* of upper class salons, transformed by their influential habitués into as many hammers to wield powerful political blows against the Catholic Sect in polite society; a brutal plebeian ridicule

which avoided substantive argument the more that it ground the believer into the dirt. Points were effectively scored and high-minded lessons popularly taught even through a determined use of the weapon of silence, which subtly showed the world that Catholics and Catholicism were not to be mentioned by rational and decent men when topics of political, social, or general cultural importance were under serious discussion. Every media tool of the late 1700's to the 1900's was conscripted to serve the cause of broadcasting the basic principles of this naturalist message and drilling in the horror of continued Catholic influence over men and society, creating, in effect, a permanent revolutionary propaganda machine. And that propaganda machine, with all of its manifold media attachments, demanded the right to operate everywhere with reference to the liberal principle of "freedom of expression". As the *Civiltà* wrote, summarizing neatly the propaganda machine in question:<sup>3</sup>

Now whence come so much disagreement in opinions both with regard to theory and practice? Everyone knows. It proceeds from that absolute freedom of thought, of speech, and of the press which, as Gregory XVI said, perpetually engenders new monsters of error, eroding even Catholic minds and their doctrinal principles, little by little, as with corrosive acid. The error that in previous times had been locked up in scientific volumes and in learned languages, and had deceived the hearts rather than the heads of instructed and erudite men, was popularized and simplified in flyers to be hurled at

---

<sup>3</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, IV, 4 (1859), 680-681.

## THE WORD

the mob by the ham actor on the stage, by poets in odes, by musicians in songs, by the fop in the salons, by pedantic schoolmasters for children, and so found entry into the heads of idiots incapable of unmasking sophisms and of consulting documents. An impiety which at the beginning of a revolution made horrified souls shiver, was repeated audaciously by the libertine press and weakly contradicted by the majority of the timid, the moderate, the indifferent, and infiltrated into the social atmosphere through ambiguous words that were tolerated by good men and blindly adopted by simple ones. Thus was formed an erroneous body of opinion, even among many good Catholics, which compelled those who should correct it to respect it, and therefore to combat it weakly. One error then sprouts forth from another. One weakness leads to another weakness. The logic of error silences the good sense that still would like to hear the truth. False principles are embraced unconsciously. Their consequences are then tenaciously maintained so that one combats and destroys true principles that would have offered a thread to grasp onto to exit the labyrinth. Finally, an immense chaos is formed in the society of Catholics, rendering impossible all energetic exercises of will, all unity of effort. It is not possible to combat with resolute courage when one fears to fight, perhaps not out of fear of being unjust, but at least out of fear of being accused of exaggeration and fanaticism. Thus, impoverished society loses that immense force which both Catholics and other honest men would have

from the unity of conscience and of faith. Meanwhile, the impious triumph, and remain tightly unified in their hatred and in their self-interest. And all this is thanks to that freedom of the press that instills error and uncertainty everywhere, from the heights of royal palaces and cabinets to the depths of hovels and huts.

Black legends and alternative good stories also gained great strength from their ability to appeal to the psychologically powerful “either-or” option that was evoked with such success from the time of Isocrates onwards. They called men irresistibly to one inescapable and overwhelming choice: support *either* their point of view, rooted in the satisfaction of individual earthly desires and the common human concern for social order and peace; *or* enter onto the Christian highway, accept its invitation to self-questioning, correction, and the endless sacrifices and disputes these bring into the life of both the human person and society at large, all the while moving towards a paradise only “seen through a glass, darkly”. Presentation of this *either-or option* was dependent upon blocking a clear understanding of the real substance, history, and achievements of the Catholic religion. To that end, the black legends and alternative good stories attributed all obviously popular and beneficial Christian fruits to anti-Christian beliefs and labors. Orthodox Christianity was held responsible only for what was deemed ludicrous, base, dangerous to society, and detrimental to man. The real character of the myths in question, and especially their blatant self-serving adulation of passion and power, was thereby also thrown comfortably into the shadows. This was certainly the approach encouraged by what Herbert Butterfield called the “Whig Interpretation of

## THE WORD

History", which, through its black-and-white discussion of the past in terms of liberal good and anti-liberal evil, actually served as a means of preventing solid research into historical development. For, why bother to investigate reality when one knew already that Catholicism produced bad fruits and proponents of following the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" good ones?<sup>4</sup>

Yes, by 1900, Catholicism was the enemy of God, Holy Scriptures, peace, order, law, nations, monarchy, democracy, wealth, poverty, industry, property, the worker, intelligence, art, freedom in each and every one of its particular forms, and, last but not least, the Superman's recognition of the underlying meaninglessness of all of existence. The Enlightenment's mobilization of all of the age-old secularist forces horrified by the attempt to transform the universe in Christ may thus have seemed to be totally complete at the dawn of the Twentieth Century. And yet the units of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo were destined to grow in its number still further in the course of a dramatic century, all of them driving home the argument that the individual human person, his political and social communities, and each and every aspect of Creation could only be understood and perfected by ignoring correction and transformation at the hand of a Creating and Redeeming God. "All things natural belong to us" was perhaps the proudest of positive revolutionary boasts. "All things Catholic are grotesquely unnatural" was perhaps its most basic negative propaganda slogan. All hell was about to break loose in consequence.

---

<sup>4</sup> H. Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (Norton, 1965).

*D. Flammable Catholic Materials (1890's-1914)*

But flammable Catholic materials were also available in abundance as the nineteenth century reached its end. Obviously, opponents of the intransigents, many of whom continued to be active inside the Church as well as just outside her fringes, provided some of these combustible elements. Unfortunately, however, certain of the tendencies of seemingly solid supporters of the full message of the Word in history also played their role in creating future targets for the fire bombers. For there were, indeed, flaws in the approach of the intransigents that its friends ignore or deny at their own peril. In fact, in so far as these flaws *were* ignored or denied, they grew to undermine the very foundations of the whole intransigent project. Let us therefore first turn to the question of the combustible elements unwittingly forged by the Ninth Crusaders before turning to those provided by their sworn enemies.<sup>5</sup>

Just like proponents of the Whig interpretation of history, a number of the standard bearers of the intransigent movement, not to speak of ordinary members of the clergy and laity militating in its ranks, cultivated an unproductive and uncharitable harshness of spirit and tone. All too many of them attributed nothing but bad motivation and hidden heretical sympathies to critics who were sometimes quite nuanced and even completely accurate in their complaints.

This unhelpful spirit did not emerge from Roman sources. Rather, it was, to a large degree a legacy of that

---

<sup>5</sup> On modern thought and its influence on Catholics in the first half of the century, see Mayeur, XI, 45-112, 251-262, 367-462, 597-609, 763-770; XII, 87-258; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 420-455.

## THE WORD

brutal prophetic deportment of the *Mennaisiens*. For, sadly, even when Lamennais' followers rejected his condemned principles, they all too frequently retained his rhetorical style. Montalembert was a prime example of this inside the liberal Catholic camp, with his offhanded ridicule of anyone disagreeing with him. But Mennaisien-inspired *intransigents*, such as those who fought to rid French seminaries of Gallican texts and introduce the Roman Liturgy into dioceses with different ancient traditions, could be equally rough in language and tactics. It is impossible to say just how many discerning minds and hearts were lost to the orthodox camp because of their lack of charity and distinction.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, it is also unfortunate that a rich variety of disciplines, from philology to sociology, all of them immensely valuable to an understanding of how to bring the full message of the Word into daily life, came to be neglected by many intransigents. Such neglect had a deadening effect on the work of positive theology, with biblical and historical studies at the top of the list of the disciplines affected. Perhaps most important from a practical standpoint, this also weakened considerably one of the primary goals of the Ninth Crusade, which was that of identifying the self-destructive work perpetrated by the naturalist word merchants. For the use of all such disciplines was especially required in order to pinpoint this *rhetorical* problem accurately.

Intransigent Catholic neglect was due to two quite contradictory factors, the first of which was, ironically, its pronounced rationalist tendency. The modern world is a time

---

<sup>6</sup> See the discussion throughout Gough, especially pp. 85-131, 151-219.

and place of many such ironies, beginning with its depiction as an “Age of Reason” itself. We have repeatedly insisted that, whatever the popular image created by Enlightenment purveyors of alternative good stories, their supposedly rational era was, in fact, anti-intellectual and reductionist in its arguments. It actually allowed scope for only practical and mathematical reasoning to flourish. And practical, experimental reasoning gradually depicted human life as something hopelessly enslaved to passion, will, and subjective value judgments; based, in short, upon irrationality rather than rationality. Nineteenth century Catholicism, on the other hand, was one of the few forces committed to defending the objective value and significance of Reason in all of its many and varied forms. First Vatican Council gave eloquent testimony to this defense of the human mind through the *Dogmatic Constitution Concerning the Catholic Faith*, which reiterated the Church’s belief that Reason had intrinsic meaningfulness, and could, in fact, also prove the existence of the God that blessed its work.<sup>7</sup>

The intransigent flaw lay not in this proper cultivation of Reason, but, rather, in the tendency, by the end of the century and the beginning of the next, to focus on one specific line of speculative theological and philosophical reasoning to the exclusion of other natural but non-rational approaches to uncovering the truth. Thus, to take but one example of the problem this created, it was often only with great difficulty, and under accusations of heterodox tendencies, that scholars could speak of the historical context in which men like St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, suggest that this context helped to shape and limit the completeness of their work, and thereby

---

<sup>7</sup> Fitzer, pp. 268-288; Butler, pp. 235-247.



## THE WORD

argue that thirteenth century scholastic labors could well be complemented by the efforts of different thinkers of other eras. Such exclusivity was simply not friendly to the rich cause of the Word. Worse still, once it placed non-speculative studies beyond the pale, it became almost impossible to demonstrate the gravity of the pastoral error that had been committed. For it was precisely through the use of the excluded disciplines that the nature of the problem could be uncovered in the first place.

To say that the method and writings of a man like St. Thomas were not in and of themselves *completely* sufficient; to argue that they did not by themselves *alone* give the fullest possible expression to the Christian Faith; to discuss the historical circumstances in which St. Thomas labored and how these may have narrowed his approach to the questions to which he primarily directed his attention, was not at all the same as saying that Thomism was wrong, beside the point, or in any way dispensable. Similarly, to say that knowledge of Christian teachings might grow beyond the manner in which St. Thomas expressed it was not the same thing as denying to dogma an objective, God-given content, anymore than an appreciation of St. Thomas's doctrinal use of Aristotelian language amounted to a denial of the divine character of the non-Aristotelian doctrinal statements of the apostles or the value of the Platonic-influenced writings of St. Augustine.

Still, many members of the intransigent school of Ninth Crusaders did often draw such inferences, with the consequence that any non-Thomist, or non-speculative, biblical, patristic, experiential, and historically based exploration of the Faith stood condemned as either heretical or frivolous and useless. This had the unfortunate effect of

expelling from the seminary curriculum studies that “told a good story about the true story”, and taught the young minds present how to recount the Catholic tale themselves, thereby limiting future clerics’ training and practical skills to a dry, logical, and textbook level alone. And the fact that such reductionist, rationalist education was often imparted by uninspiring teachers made seminarians “sitting ducks” for the first “vitalist” heretic with a lively---though erroneous---alternative story to tell.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, many intransigents also neglected a number of the studies essential to spreading the full message of the Word in a truly effective manner for a totally *opposite* reason: a conviction of divine action in nature that was so strong as dangerously to overemphasize supra-rational explanations for historical events. This not only prevented their coming to an accurate understanding of contemporary political and social developments; it also served to check the creation of serious Catholic organizations ready to fight the many powerful modern forces seeking to guide individual and social life solely according to the demands of “nature as is”.

To take but a single example of this phenomenon, the sense that “war in heaven”, with apocalyptic overtones, was the overriding factor shaping the course of nineteenth-century human history, seems to have been one of the chief elements contributing to French Catholic inaction and

---

<sup>8</sup> E. Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique dans la crise moderniste* (Casterman, 1962), pp. 270-296; E. Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral. Un réseau secret international antimoderniste : la « Sapinière », 1909-1921*, (Casterman, 1969); Mayeur, XI, 349-366, 441-462; Jedin and Dolan, VIII, 208-334; IX, 307-334, 455-480.

## THE WORD

resignation to the passage of anticlerical legislation during the early years of the Third Republic, from 1877 through the 1880's. History, in the minds of many French intransigents, was something that was made by God alone. God alone, therefore, was the sole physician for social problems, either through His direct action in human life or through the medium of a providential personality—such as a sacred monarch, a new St. Louis IX. Human organization to head off disaster could be construed almost as an insult to the redemptive supernatural forces waiting behind the bend to deal swiftly and effectively with contemporary evils. But no discernable political miracles were forthcoming in late nineteenth century France, and a Catholic defeat that perhaps need not have taken place ensued. Thankfully, numerous French Catholic luminaries, such as the great social activist, Albert de Mun (1841-1914), rejected this pious defeatism and helped to prepare the way for French militancy in the years to come. And we have seen that other intransigent militants were working as though everything did depend upon their human labors elsewhere around the Catholic world.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, it may well be that the fortunate rediscovery of a pre-Jansenist piety eventually took precedence over the recovery of other valuable aspects of the Catholic past, such as its scriptural, patristic, conciliar, and even its papal teaching heritage. Contemporary apparitions came to resonate more in the minds of significant segments of the faithful than the words of the Gospel, the Church Fathers, or

---

<sup>9</sup> Chiappe, *France et le roi*, pp. 405-605; Kalyvas, pp. 114-166; J.F. Chiappe, *Le comte de Chambord* (Perrin, 1990); Mayeur, XI, 501-544.

those of councils and popes. Ironically, the piety that was thus exalted was actually weakened in the long run, insofar as it was emphasized at the expense of familiarity with the apostolic and ecclesiastical testimony from which its very justification and value were derived. In other words, neglect of the ground of the Faith in exchange for an exclusive or exaggerated commitment to a particular pious practice, even one which had the highest backing of the Church, might well bring that specific devotion itself into question over time.

Critics of the intransigent Ninth Crusaders also claimed that the piety thus inspired was an egotistical one, centered upon individual devotions and stressing self-sanctification at the expense of a more balanced appreciation of the unity of all believers in that communal enterprise of adoration of the True God from which personal sanctification flows. This self-centeredness was then said to stand as an obstacle to true liturgical revival. One might well note that such a complaint did seem to contradict or at least weaken another valid complaint regarding the intransigents: namely, that many of them were so concerned for illustrating the interaction of the supernatural and the natural in the institution of the Mystical Body of Christ that they ended by ignoring the divinizing consequences of the Incarnation for the individual believer.

Intransigents certainly did not begin by neglecting individual "divinization" in Christ, as the many articles of *La Civiltà Cattolica* on this precise subject clearly indicated. Nevertheless, meditations such as those favored by its Jesuit editors may indeed have lessened as the nineteenth century moved into the twentieth. But this is hard to know. Only further study of Ninth Crusader journals of the time period--which is sadly lacking--would be able to tell for certain. What is absolutely clear, however, is that for many of the readers of

## THE WORD

such periodicals, a Jansenist obsession with hell rather than a Jesuit pursuit of transformation in Christ seems to have come to dominate their spiritual lives. As the late Dr. William Marra often quipped, the chief terror of many supporters of the intransigent position seemed to be that somewhere, someone might actually be doing what would lead him to heaven; that he might be feeling the joy of Christ in his daily life rather than experiencing a constant terror over the inevitable fall of His wrath upon him.

Neo-Ultramontanism also had its negative side, which, alas, has become much more clear to traditionalist Catholics in recent times. Like all centralizing movements, it caused problems at the diocesan level, perhaps hampering the development of local initiative. This was not so much due to the disturbing but ultimately salutary rocking of the many rather listless parochial boats of the day as it was to a gradual encouragement of the expectation that Rome could and would uncover and handle all future problems on its own initiative. When Rome could or would not do so, and when the Holy See herself became a source of confusion, local clerical and lay stimulus to confront debilitating crises was often therefore sorely lacking. Reliance on a Papacy which was both divinely and humanly incapable of confronting every Christian problem in a dance of life that was growing ever more dangerously complex was a recipe for doing nothing more than handing oneself over to the local machinations of the proponents of "nature as is".

It is highly understandable why such a problem arose. The manner in which the definition of papal infallibility was "resolved" at Vatican One was unexpectedly problematic. Men like Henry Cardinal Manning (1808-1892) who were

firmly convinced of the contemporary necessity of this definition were nevertheless also very much concerned that it be refined while deepening appreciation of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and of ecclesiology in general. Official plans had called for a general schema on the nature of the Church to be discussed and promulgated at the Council, and it was into this schema that the question of papal infallibility was introduced. Difficulties emerged, however, due to intense lobbying for and against the doctrine, inside and outside the council. Anger and confusion also accompanied the lifting of the discussion of papal infallibility from the basic explanatory framework in which it was embedded, and treating it on its own--first and out of context. The storm grew more violent still. When it was calmed, the resulting definition in no way met the expectations of its more fervent supporters. Meanwhile, fallout from the Franco-Prussian War then shut the Holy Synod down, leaving the schema on the Church as a whole a schema alone.<sup>10</sup>

Vatican One did indeed bequeath the Catholic world a more solid understanding of papal power and prerogatives, but the council still failed adequately to explain how these were to be put into effect and what relation they might have with the work of ordinary bishops in their own dioceses. It especially left a good deal of perplexity regarding how papal infallibility applied to the pontiff's use of his ordinary magisterium. This then fed the constant debate that we have witnessed for over one hundred forty years regarding

---

<sup>10</sup> Butler, pp. 121-122, 348-416, 63-488; Mayeur, XI, 15-43, 113-136; Jedin, IX, Mersch, pp. 556-573; H.E. Manning, *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost* (London, 1865); *Unity in Diversity the Perfection of the Church* (London, 1860).

## THE WORD

whether or not that ordinary magisterium actually has been invoked with respect to one or the other specific issue.

Parenthetically, however, in defense of the council's procedure, one ought to remember that all such synods have tended to treat issues as they arose, in the envelope of ecclesiastical crisis. All have thus left terrible conundrums for posterity, as the examples of Nicaea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Trent have already shown us. Nevertheless, the confusion was real, and many intransigents acted, unjustifiably, as though the maximalist position on papal infallibility that had definitely *not* been adopted by the council was the one that "real Catholics", in practice, were obliged to accept anyway. That same mentality still continues to have an influence with the many contemporary faithful who insist that "real Catholics" must love the *Novus Ordo*, whatever the words of Benedict XVI's *Motu proprio* indicating the continued validity of the Traditional Mass might indicate—so long as it can be shown that the pope personally prefers it.

Happily, a number of the criticisms of the intransigent camp outlined above can actually be discovered in the writings of many other of its prominent members besides Cardinal Manning—the editors of *La Civiltà Cattolica* and *l'Univers*, theologians of the caliber of Cardinal Louis-Edouard Pie (1815-1880) of Poitiers and Cardinal Victor Dechamps (1810-1883) of Malines, neo-scholastics like Joseph Kleutgen, liturgists such as Dom Guéranger, the historian Ludwig von Pastor, and the favorite pontiff of the Ninth Crusaders, Pope St. Pius X. Hence, the fervent Ultramontanists, Pie and Dechamps, were among the most harsh judges of exaggerations of the procedure and

apologetics of the infallibilists at Vatican Council; the neo-scholastic Kleutgen demonstrated a profound awareness of the importance of history and mystical theology; Pastor presented individual nefarious popes in his “apologetic” history in anything but a “whitewashed” manner; and the “authoritarian” Pius X, the agent *par excellence* of the full intransigent agenda, was the man who actually, in practice, democratized the Roman Curia and encouraged the revivification of the understanding of the liturgy as the *communal* prayer of the Church.<sup>11</sup>

One last intransigent-inspired problem has to be addressed, although this, we shall see, will lead us directly into a discussion of the flammable material provided by their internal Catholic opponents as well. Intransigent calls for transformation of everything in Christ through the activity of a mobilized and militant laity had the totally undesired consequence of sometimes promoting a lay Catholic naturalism. This developed as the laity’s greater consciousness of its own mission and responsibilities encouraged a corresponding willingness to judge its ecclesiastical guides and their performance as spiritual leaders. Such judgment led many laymen and laywomen to the presumption that the Teaching Church had herself to be taught, and not simply with respect to certain natural facts of political life where this kind of instruction might be more than valid. Taken beyond its proper bounds, and intensified by a sense of the urgent need to chastise insufficiently militant prelates and priests, what this meant was the

---

<sup>11</sup> See Butler, *passim*; G. Romanato, *Pio X* (Rusconi, 1992), pp. 227-291; Rao, in “School Days”, ([www.jcrao.freeshell.org](http://www.jcrao.freeshell.org)); Mayeur, XI, 112-136, 501-587.



## THE WORD

reappearance of an older, Jansenist-like spirit in newer, intransigent, Neo-Ultramontanist guise.

Troubles taking shape through pilgrim-minded activists performing new steps in the dance of life were also compounded by the very success of Catholics in creating numerous new organizations competing with one another in seeking to correct and transform nature in Christ. Parties often had difficult relations with the complex network of active Catholic lay and clerical associations, which they viewed as challengers for ultimate direction of the Catholic movement. Much more significantly, however, Catholic associations expressed the concerns of an ever-greater assortment of social groups with divergent interests and agendas, especially economic ones. This complicated the life of a Catholic Party enormously, forcing it to take stands regarding given positions that might satisfy one element of its clientele but horrify another. As Joseph Edmund Jörg noted, "any attempt to construct a detailed political program would be injurious and perhaps fatal to the Party".<sup>12</sup> Bismarck bemusedly remarked that "there are not two souls in the Center but seven ideological tendencies which portray all the colors of the political rainbow from the most extreme right to the radical left".<sup>13</sup> Raising the banner of the Church in Danger was, therefore, the only means of assuring internal unity. But it became ever more difficult to hoist that flag when the *Kulturkampf* in Germany eventually eased and when each internal group increasingly demanded definitive doctrinal confirmation of its principles from Rome.

---

<sup>12</sup> Kalyvas, p. 236.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

Parties also showed a propensity to easy acceptance of new "false friends". Once they had found some way through their initial difficulties and begun to function more smoothly in a given nation, a practical opposition to the Ninth Crusader vision all too frequently emerged from their ranks, subverting the purpose for which they seemingly had been created. It made perfect sense that parties often preferred a more democratic political and social order as a means of breaking down the control of given nations by bourgeois oligarchies. But parties themselves proved to be susceptible to revolutionary transformation in their pursuit of democratic politics. Here, the transmutation was the same as that described by Max Weber in discussing the German Social Democrats: it was due to the emergence of the party functionary and his desire to win elections, at all costs, in order to justify the group's existence and thus continue to have a party office to perform.

We have already seen that in working in a liberal constitutional system, activists tended to treat the "business as usual" rules of that system, hostile though they might be, as unquestionable givens, thereby accepting limitations upon and modification of broader Catholic expectations. But when laboring in a more democratic environment, they also began to praise the will of "The People", no matter how rabidly nationalist, racist, Marxist, libertine, and fraudulently manipulated this "People" could be. Criticism might be met by insisting that everything the "religious party" accepted and promoted was *ipso facto* Catholic; as though its claim to be the "Catholic Party" protected it from error in its political defense of Christianity; as though an idea or policy which was notoriously secular could become sacred through the waving of its magic wand alone. Any corrective and

## THE WORD

transforming vision that it might possess was inevitably sacrificed as a result. Moreover, subsequent victories by opposing parties might then bring down upon Catholics a persecution for supporting positions that really had nothing to do with their Faith at all; positions that only reflected the partisan, self-interested programs of a new group of people playing by the rules of "nature as is" and supporting whatever "worked" for them at this particular moment in time.

Another problem for Catholic parties came from the hierarchy's dislike of participation of the lower clergy in their affairs. Special circumstances were one thing, bishops reiterated; a general permission for clerical involvement was quite another matter. The bishops' chief grievance---that political activity took priests away from their primary spiritual responsibilities and also gave them a power base enabling them to speak to their clerical superiors as equals or even inferiors---was more than understandable. The Bishop of Trier was not alone in lamenting, in 1873, that his subordinate clergy was simultaneously guilty of absenteeism and monitoring his own behavior for political correctness.<sup>14</sup> Complaints on the part of the hierarchy regarding lay and clerical activism were rejected by many in the Catholic Movement as a sign of the persistence of the high clergy's tradition of timidity, outright cowardice, or hypocritical protection of its own unacceptable form of political activism. There are, indeed, a number of cases where all these accusations appear to be valid and as unedifying as the intransigents argued.

---

<sup>14</sup> Kalyvas, p. 40.

Still, practical examples of the failures of prelates should not blind us to the fact that parties, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, were indeed succumbing to the kind of temptations bishops identified. The Center Party redefined religious truth ever more broadly in order to win elections. "Confessional party leaders such as Julius Bachem were repeatedly attacked for setting aside the Catholic basis of the most important organization of German Catholicism in order to substitute a so-called non-denominational Christian basis as the party's guiding philosophy."<sup>15</sup> "Catholics must appeal to the ideas on which modern society is based in order to vindicate their belief", Etienne Lamy, one of the French Catholic democratic leaders, argued in 1896.<sup>16</sup> An Austrian Christian Social spokesman put it most succinctly a bit later: "in politics the only thing that counted was success".<sup>17</sup>

And many laymen were, in fact, dangerously insistent upon their role as *religious* as well as political leaders. Archbishop Victor Dechamps complained to the pope of two prominent and politically active lay Belgian Catholics, both "fervent and good soldiers" but problematic since they "want to command within the church".<sup>18</sup> Italian lay activists often ended up "giving directives to bishops, provoking frequent complaint".<sup>19</sup> *Le Temps* in 1881 labeled the French activist, Albert de Mun, "a lay bishop who undertakes...a political campaign, and who finds nothing better than to address the

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>16</sup> Kalyvas, p. 232.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

## THE WORD

authentic bishop like a master".<sup>20</sup> One priest bitterly criticized the special pretensions of Catholic journalists, noting their claim to a right to resolve doctrinal disputes. "Is not that a stunning victory for laicism?" he wondered.<sup>21</sup> Worse still, Catholic organizations sometimes moved beyond support for liberal constitutionalism and democratic politics to calls for internal Church reform according to their respective principles. Austrian prelates, for example, were told that they "must cease to act autocratically" or face the consequences of the wrath of a more self-conscious democratic populace.<sup>22</sup>

The Italian Catholic Movement as a whole is a crucial case in point. By the late 1890's, *Opera* leaders were seriously divided over future initiatives. One group insisted upon maintenance of its standard operating procedure, neither compromising with the existing liberal authorities nor opposing them in politics directly, lest the socialists pick up the pieces in a bitter national political campaign. Intransigents rejected socialist appeals for cooperation for the same reasons as they did the appeal of the liberal friends of property. Catholic understandings of freedom and community, they argued, were based on different grounds than naturalist ones and could not be compromised without danger to the Faith. A second faction that came to be known as the "clerico-moderates" wished to take advantage of yet another liberal invitation to form a broad Party of Order that could then confront the common danger of socialist extremism. Catholic abstention from national politics would

---

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

thus end, and leaders who had been prepared during that abstention could move forward to exercise direct influence over Italian political life. Yet a third force, many-headed in character, considered the standard operating procedure as no longer opportune but also viewed the clerico-moderate position as a sell-out to the anti-Catholic conservatism of the "liberals who had been mugged". One of this third force's constituent elements wished boldly to declare liberal economic policies to be materialist and immoral. Some of their number also longed for the creation of a distinctly popular Catholic political party. These men presumed that such a party would also have a broad appeal beyond the immediate camp of the believers---to open-minded socialists in particular---and would therefore have to operate with significant freedom from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Priests, Don Romolo Murri (1870-1944) prominent among them, played a role within the ranks of those hungry for a political party of their own.

Friction among these contesting components of the *Opera* was stirred by brutal government repression of both socialist and Catholic organizations in the midst of the riotous years of the 1890's. It was also fed by the failure of the still dominant proponents of maintaining standard operating procedures to make more of an issue of the governmental injustices that they, too, at least in theory, deeply abhorred.<sup>23</sup>

France became yet another hot spot, and one that leads us directly into discussion of the camp of the internal Catholic opponents of the intransigents as well. Once it appeared that the Third Republic was there to stay and that there were differences among its leaders, with the so-called Opportunists

---

<sup>23</sup> Jedin and Dolan, IX, 481-494 on the Roman Question and Italy.

## THE WORD

playing the role of conservative liberals who might be more open to cooperation with the Church than their Radical counterparts, some Catholics thought that a corresponding openness of spirit on the part of believers was necessary. Pope Leo XIII encouraged this “hypothetical” outlook with his call to “rally” to the support of the Republic in the 1890’s. Many French intransigents found such a call impossible to accept, especially after all of the anticlerical republican legislation that had devastated Catholic education in the country. Ultimately, their reason for refusing the papal *rapprochement* was similar to that of their like-minded counterparts within the Italian *Opera dei congressi*. All that the *ralliement* would entail, they feared, was yet another seduction of Catholics by modern naturalist opponents of Christ.

But some believers were more hopeful, among them the young Marc Sangnier (1873-1950).<sup>24</sup> In 1893, Sangnier and a group of “democratic Catholics” at the College Stanislas of the École Polytechnique in Paris created the movement called the *Sillon*—The Furrow. At first, Sangnier and the members of

---

<sup>24</sup> Mayeur, XI, 486, 496, 533, 535, 536, 542; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 190-245; Invernizzi, pp. 15-58; Chiappe, pp. 581-628; P. Pierrard, *Les Chrétiens et l'affaire Dreyfus* (L’Atelier, 1998), pp. 120-121, 198-199, 202-207; H. Petit, *L’Église, le Sillon et l’Action Française* (NEL, 1998), pp. 19-52; J.M. Mayeur, *La Séparation des Églises et de l’État* (Ouvrières, 1991); Choly and Hilaire, II, 67-169; E. Weber, *L’Action française* (Fayard, 1985), pp.19-108; E. Vatré, *Charles Maurras* (NEL, 1978); Y. Chiron, *La vie de Maurras* (Goedfroy de Bouillon, 1999); Meinvielle, pp. 173-176 on Lamennais, Sillon, and Americanism.

the movement talked about the need to work within the republican system to correct and transform it, thereby making it perfectly compatible with the full message of the Word in history. Nevertheless, when the situation in France deteriorated, and the Radical faction, taking power, unilaterally ended the Napoleonic Concordat in 1905, the *Sillon* changed its argument. Now its language seemed in many respects palingenesist and Mennaisian in character. Christ was once again depicted as the real founder of modern democracy. While those who grew deeper in the faith were said to progress to a point where no system other than the democratic republican system would be fit for them, democratic republicans were identified as already being Catholics in the depth of their hearts—due to their political faith alone. Hence, Sangnier, in 1906, created the *Grand Sillon*, whose fraternal glue was the “grace” given by joint commitment to the ideals of democracy. Those not accepting the truth of this vision were, as usual, treated with the arrogance typical of the palingnesist prophetic spirit—as Catholics who stubbornly nurtured an anachronistic autocratic spirit and could never therefore understand human freedom and dignity in the modern world. In short, once again, it was democracy that defined, corrected, and transformed Catholicism rather than the other way round.

Many Catholics opposed to the outlook of the *Sillon* were attracted to that of the League of *l'Action Française*. This was founded in 1905, and accompanied by a journal of the same name that began publication three years later. The inspiration behind both was the French writer and political theorist, Charles Maurras (1868-1952). Maurras, while not a believing Catholic, was an appealing figure to many intransigents because of his critique of the self-destructive fraudulence of



## THE WORD

liberalism and the still more radical leftist movements that grew under its fatherly wing. Arguing on historical and sociological grounds alone, Maurras reached the conclusion that a patriot eager to preserve a sound French nation had to be a supporter of the legitimate monarchy, a decentralized government, the Catholic Church, and Greco-Roman culture. It was historically demonstrable, he insisted, that these forces, working together, had built and sustained France, whereas others hostile to them had weakened her. Did it not follow, his Catholic followers argued, that a believer eager to correct and transform society in Christ was on safe ground listening to what this man had to say, non-believer though he was? Heeding a Maurras, they insisted, was essentially different from hearkening to a co-religionist like Sangnier who wanted the faithful to accept the notion that democracy and the Faith enshrined one and the same outlook. Besides, they concluded, the League actually came to the practical aid of Catholics, physically defending churches from their possible confiscation by the government after the unilateral Radical Republican denunciation of the Concordat, while the supporters of the *Grand Sillon* remained painfully silent and inactive.

Archbishop John Ireland (1838-1918) of St. Paul, Minnesota, a French-speaking Irish-American prelate active in political and social life in the United States, had been an inspiration to the supporters of the "rally to the Republic" of the 1890's in general. Marc Sangnier and the *Sillon* also greatly admired him. But Ireland, along with Cardinal James Gibbons (1834-1921) of Baltimore, and two Rectors of the Catholic University of America, Archbishop John Keane (1834-1918) and Bishop Denis O'Connell (1849-1927), were

also important and inspirational for another controversial reason. They were the most prominent supporters of what, by the end of the nineteenth century, became known as Americanism. What, exactly was this new “ism”, and what was its relationship to the corrective and transformative message of the Word in history?<sup>25</sup>

Let it suffice for the moment to say that Americanism was the complicated and contradictory teaching that emerged out of an attempt to harmonize an atomistic Protestant radicalism rooted in the doctrine of total depravity and transformed, through secularization, into a general demand for individual freedom with that conservative naturalism of the Moderate Enlightenment designed to protect the dominance of an oligarchy of merchants and planters – all within the context of a potentially ever more chaotic multicultural immigrant society. Its chief doctrines were firmly in place by the late 1890’s, and its central theme was clear. America had discovered a unique, non-dogmatic, pragmatic formula for providing a peaceful, ordered community that simultaneously guaranteed freedom to all of God—or, Nature’s—spiritually, intellectually, and culturally divided children. In short, America had become a totally inimitable Defender of the Peace; one that offered mankind its “last and

---

<sup>25</sup> On the United States, see Mayeur, XI, 854-932, XII, 833-924; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 150-166; Archbishop Ireland, in Fitzer, pp. 291-313; T. McAvoy, *The Americanist Heresy in Roman Catholicism* (Notre Dame, 1963); M. Marty, *Pilgrims in their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (Penguin, 1984); J. Rao, *Americanism and the Collapse of the Church in the United States* (Tan, 1994); On Sarpi and Puritans, Bouwsma, p. 626.

## THE WORD

best hope" for a liberty, tranquility, and happiness greater than any ever known before in human history.

"Pragmatic" though its vision was, Puritan and pious Moderate Enlightenment influence also promoted the conviction that the American system had in some way arisen through the mysterious Providence of God. The American Republic, like the Venetian Republic, was a godly Republic. Unfortunately, however, God reigned but did not really rule within its confines. It was the "will" of providentially inspired "Founding Fathers" that shaped its Magisterium. In many respects the nature of their will seems to have paralleled that described by the Venetian *Giovani*. This is no particular surprise, given the fact that the Founders' chief philosophical and political guide, John Locke, was a man whose theories are often close to those of the earlier Venetian movement.

Both moderate Enlightenment pietist conservatism as well as secularized Puritan radicalism led defenders of the budding Americanist vision to insist that dogmas, doctrines, and intellectual fancies were all alien to the Founders' will. Theirs was a purely practical, experiential wisdom. Nevertheless, many partisans of the new dispensation, from Benjamin Franklin to Abraham Lincoln and beyond, gradually expanded upon the concept of a providential American Foundation to create a distinct "civil religion" serving a Divine Republic similar to that adored by the *Giovani*. This then was presented to the world as the real corrective and transforming agent in human life; the pillar of a *novus ordo saeculorum* overcoming the manifold evils of the Old World. Its ethos clearly taught that it was 1776---the first year of the Revolution---and 1787---that of the Founders'

definitive intervention in human socio-political affairs---that marked the real beginning of mankind's redemption.

Still, this Americanist religion was always somehow simultaneously depicted as a purely "pragmatic" approach to political and social life. In any case, the redemption it offered was certainly not Catholic in character. For the mankind that the will of the Founders redeemed was nothing other than a totally depraved herd of atomistic, self-interested brutes. Moreover, its path to redemption involved a pragmatic, cooperation with Original Sin rather than a means of overcoming its ravages. All that it entailed was a systematic "management" of the individualist "war of all against all" that seemingly allowed for it to continue while maintaining the power of its momentary victors. A call to cease and desist in the name of God's plan for the universe, justice, virtue, and ultimate transformation in Christ played no role whatsoever in its salvation history. To say that this---from a Catholic standpoint---revealed a deep confusion or cynicism about the nature of God, man, creation, religion, and pragmatism itself is but to touch the tip of an iceberg that we will examine in painful detail in the next chapter.

Be that as it may, America's pragmatic civil religion prospered. As it grew, it was ever more tightly wrapped in a patriotic cloak, reminiscent of the monarchical regalism of the *bons français* as well as the divine republicanism of the *Giovani*. By the 1890's, its liturgy involved eternal flames before the temples of divinized Founders and Heroes in Washington; kowtows in front of the sacred documents of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution; spiritual readings from the writings of Thomas Jefferson as well as those of Franklin and Lincoln; and invocations to the Goddess-Statute of Liberty in New York Harbor. Rooted in

## THE WORD

the country's Protestant religious past, this earthbound and materialist cult continued to use traditional biblical terms in its liturgical language, thereby seducing many believing American Christians into misunderstanding the destructive character of the naturalist path that it was urging them to trod. The result was that Americanism hid the reality that it ensured—the victory of the willful, “business as usual” demands of ‘nature as is’— underneath the secularized Puritan and Pietist but Christian sounding mantras of pragmatism, common sense, openness, freedom, diversity, tolerance, and peace that it taught its disciples to recite in place of theological and philosophical judgements.

Equivocal use of already problematic Protestant Christian language on behalf of this happy vision of peaceful order and freedom, accompanied by the appeal of material success in the New World and a desire to “fit in” as quickly as possible, tempted many Roman Catholic immigrants to the United States into the Americanist camp even before the 1890's. The prelates mentioned above were simply more vocal and coherent in their acceptance of Americanist precepts, treating them as “no lose” propositions, even from a Catholic standpoint, given the opportunity they supposedly assured for a free propagation of the Church's message. For the union of American freedom and Catholic truth, as the motto on the tomb of Fr. Isaac Hecker (1819-1888) asserts, could not help but produce “a future brighter than any past”.

Still, their attitude was by no means uncontested. Anti-Americanism had a very broad set of supporters. Leaders of German-speaking Catholics were prominent among them. So were several foreign faculty members at the new Catholic University of America, who spread criticism of this

problematic, pragmatic, civil religion back in Europe once their enemies expelled them from its precincts. Although the Americanist spokesmen were generally Irish in background, many Irish-American bishops, such as Michael Corrigan (1839-1900) of New York and Bernard McQuaid (1823-1909) of Rochester, were also highly critical of their teachings.

All these anti-Americanists were disturbed by the fact that prelates like Ireland stated flatly that nothing in a purely pragmatic American system providing both order and freedom could in any way prove to be detrimental to Catholicism. Through such glowing and uncritical endorsements, they made it crystal clear that the corrective and transforming Catholic vision had no American social role to perform. The Founders' system was already in possession of the politically and socially True, Good, and Beautiful. To be an American, for men like Ireland—just as to be a democrat for figures such as Sangnier—was already to enjoy everything that the full message of the Word might claim to give to mortal men in their communal environment. In short, if Christ walked the earth in the 1890's, he would not be a member of the Party of Order or that of the Barricades. He would recognize his Gospel in the pragmatic civil religion of America.

In light of this entire broad discussion of problems arising from the Culture Wars, it seems safe to say that many of the developments emerging from encouragement of militant Catholic political activity in the nineteenth century can be critiqued along the very same lines that the proponents of the Ninth Crusade had chastised legitimist political life when first entering into battle. Sacred monarchies of the past had bent religious concerns to parochial secular considerations. Clergy had played too great a governmental role within

## THE WORD

them, sullyng their spiritual mission along the way. Now, out of an initial desire to fight precisely such corruption, the sacred political party had emerged, twisting Catholic goals to the divinized requirements of anticlerical liberal constitutions, willful democratic Peoples, and the charismatic party leaders and journalists interpreting the "true meaning" of their desires---sometimes even claiming to be the voice of the Holy Spirit while doing so. In Europe, the Divine Right of the past had not just reappeared; it had resurfaced compounded, with militant laymen and secularized clerics boasting of their protection of what amounted to a twisted understanding of human freedom and progress that assured little other than their own political advantage and the corruption of the Catholic Faith. And as the concept of Divine Right celebrated its rebirth, it gained further succor from the New World; from the myth of an American system whose secularized Puritan and Whig Founding Fathers were said to be friendlier to the Catholic Church than any other group of men in human history – *Church Fathers* and *saints* included.

It is, of course, unfair to the intransigents of the Ninth Crusade to blame all of the difficulties emerging from the lay political movements of the late nineteenth century upon them. Obviously, most of the French supporters of the "rally for the Republic", as well as the Catholic proponents of Americanism, were not the "intransigents gone astray" that I have generally been criticizing. Instead, they were conscious heirs of the earlier committed foes of the intransigent school of thought from the first days of the post-1848 battles. Many of those foes, in turn, were the intellectual and spiritual children of the still earlier supporters of that heady combination of regalist, Gallican, Pietist, Jansenist, and

Enlightenment ideas regarding the relationship of nature and the supernatural, pragmatism and doctrine, religion and civic duty, Church and State, that had first been battled by the Ninth Crusaders. Those who were not were often proponents of condemned *Mennaisien* views concerning not simply democracy, but, much more importantly, the need to submit to “vital” energies in life wherever they emerged and wherever they ultimately aimed their bearers and adherents.

Whatever the provenance of such enemies of the intransigent position might be, they also provided flammable materials for the fire bombers of the turn of the century to exploit, and not just in the political arena. The thinkers among them threw their hearts into the widest variety of “vital” but suspect modern activities, ranging from the so-called “higher scriptural exegesis”, Kantian philosophical studies, and historicist research to nationalist and racist apologetics. Almost all such thinkers accepted the treasury of anti-Catholic black legends and alternative good stories as they went about their work, contributing their own slight but closely related variations to this stock of tall tales. They bemoaned the Church’s loss of esteem in the eyes of that energetic, contemporary, secular world that the intransigents insisted was on the path to self-destruction. For them, intransigent insistence on correcting and transforming the world through a “frozen” understanding of Christ was a fundamentally exaggerated enterprise, one that dangerously obscured the truths that *natural* investigations of everything from holy writ to history would more clearly reveal. They considered the Ninth Crusade approach to be a wrong-headed, anachronistic, impossibly holistic project blinding Catholics to the lessons taught by the particular, evolving spirit of each revelation-bearing race, ethnic group, or



## THE WORD

individual conscience and genius---“unique” and “diverse” teachings which, as Taparelli and Veuillot sarcastically noted, somehow always uniformly emphasized exactly the same predictably parochial, materialist, and ultimately willful themes.

Let me hasten to note that I am not speaking of men who merely disagreed with certain of those truly exaggerated features of the intransigent approach noted above—thinkers like John Henry Newman (1801-1890) and Fr. Marie Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938). Newman was indeed concerned for the history of the development of doctrine in a way that appeared to give him more in common with anti-speculative, nature-focused, modern historians than with the anti-historical theologians increasingly dominating the papal entourage by the time of St. Pius X. Lagrange did, in fact, lament the exegetical backwardness of many powerful leaders of the later intransigent camp, who began to cause him severe difficulties when they fully realized where he was headed with his own scriptural studies by the time of the International Congress of Fribourg in 1897. Opponents of the intransigents certainly did like to claim both of these men as sympathizers and could point to scholarly connections with them. Nevertheless, the attack by Newman on the kind of theology, both liberal and vitalist in character, that would evolve into what Catholics call Modernism, and the assault by Lagrange on Alfred Loisy’s (1857-1940) school of scriptural exegesis, created an iron curtain between their basic attitudes and the one that I am identifying here. Newman and Lagrange were men who thought with the Church, but were sometimes unjustly treated by fellow Catholics. Their criticisms reflected an intellectual “pilgrim spirit” requiring a

patience and perspicacity equal to their own genius to digest, appreciate---and also *properly* assess for any needed censure. But such patience and perspicacity are all too rare in any age--much less one forced to confront the arrogance of a vitalist prophet a minute.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, the kind of critical spirit that was the pride of the anti-intransigent school, even though it helped pass down many specific insights to posterity, was marred by its dogmatic refusal to allow for the very possibility of any human perception and discussion of supernatural influence over the natural world. It was also seriously corrupted by a display of bitterness and arrogance that were at least as unedifying--if not, actually, much more so--than any that it could justly ascribed to its intransigent opponents within the Catholic camp. Every defeat rankled in the hearts of the men motivated by it. A desire for vengeance at the first available opportunity was noticeable in their writings and their actions. One can almost imagine a collective unclenching of teeth in the graves of such anti-intransigents across Christendom during the 1960's, as one ecclesiastical change after another apparently vindicated their own position.

Conspiratorial mythmaking was one of the anti-intransigents' strengths. This was a bit ironic, given their disdain for their opponents' intellectual "system building".

---

<sup>26</sup> Mayeur, XI, 230-236, 441-462, 577-580; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 307-334, 420-480; see the selection from *Parochial and Plain Sermons* in M. Davies, ed., *Newman Against the Liberals* (Davies, 1978); on Modernism and its critics, see Poulat, *La crise moderniste, Intégrisme*; D. Sarascella, *Modernismo* (Bibliographica, 1995); P. Coulin et al., *Le Modernisme* (Beauchesne, 1980); Choloy and Hilaire, II, 67-169.

## THE WORD

Here were men who mocked as overblown and a-historical all of the best efforts by modern speculative thinkers to tie together theological principles, historical developments, and pastoral approaches into some cohesive intelligible whole; men whose dislike of systematic theology and philosophy contributed mightily to killing that ecclesiological schema on the Church at Vatican One which would have made the infallibility decree more cohesive, comprehensible, and efficacious. And yet these same people harped upon the existence of a highly structured intellectual-political plot, led by intransigent Jesuits and their scholastic drones, responsible for every setback and defeat that progress-loving Peoples and their prophets experienced. One would almost be tempted to say--as modernists themselves did when rejecting Pius X's attack upon them as members of a unified faction within the Church--that there would be no intransigent *movement* as such to criticize at all were it not for the work that its opponents did in bringing its disparate and complex elements together into an artificial and simplistic caricature of a union.

Intransigent Ninth Crusaders, like all fervent believers in every age in the history of the Church, were a flawed lot. A critical spirit was truly needed to correct their errors. The critical spirit of their late nineteenth and early twentieth century opponents was simply not up to that laudable task. All that this spirit did was to provide more flammable material for the fire bombing soldiers in the turn of the century army of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo. But before it could do so, the sins of both camps were about to be chastised by higher authority.

*E. A Second Retrenchment*

No one counts Leo XIII among the intransigents, despite his firm pursuit of the strengthening of papal power and his support for many of their projects. We have seen that his encouragement of the *Ralliement*, the Rally for the Republic, discussed in some detail above, caused great dismay among many Ninth Crusaders active in political life. Moreover, even though the members of their camp certainly did consider him to be one with them in their love for St. Thomas Aquinas, Leo also accomplished more for historical and scriptural studies than any pontiff of the century. In fact, Leo's insouciance regarding potential dangers emerging from allowing "a hundred flowers to bloom and a hundred schools to contend" underlines the absence of authoritative intervention during almost all but the last years of his long pontificate:<sup>27</sup>

There are some restless and worried spirits who press the Roman Congregations to pronounce upon still doubtful questions. I oppose this, I stop them, because it is necessary not to prevent the intelligent from working. It is necessary to leave them the leisure to hesitate and even to err. The Truth can only win by this. The Church will always arrive in time to put them back onto the right path.

Still, the problems that emerged in the later nineteenth century were real ones—problems regularly lamented by

---

<sup>27</sup> Jedin and Dolan, IX, 331f, also 3-25; See also M. Launay, *La papauté à l'aube du xx siècle* (Cerf, 1997), pp. 13-110, 133-145; Jemolo, pp. 47-79; Mayeur, XI, 463-497, 611-636.

## THE WORD

intransigents, but problems, many of which they themselves had actually unconsciously helped to stimulate through their intellectual failings and their enthusiasm for militant political activity. That such problems could emerge, even through the labor of the most committed of Catholics, is by now no surprise to the reader of this book. All noble demonstrations of a pilgrim spirit born of a deeper understanding of the message of the Word in history and aimed at dealing with new steps in the dance of life always involve troubling complications. But troubling complications still have to be addressed if the dance is to flow properly and the work of correction and transformation effectively continued. Thus, the Papacy, even under the highly nuanced and experiment-friendly guidance of Leo XIII, became deeply involved in responding to them. The Church indeed proved herself ready to "arrive in time" to put Catholics "back onto the right path", as that pontiff claimed that she would.<sup>28</sup>

Leo's "reining in" of pilgrim experiments gone astray began in the 1890's, through a series of attacks on the purely naturalist form of biblical interpretation embraced by a number of the anti-intransigents discussed above. It continued with two documents criticizing Americanism, the more important of which was *Testem benevolentiae* in 1899. The significance of the former was swallowed up in the greater movement against theological and philosophical modernism under his successor, Pope St. Pius X; that of the second was subordinated to the flow of events in France, and

---

<sup>28</sup> Mayeur, XI, 441-487; Launay, pp. 111-129; Jemolo, pp. 47-79.

basically forgotten in the midst of the anti-modernist onslaught as well.<sup>29</sup>

For our purposes now, it is best to focus our discussion of a second retrenchment upon Leo XIII's publication, on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1901, of the encyclical letter *Graves de communi*, which rejected the creation of a distinctly Catholic Italian Democratic Party. If the term "Christian Democracy" were employed at all, the pope insisted, this could only legitimately be used to indicate "a beneficent Christian action in favor of the people", not a commitment of the Church to democratic politics. Moreover, as the first of its two words emphasized, "Christian Democracy" could only exist with reference to a foundation in the Christian Faith; cooperation with those of democratic spirit who were materialist socialists was thereby excluded. Even what today would be called a "preferential option for the poor" was dismissed as objectionable by the pope, since a true concept of "the People" had to include all social classes, coordinated into one harmonious whole.<sup>30</sup>

A second intervention came from Leo's successor in the aftermath of the XIX Congress of the *Opera* in Bologna, November 10-13, 1903. At that meeting, Romolo Murri, with a certain support from Giovanni Grosoli (1859-1937), the President of the organization, had gained the edge over the older faction eager to continue abstention from national politics. An imprudent circular from Grosoli then argued that "old questions", presumably including the issue of the papal Temporal Power, no longer mattered that much to

---

<sup>29</sup> Jedin and Dolan, IX, 324-334.

<sup>30</sup> Mayeur, XI, 611-636; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 233-242; Gilson, *The Church Speaks*, pp. 315-330.

## THE WORD

contemporary Catholics, who were thus freed to confront more serious matters. Although personally content to let the Temporal Power issue die, the new pontiff, Pius X, was disturbed by what he considered to be the *Opera's* lay-clerical insubordination, and dissolved it on July 28, 1904. Only Section II, dealing with Social Economy, was maintained, in order to emphasize the fact that "beneficent action in favor of the people" was still encouraged by Rome.

The Italian Catholic Movement was then entirely restructured on June 11, 1905, with the publication of an encyclical letter, *Il fermo proposito*. Section II of the *Opera* became the *Unione Economico-Sociale dei Cattolici Italiani*. An *Unione Popolare tra i Cattolici d'Italia* was established on the model of the *Volksverein*, along with an *Unione Elettorale Cattolica Italiana*, designed to prepare Catholics gradually for active participation in national political life. In practice, with the hopes for a Catholic Party squelched, and the *Opera's* original "stand-pat" position abandoned, Rome opted for the clerico-moderate line. The *Unione Elettorale* gradually pursued the kind of contractual agreement with conservatives that had been utilized in other countries. Its great chance to put this plan into effective operation came with the introduction of universal male suffrage in the next decade, increasing the impact of the pro-Catholic vote. This resulted in the famous "Pact" of 1911 of the President of the *Unione*, Vincenzo Ottorino Gentiloni (1865-1916) with the conservative elements of the liberal party guided by Giovanni Giolitti (1842-1928).<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Launay, pp. 183-186; Invernizzi, pp. 23-58; Kalyvas, pp. 217-221; Jemolo, pp. 80-160; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 481-494.

Romolo Murri, disturbed by this development, moved on to build a *Lega Democratica Italiana*, open to direct cooperation with socialists in a way that seemed to confirm his belief in democracy's superiority to the Faith as a guide to political life. Such an impression was still further strengthened by Murri's calls for an internal democratization of the Church. He was formally expelled from the Catholic Movement and eventually excommunicated. Nevertheless, a number of "Christian Democrats" quietly remained within the official camp, hoping one day to be able to build a mass party that could address itself both outside as well as inside Catholic circles, and thus continue to allow a joint lay-clerical political activity. Don Luigi Sturzo (1871-1959) emerged, later, under different circumstances, as the leader of this group, in what became the Italian Popular Party, and, after its demise under Mussolini, the Christian Democratic Party of Alcide de Gasperi (1881-1954). And this latter formation, sometimes criticized by the Papacy and sometimes prodded by it, would then go on to preside over the most successful secularization of the "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" in Italy's history. But that is another story for the next unhappy chapter.

Pope St. Pius X also condemned the *Sillon* in the encyclical letter, *Notre Charge Apostolique* of January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1910. In doing so, he demonstrated, as Maurras quipped, that "democratic agitation was easier to bring about than any Catholic result as a consequence of it".<sup>32</sup> Pius lamented the progress of the movement from one that had worked to

---

<sup>32</sup> Petit, p. 145, *passim*; Jemolo, pp. 80-160; Mayeur, XI, 486, 496, 533, 535, 536, 542; Romanato, pp. 227-291; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 96-107, 473-480, 507-517.



## THE WORD

assure that democracy would be Catholic in spirit to another that abandoned such a laudable project as superfluous. For, as was to be expected, the pope complained that the *Grand Sillon* grounded its definition of liberty, equality, fraternity, and, in fact, all morality, in a non-religious political philosophy, and one with a mythical authority—The People—to boot. But Marc Sangnier was not personally condemned along with the movement that he led. He was able to maintain his prestige within the Catholic camp at large by responding to the pope's decision through an immediate act of submission---the absolute sincerity of which was deeply questioned by his enemies.

In fact, the whole of Giuseppe Sarto's pontificate was characterized by a "call to order" of the same timbre in other realms well beyond politics.<sup>33</sup> Problems in the world of labor were addressed, the cooperation of Catholic unions with their socialist counterparts being placed under certain restrictions, particularly where going out on strike was concerned. Turning to intellectual issues, the pope, through one measure after another, brought the vitalist-inspired Modernist Movement under control in the spheres of scriptural, dogmatic theological, and historical research. Support was given to a network of intransigent groups in their efforts to purge the Catholic camp of activists and thinkers who were said to have abandoned the project of correcting and transforming nature in Christ and to have plunged into its uncritical acceptance instead. Mgr. Umberto Benigni (1862-

---

<sup>33</sup> Launay, pp. 147-212; Invernizzi, pp. 47-58; Romanato, pp. 227-291; Mayeur, XI, 456-497; Poulat, *La crise moderniste*, pp. 103-267; *Intégrisme*; Jedin and Dolan, IX, 381-480.

1934), head of the Fellowship of Pius X and deeply concerned for social justice as well as doctrinal purity, is the name most associated with this new and extensive intransigent initiative.

Would, in many respects, that that work had been completed! In saying this, I do not mean that any of that prophetic brutality inherited from the Mennaisien past that continued to play an unfortunate role in the neo-intransigent crusade was praiseworthy. Uncharitable that spirit was in its origins and uncharitable in all of its subsequent manifestations. What I do wish to say, however, is that the modernist danger was a real one and the effort to rid the Church of elements surrendering to “nature as is” was, as always, absolutely essential to the labor of the Mystical Body of Christ on behalf of the message of the Word in history. Nevertheless, a *totally* effective crusade of this kind would have entailed not just purging specific disciplines of their modernist tendencies—which was done—but encouraging their proper positive use—which, for a time at least, was not. Insofar as this positive aspect was missing, the purge aided a one-sided recovery and could not be completely useful to the cause of Christ. And it was for this reason, as well as the need to correct brutal and uncharitable assaults on non-modernists who simply defied intransigent reductionism, that some necessary backtracking began almost immediately, during the pontificate of Benedict XV (1914-1922).<sup>34</sup>

I also certainly do *not* think that “justice” to the *Sillon* somehow required a complementary condemnation of the *Action Française*. Many trustworthy sources tell us that this did not come about at the time for three reasons: because the non-doctrinal character of the political arguments of Maurras

---

<sup>34</sup> Mayeur, XII, 13-18.

## THE WORD

contrasted so clearly with the doctrinally-charged approach of Sangnier; due to Pius X's appreciation of the practical work of the League in defense of the Church after the denunciation of the Concordat; and since the atmosphere of the whole of the Maurrasian movement was seemingly friendly to the Faith, with many conversions coming through cooperation with it.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, much more ought to have been done to control nefarious developments in several other countries. Hence, solid and praiseworthy efforts to separate Catholics from palingenesist democratic temptations in France should have been accompanied by further assaults on democratic nationalist temptations in places like Germany, where the Center Party was not at all free from such contamination. Closer to home, the stop sign placed in the path of Catholic democratic socialist visions should have been paralleled with another that underlined the continuing danger coming from Italian liberalism. For the chief fruit of all of the changes in Italian Catholic Action was to press believers into a cooperation with a new manifestation of the Party of Order, as reflected in the support offered to religion "friendly" liberal candidates to Parliament through the above-mentioned Gentiloni Pact of 1911.<sup>36</sup>

Last, but definitely not least, the future of the cause of the Word in history would have been much aided by a deeper attention being turned to the very real danger of Americanism. Yes, Leo XIII's attacks upon this new civil

---

<sup>35</sup> Launay, pp. 191-193; Petit, pp. 64-66; Chiron, pp. 245-268; Jedin and Dolan; IX, 473-480.

<sup>36</sup> Jedin and Dolan, IX, 418-517; X, 569-579.

religion were in many respects astute and crucial ones, but any sign of the importance of what he had to say faded swiftly into the shadows. It did so partly because, at the turn of the century, the United States was on the periphery of the Vatican's telescope and could not hold its attention for long. Rome was not eager to bother the Americans so long as the Americans did not openly bother Rome. In other words, the Holy See allowed the infection to grow. And America would soon return to torment the Roman Catholic Church more than one can bear to mention at this juncture.

Admittedly, it was difficult for the Papacy to continue hostilities when the Americanists themselves insisted that no heresy existed, that they possessed no discernable theological platform, and that they merely espoused a humble, pragmatic method harmonizing order and freedom in a complex modern society, with no prejudice to any Catholic doctrine whatsoever. The transformation of a pragmatic political program into an evangelical national religion seems to have escaped the Catholic Americanists, much as it escaped many non-Catholic patriots who unwittingly served this pseudo-religious creed with universal missionary pretensions. Americanists could not grasp the meaning of *Testem benevolentiae* because the encyclical was itself part and parcel of that preoccupation with intellectual abstractions that their budding ideology of purely pragmatic action was designed to overcome. If the Americanist issue did not attract the concern of most Catholics, and one of the participants in the battle refused to admit that there was even a war, why would

## THE WORD

Rome, belabored with other difficulties which it judged to be more immediately critical, think to intervene anew?<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, the contrast of modernism with Americanism seemed to confirm this judgment. The modernist crisis *did* involve a direct theological challenge to Catholic doctrine and, as such, once again, could not arouse Americanist enthusiasm. American failure to embrace modernism in the wake of its flare-up in Europe gave the United States the aura of a model orthodox nation. Unfortunately, Rome did not realize how a “practical”, “pragmatic” Americanism could suck whole nations into what effectively became a nominalist, naturalist, and equally modernist wind tunnel. And the opportunity for it to do so was soon to arise. For literal firebombing was by now just around the corner.

### *F. Danger on All Fronts*

Unfortunately for the Church and for the globe as a whole, the First World War gave the willful intellectual, spiritual, political, and social fire bombers their greatest opportunity to link theory and practice together. Wartime observers as diverse as Karl Kraus (1874-1936) and Romain Rolland (1876-1944) were horrified by the orgiastic abandonment of all rational discourse and the passionately irrational destruction engendered by that conflict from its very outset. Meanwhile, complex postwar figures such as Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), the author of the famous 1920 work,

---

<sup>37</sup> Jedin and Dolan, IX, 331-334; Rao, *Americanism*; See, also, McAvoy on the aftermath.

the *Storm of Steel*, seemed to revel in them.<sup>38</sup> Our task here, however, is to note that any open-minded student of the Catholic scene since 1848 is obliged to make one firm comment about the events of 1914-1918. Everything that intransigents, Pius IX, the Syllabus of Errors, and Catholic Social Doctrine had predicted would emerge from both uncorrected national material ambition and mechanist naturalist society was proving to be true. If the warring powers did not satisfy themselves with the destruction that they had already caused on behalf of what Pope Benedict XV called a “useless massacre”; if they did not end the conflict swiftly, then horrific and potentially irreparable consequences for the entire globe appeared impossible to avoid.<sup>39</sup>

And yet every new impressive display of butchery evoked further rhetorical calls from the Entente and Central Powers for still greater commitment in support of the continuing evil, “lest those who have died be said to have died in vain”. No aspect of the unfolding nightmare seemed monstrous enough to prevent Catholics themselves, from fervent individual believers to whole national episcopacies, from participating in the orgy of self-destruction. Neither did it prevent the conscious and unconscious historical proponents of irrationalism from insisting that the damage logically caused by them was somehow actually the final

---

<sup>38</sup> R. Rolland, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1956); K. Kraus, *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Suhrkamp, 2008); E. Jünger, *In Stahlgewitter* (Klett-Cotta, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* (11/1,1914); Benedict XV, in Invernizzi, pp. 97-108; G. Rumi, ed., *Benedetto XV e la pace – 1918* (Morcelliana, 1990); Jemolo, pp. 161-182.

## THE WORD

demonstration of the pointlessness of Christian Faith. In short, the word merchants supporting the vision of “nature as is” laid the blame for the horror for which *they* were responsible at the feet of the very force that had sought to prevent such a situation from developing in the first place. In doing so, a worldview based on the struggle of all against all and the supremacy of willful action in giving direction to mankind closed up shop on the first global conflict that it had long prepared. It then “moved on” to justify more, but different “business as usual” projects, as revolution and civil war followed relentlessly in the footsteps of the four-year bloodbath.

A European continent devastated by the First World War, decimated by its aftermath of starvation and disease, and troubled by postwar internal partisan disturbances, offered few grounds for general optimism by 1920. International order, whose last political symbol Karl Kraus understood to be the now defunct empire of the Catholic Hapsburgs, seemed to be a chimera. Any hope for economic justice, made still more difficult by the return of impassioned front-line soldiers to unemployment in broken economies, appeared to be a utopian dream. In most respects, the Old World could appeal only to the fully conscious cynic, anxious to cripple all faith in moral and material regeneration. “We foresee more ferocious warfare”, the editors of *La Civiltà Cattolica* lamented as the decade commenced, “more difficult conditions for the good, a more menacing future for society as a whole”.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever the word merchants might argue, the First World War had been a massive defeat for the Enlightenment

---

<sup>40</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1920), I, 6-7.

naturalist vision. It in no way discredited Christ and the Christian message in the eyes of anyone who knew what these actually taught in the first place. As a result, all three pontiffs of the horrific years between 1914 and 1945, Benedict XV (1914-1922), Pius XI (1922-1939), and Pius XII (1939-1958), unceasingly continued to proclaim the Catholic intransigent "thesis" that the world of nature must bend to the corrective and transforming message of the Word.<sup>41</sup>

Benedict had courageously insisted upon a return to the principles of international order in the face of brutal opposition from all the belligerents during the whole of the world conflict, and his successors continued to beg for "the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ" on a global basis in its aftermath. While Pius XI dedicated himself to encouraging the acceptance of Christ as King of the universe, Eugenio Pacelli, coordinating all of the different strands of the revival movement of the previous one hundred years and more, discussed the patristic doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and its meaning for human life more thoroughly than any previous pontiff. The economic aspects of a just political order recognizing the complementary character of the individual and the community were again emphasized in Pius XI's splendid encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), commemorating the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*.

---

<sup>41</sup> Mayeur, XII, 13-86, 297-345; Jedin, X, 22-96, 177-228 See *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum; Achille Ratti: Pape Pie XI*, (Collection de l'École Française de Rome, École Française, 1996), pp. 279-420; T. McLaughlin, ed., *The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World* (Image, 1957); Jemolo, pp. 161-282; J. Chélini, *L'Église sous Pie XII* (Fayard, 1983); P. Blet, *Pie XII et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Perrin, 1997); Jedin and Dolan, X, 21-96.



## THE WORD

Meanwhile, he and his incisive follower on the throne of Peter addressed the complex interaction of the supernatural and natural realms in innumerable papal letters and allocutions, on subjects ranging from the use of the radio and the cinema to that of medicine and astronomy.

Nevertheless, concern for the thesis did not obliterate the three pontiffs' appreciation of the continuing reality of the hypothesis as well. All of the labors discussed above were undertaken with the requisite opening to a pilgrim spirit. That spirit can be seen in the Holy See's ever more impassioned cultivation of a worldwide Christian commonwealth, and its courageous recognition that a New Christendom rooted in other parts of the globe might soon take precedence over a European Christian order whose underpinnings had, perhaps, been subverted for good.

Papal openness to nuance was not, however, without its unfortunate side effects. More than anything else, it was Rome's accurate appreciation of the dilemmas posed by a rapidly changing reality, along with the new steps in the dance of life required to address them, that created the impression in many people's minds that the Church of the years from 1914-1945 lacked both a commitment to solid principles as well as coherent policies. It was this openness that stirred critics to complain that hers was an engine propelled by base opportunism and hypocrisy alone. And it was this openness that also gave credence to yet another batch of telling black legends once the Second World War was over.

Anyone eager to identify seemingly incomprehensible flip-flops in the era in question does indeed have a gold mine to plumb in the pages of its history. Thundering

condemnations of secularization and Bolshevism poured forth from the mouth of Rome. These did not, however, lead the Holy See to reject all contact with leftist Russia, nor to offer serious support to fervent *Cristeros* fighting a violently anticlerical and semi-Bolshevik government in Mexico, nor uncritically to accept the Spanish Nationalists in their anti-Red campaign, nor to proclaim an anti-Soviet crusade in 1941. The Holy See's relations with the Christian Socials in Austria in the early 1930's were friendly, even though it continued to reprove openly confessional parties elsewhere. National cultures were highly praised, but French and Polish nationalism intensely disliked; international co-operation was touted, but many existing supra-national institutions openly disdained. Fascists were opposed but somehow not opposed; accepted, but publicly abhorred and chastised. What lay behind all of these contortions?<sup>42</sup>

They were fueled, first and foremost, by the basic fact that the dance of life *is* always difficult to perform well. Numerous contemporary Church failures in dancing that dance to sanctity inevitably emerged. Many may indeed have been due to the individual sins of Catholics, from those of Roman Pontiffs down to the evils perpetrated by ordinary believers active in lay political movements. Many more were owed to the fact that dangers were appearing on literally

---

<sup>42</sup> Mayeur, XII, 297-616, 745-786, 964-972; Jedin and Dolan, X, 505-564, 569-613, 672-752; A. Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca* (Laterza, 1993), pp. vii-24; A. Wenger, *Catholiques en Russie* (Desclée, 1998); *Achille Ratti*, pp. 499-527, 549-761, 811-824, 893-907; K. von Klemperer, *Ignaz von Seipel* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 214, 412-416, 420; B. Bennassar, *Franco* (Perrin, 1995); Rumi, pp. 151-169; Blet, pp. 134-158.

## THE WORD

every front at once in what was, after all, a mere thirty-one year slice of history. Moreover, such strange new dangers, in this short space of time, were confronted by three men of highly different personalities, each of whom learned that a nuanced and prudent response to one practical dilemma tended to give birth to another problem of exactly the same intensity and complexity, often arising from a completely diverse and even totally unexpected direction.

Then again, all three pontiffs were undertaking the already highly complicated work of bringing the full message of the Word into every aspect of natural life in an age of ever more perilous fire bombing activity, making those engaged in battle with her into sometimes more brutal but always much more effective enemies than those of the immediate past. Also, the word merchants laboring in the enemy vineyards had many further means at their disposal to promote their causes and overwhelm or confuse believers with new flips on existing black legends and alternative good stories. To take but one simple example of great importance on the "everyday" level, the fact that a popular cinema actor might be made to represent Christ one day and a "friendly" criminal or libertine the next was enough to baffle his adoring admirers and complicate the task of any pastor of souls, whether pontiff or parish priest.<sup>43</sup>

It is ironic that one of the Church's chief flaws between the two wars was her exaggerated practical acceptance of *liberal* approaches her defenders had so often reproved. Perhaps more than anything else, it was this liberal temptation that provided fodder for the black legends

---

<sup>43</sup> Achille Ratti, pp. 125-157, 825-853; Jedin and Dolan, X, 410-436.

propagated after 1945 regarding Church action in the era in question—a topic to be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter. Let it suffice to say, for the moment, that the “preferential option for conservative liberalism” demonstrated at the time of the *Ralliement* in France and, later, through the Gentiloni Pact in Italy, seems to have been more and more accompanied by a conviction that liberal concepts regarding “the rule of laws and not men” must be treated seriously by Church authorities. Hence, laying aside the basic, purely conventional foundations of liberal systems, and the philosophical, psychological, and historical willfulness that truly characterized them in practice, the Holy See tended to accept modern legal agreements and concordats as though they really did provide unshakeable guarantees for action in the future. The attacks made upon Rome for signing a Concordat with the Nazis—part of a network of treaties with the many states composing the German Empire that had been in the offing since the First World War, long before Hitler’s arrival at the summit of power—far from demonstrating friendship with National Socialism, revealed, instead, a quasi-liberal faith in the invincible strength of legal documents that was highly misplaced. And it was the same spirit that was at work in abandoning the Mexican *Cristeros* in exchange for government “guarantees”—and the approval of both secular and Catholic American opinion.<sup>44</sup>

A useful guide to Rome’s highly complicated---and, at times, seemingly ill-informed, contradictory, and

---

<sup>44</sup> Mayeur, XII, 301-305, 964-972; Jedin and Dolan, X,177-228; *Achille Ratti*, pp.197- 213, 591-673, 873-892; Jemolo, pp. 183-282; Chélini, pp. 21-59.

## THE WORD

intellectually tortured---perspective in the whole of the interwar period can once again be found in the pages of *La Civiltà Cattolica*. This journal remained highly influential throughout those troubled years, both as a literary weapon as well as a practical intermediary between the European religious and political world. We shall see that it continued to base its critical commentary on current events on the fundamental principles of its nineteenth century intransigent founders. But it did so with an eye to the *hypothesis* as well as the *thesis*, illustrating the major difficulties of successful Catholic maneuvering in a time of danger on all fronts.

Despite the *Civiltà's* terrible fears for the future, it insisted that there was no need to abandon all hope for improvement. Indeed, its editors argued, the very horrors of a war that belied certainty in a never-ending progress had radically increased sympathy in intellectual and artistic circles towards a Church that had long predicted this disaster as an inevitable consequence of a willful, Enlightenment-inspired nationalism.

Nationalism continued to be just as reprehensible in the *Civiltà's* eyes after 1914 as before. One needed only to consider the way in which the fighting countries had dehumanized each another during the conflict, or the vilification of the Germans in its aftermath, to realize the irrational depths to which national feeling could drive men. The spirit of vengeance it fomented had then caused the Paris Peace Conference to trample upon the just interests of the defeated powers, in ways that would merely feed desires for retribution, "and please God that a new and more profound

destruction does not take place".<sup>45</sup> Post-war Europe was also given further insights into the madness of the nationalist spirit through the creation of new ethnic nation-states out of the dismantled Austro-Hungarian Empire lacking the requisite economic resources sufficient for their independent survival, and capable of defending themselves only so long as Germany and the Soviet Union remained in their momentarily weakened condition. Who was the ultimate loser in all these developments? The real individual human person, who was taxed, conscripted, brutalized, and sacrificed without concern to the needs of the merciless Moloch called the nation-state, and true, non-ideological, patriotic love of country along with him.

An equally Enlightenment-inspired internationalism, corrected neither by Reason nor Faith, was not the answer to the blight of nationalism either, the *Civiltà* insisted.<sup>46</sup> A League of Nations with no real roots in European history was nothing other than a weak, liberal, pseudo-State. As on the national level, power in such a State would flow to the strong and the better-prepared forces capable of manipulating it rather than to the constituent elements it was truly supposed to serve. What this meant was that insofar as the League had any authority whatsoever it would inevitably be used to enforce the will of the victorious Entente Powers, whitewashed by the good story of finally securing the establishment of a just international order. But, of course, the governments of these manipulative victorious nations were

---

<sup>45</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1921), III, 245-248; IV, 289-296; (1922), I, 101; (1923), IV, 486.

<sup>46</sup> In addition to the previous footnote, see see Rumi, pp. 65-82, 129-150; *Achille Ratti*, pp. 857-892.

## THE WORD

themselves still the hapless tools of the anti-social, liberal capitalist financial magnates that controlled them, compounding the fraudulence of any League claim to provide global justice.

Moreover, the entire post-war edifice, international and national, was unbearably shaky. It looked, for a brief moment, as though it might be transformed at the hands of the "pragmatic" American civil religion, whose secular, revolutionary impact could easily be seen in the contrast of the ideologically charged peace plans of Woodrow Wilson with those of Benedict XV. But America's time was not yet at hand. Instead, the shakiness of the European order was to be demonstrated by the political appeal of two opponents of the liberal capitalist version of the Enlightenment vision--Marxism-Leninism and Fascism---themselves immediately ready and able to take over the weakened nineteenth century constitutional State to serve their own purposes.

Lenin's movement, like all truly Marxist approaches, was built on the concept of history as class struggle. We have seen that he added to it the role of an elitist, prophetic, and, of course, inevitably willful party---a "vanguard of the proletariat". This would make use of historical opportunities to leapfrog the series of clashes Marx had thought man had to endure, in order to bring the battles leading to the final age of communism to a much more swift conclusion. The Bolsheviks had appealed to the ultimately misleading words of "land, peace, and all power to the Soviets" to gain control of the machinery of a weak liberal State, the Russian Provisional Government, to serve its communist aims. They were also happy to involve violent and criminal elements in the task of speedy liberation of the working class; groups ranging from

returned front-line soldiers to ordinary town and villages toughs. The presence of a murky world of thugs ready to be mobilized on behalf of something—of anything—had long been a preoccupation of the Russian authorities and counterrevolutionary writers such as Dostoyevsky. It was a favorite topic of journalists in Moscow and St. Petersburg by the latter years of the nineteenth century. The “Thug Moment” in history had now definitively arrived, aided by gifted rhetoricians ready to proclaim it an instrument for the final emancipation of The People.<sup>47</sup>

Mention of thuggery brings us directly into the Fascist world. Concepts central to Fascism were “in the air” already for some time before Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) brought them together in the public forum. Eager, like Lenin, to leapfrog his way to a better world, this former radical socialist also understood that the general disruption accompanying a continental war would greatly aid the cause of change. Mussolini saw how a thoroughly determined but tiny minority with a rhetoric of “nation, strength, and glory” on its lips had been able to trick an overwhelmingly pacifist Italy into war, and, even more importantly, how men of the most diverse and seemingly irreconcilable backgrounds were transformed by the frontline experience into a collective, almost superhumanly self-sacrificing fraternal brotherhood. How did this transformation take place? It was brought about through unquestioned submission to the commands of the frontline officers who shared their men’s sufferings and their fate.

---

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, G. Hosking, *Russia and Russians* (Harvard, 2001), pp. 364-365.



## THE WORD

Obedience to the will of a leader—the leadership principle—transferred from wartime to peacetime circumstances could, Mussolini concluded, metamorphosize a badly divided modern people into a fraternal band of brothers, annihilate the individualist egotism of nineteenth century liberalism in the process, and move everyone to the accomplishment of great social deeds. No one, certainly to begin with, could ask exactly what these deeds might be or judge their intellectual or moral suitability, since to do so would involve not just questioning the leader's commands but also reintroducing the division that his right to blind obedience was intended to overcome.

Given the exile of both Faith and Reason from this picture, Fascism could, potentially, work in the service of any cause whatsoever. Hence, while concerned for national solidarity as such in Italy, it came to mean fraternal commitment to an Hispanic *ecumene* for the Spanish Falange, a purged racial community or *Volksgemeinschaft* for National Socialist Germany, and the victory of a Nihilist monster, *der Oberförster*, in Ernst Jünger's brilliant novel, *Auf den Marmorklippen* (1939)—about which much more in the epilogue to this work. Whatever the form it might take, however, Fascism's appearance on the postwar scene was eminently understandable. In some respects, it was simply a more violent development of the mentality arguing for blind obedience to an absolute monarch in the aftermath of the chaos of the Religious Wars.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Z. Sternhell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology, From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution* (Princeton, 1994); E. Jünger, *Auf dem Marmorklippen* (Ullstein, 1994).

Panic always stimulated a population's readiness to accept an easy way out of a spiritual, intellectual, and social war of all against all brought about by the victory of "nature as is"---even if this meant welcoming Leviathan's absorption of everything personal into its bosom. Nevertheless, the *Civiltà* editors continued to argue that long-term solutions to any given contemporary problems had to take account of the complexities of the dance of life, and, that this required the traditional intransigent unification of what the "principle of independence" had put asunder: social authority with individual freedom and dignity. Thus, for example, while they were quite willing to contemplate many "socialist"-sounding projects, including State aid to farmers, land reform, and, in the ultimate extreme, expropriation of large estates in order to combat agricultural indebtedness and semi-peonage, they insisted that all this was intended to promote the widespread dissemination of personal private property. Again, while supporting a strong Christian labor movement organizing workers to obtain their rights, especially given the economic reality created by liberal capitalist governments' abandonment of real concern for the common good, they argued that this was only to secure the existence of an harmonious corporate society in which all classes were equally guaranteed their proper dignity. Finally, the editors campaigned for a purified League of Nations, one that built upon the success of European diplomacy at the Locarno Conference, where Germany began to be treated as a human entity once more. This would be a League of Nations that understood, as Taparelli had taught, that international authority had to work for the protection of the just distinctions of each of its constituent nations and the

## THE WORD

populations whose common good those nation-states were themselves meant to provide.<sup>49</sup>

As always, the *Civiltà* concluded, Catholics had to realize that the answer to the problems of the dance of life was the full accepting, correcting, and transforming message of the Word in history. The teaching that emerged from the Catholic *thesis* showed them that the political organizations of both the Left and Right, despite betraying similarities with Christian positions on specific matters, were not tools through which they could comfortably work. All such partisan pseudo-societies manipulated words to take the Word captive for the sake of their own limited and corrupted goals. The contemporary Left, which often accurately pinpointed the individualist errors of previous less radical liberal movements, and hence might accidentally make common cause with Catholics on social issues, was still a carrier of the Revolution's basic anti-authoritarian infection. Catholics could not forge an uncritical alliance with any of its representatives. The contemporary Right, which sensed the importance of authority, and therefore appeared to strike at atomism in a way that Catholics could exploit, did so mainly because its terrified proponents wished to use social coercion to protect their own particular but now threatened self-interests. Catholics could not rest contented with the politics of such temporarily frightened atomists and irrationally authoritarian bourgeois. Their battle was with the underlying principles responsible for horrific modern conditions in

---

<sup>49</sup> See J. Rao, "Catholicism, Liberalism, and the Right: A Sketch From the 1920's", in *Faith and Reason* (Spring, 1983), pp. 9-31.

general. And these, many members of the Right would still dearly love to preserve.

Was a Catholic Party a fit instrument for a restoration of Christian society? The *Civiltà* was still firmly convinced that it was perhaps the *worst* expedient to which a Catholic could turn. Once again, a "party", to the editors, was a pseudo-society, and any such entity formed amidst the madness of the twentieth century would do one of two things: it would either succumb to the spirit of the times and begin to compete with its opponents by offering a utopian ideological program for the solution of all manner of social problems, or it would become rigidly conservative and self-serving. In the party's pursuit of an earthbound concept of "success", it would inevitably demand a discipline concerning issues about which Catholics might legitimately disagree, equating its victory with the victory of Christianity. Accomplishing nothing, it would hamper the real correction and transformation of all things in Christ. Only peculiar and deeply significant circumstances could justify going down the "party" route.

Better to devote Catholic attention to the survival and progress of Catholic education, so that society could continue to know what the Christian *thesis* really entailed. Better, also, to promote issue-oriented pressure groups, "Catholic Action" organizations, which would work to ensure specific Word-friendly approaches to a variety of social problems. Such groups, while political in the sense that they would seek to exert pressure on the State, would nevertheless avoid partisanship. Their issue-orientation would prevent their commitment to a given party, and thus avoid forcing Catholics to adopt a wide spectrum of positions on topics about which no one need speak specifically as a Christian.

## THE WORD

This *ad hoc* character would also block their becoming ideological instruments, since they would exist to make the State respond to Catholicism, issue by issue—not to concoct a grandiose scheme whereby they themselves became the State and offered their own ideologically twisted key to happiness. Hence, Catholics could be brought together politically only on matters of religious importance. No statement needed be made on matters about which Christians could disagree; no party discipline exacted on non-essentials.

With proper education reflecting the Word-drenched *thesis*, the faithful could then turn to the *hypothesis*, keeping their eyes open for contemporary societies and statesmen susceptible to guidance from awakened believers organized in the lobbies of the fully developed Catholic Action movement. If political forces and leaders could be found who were not frightened by the use of social authority, and who demonstrated that their operating principles did not shut them off entirely from moving down a Catholic direction, then believers could work with them—whether they shared their Faith or not. Europe might be able to breathe again, and the center of Catholicism could yet remain in the Old World. Still, even under the best of circumstances, serious caution would always be required.

One example of how the *Civiltà* applied this postwar thesis-hypothesis argument to Catholic political action in a way that clearly demonstrates Church flexibility---for better or for worse---can be found in discussing its approach to Fascism.<sup>50</sup> Fascism, in its “doctrinal” form, as a thesis of its

---

<sup>50</sup> See Mayeur, XII, 347-391, 451-522; Jedin and Dolan, X, 569-600; Jemolo, pp. 183-282; Achille Ratti, pp. 359-395, 529-548, 605-640.

own, was anathema to the editors of the *Civiltà*. They condemned it as blatantly anti-Christian. "Catholics", they concluded, "are not able therefore to approve, much less to support fascism, as they cannot support or approve socialism, both the one and the other being opposed to the most elementary principles of Christianity".<sup>51</sup> Did Fascism believe that authority was divinely instituted, shaped and limited? No. Did it recognize the need to subject individual passions to precepts of right reason and revelation? No. Indeed, it was a movement in which "brutality is allied often with lust and other passions of wayward youths".<sup>52</sup> Was international order one of its more heartfelt concerns? This was not at all the case. It praised libertine nationalists like the poet and dramatist, Gabriele D'Annunzio, who had been one of the chief rhetorical tricksters seducing Italy into the First World War against the nation's manifest true will. Perhaps social justice was a major Fascist aim? This was equally untrue. The fascist *squadristi* were the "Black Hundreds" of a dying liberal plutocracy that was ready to utilize any instrument to protect itself; funded by it to crack the skulls of the Italian Red Guards. Fascism was thus the natural home for frustrated ex-socialist ideologues like Mussolini, thugs, terrified liberals, and an exasperated bourgeoisie unable to deal with the consequences of their fundamental principles, unwilling to see chaos sweep the land, and, hence, forced to deal with their crumbling world by means of a still more frank and willful use of power. For "liberalism is always constrained to make up for moral weakness, for the defect of law, with the abuse of material force, and thus to pass from an excess of

---

<sup>51</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1922), III, 363.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, (1921), IV, 5-6.

## THE WORD

license to the other extreme of tyranny". "Such we have seen and we still see in the deeds of fascism", the editors lamented, "even without recognizing it as a direct work of the government, or a specific institution of the 'liberal State' which has, at the very least, tolerated and fomented it".<sup>53</sup>

Nevertheless, the *Civiltà* could not help but see in the fascist movement a hypothetical tool for ultimately restoring the true authority of the State and an unconscious instrument fit to destroy the modern spirit. For even "doctrinal" fascism was, to a certain degree, an artificial plant. Many fascists were simply supporters of "action" to end the crisis of paralyzed post-war Italy and went no further in formulating definite ideological principles. Obedience to the will of the leader, who might then be able to judge the practical steps that had to be taken in order to act effectively, was their single unquestionable axiom. And the Duce, whose authority was thus exalted, had shown himself to be a man of enormous organizational ability; a politician who knew how to exploit the deficiencies and errors of both socialism and liberalism; a new type of statesman who could also charismatically dominate the population as a whole. This non-ideological fascism, whatever its intellectual flaws, nevertheless struck at anarchic individualism in the population at large. Even the "honesty" of the fascist glorification of brute force, as opposed to its hidden acceptance by liberalism, could, perhaps, aid in building a path back to an understanding of the value of social authority:<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1921), II, 3-13, 391; IV, 6; 1922, II, 485-495, III, 133-146, 217-229; IV, 97-110, 201, 205-214.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, (1922), IV, 509.

The roar of the *fasci* which orders 'enough' to this disorder was like a call to battle that had to find sympathy and consent in the crowd of tired, disgusted, self-interested, and honest men who, even while applauding the goal of the fascist organizations, did not approve the method.

A consistent *Civiltà* policy, given the two-fold character of fascism, thus had to reflect the complexities discussed above. The editors determined that, first of all, fascism needed to be diverted from any dogmatic statement of its irrational principles and kept to its "gut" emphasis on action, order, and authority. This, in the right hands, could deal heavy blows to the atomistic spirit of the modern world. Secondly, Catholic Action must simultaneously be more vigorously developed and Catholic pressure more consistently exerted to ensure that Mussolini's practical policies were actually Catholic in character. Thus, a Catholic order of things could gradually be constructed without the mediation of a Catholic Party that could itself easily be tempted either to accept liberal political presuppositions or to equate the social teachings of the Church with partisan, Marxist ideology. But the success of such a policy would, of course, require the strictest unity among Catholics, both cleric and lay, themselves.

This general approach can be seen throughout the journal's pages in the 1920's and 1930's. Any justification of the paganism, immorality, violence and state worship of some fascists was vigorously reprovved, as much after the March on Rome as before. Such justifications were consistently chastised as the ultimate consequences of *liberal*



## THE WORD

theories of passion, power, and popular sovereignty. Evils that might stem from fascist “doctrines”, the murder of Senator Matteoti in 1924 among them, were eagerly identified and connected with their ultimately liberal, atomistic roots. And that particular fascist murder was condemned as a frank and logical application of principles that *both* liberals *and* socialists, through their historical attacks on objective truth and praise of revolution, had been arguing on the theoretical level for many decades already.

Similarly, helpful intellectual and socially authoritative actions of the fascists were excessively praised, and combined with exhortations to further good works. Let Mussolini make a reference to the help of God in Parliament, tinged though this might be with Mazzinian pantheism, and the *Civiltà* was seduced and would erupt in expressions of sympathy and hope. Could the Duce but cap his triumph over his enemies with a triumph over his own passions! Let the fascists publish works such as that by Giuseppe Bottai (1895-1959), *La marcia su Roma*, which urged the regulation of the overly-violent *squadristi*, and the *Civiltà* was quick to laud its sagacity. Let the party faithful, irritated by liberal, democratic, and socialist opposition, launch an attack on popular sovereignty, or even on the “protestant” roots of the modern spirit, and the journal’s editors were enraptured, seeing all this as clear progress to the more balanced and rational advice to be garnered from a Taparelli or the papal social encyclicals. Fascists were frequently right in practice, they argued. If they could be *consistently* right in dealing with the problems of the

age, they might even begin to be right for solid Catholic reasons.<sup>55</sup>

State worship and other basically anti-Christian fascist sentiments were identified and criticized in Giovanni Gentile's educational reforms. Gentile did not show any desire to abandon State claims to control over instruction. Instead, the fascist reform suggested the construction of "a new form of monopoly on the part of the pantheistic State".<sup>56</sup> Gentile himself was a Hegelian who believed that advanced students in secondary schools and universities should receive a philosophical education that would radically transform the character of their earlier Catholic education. Nevertheless, the *Civiltà* saw that even in the midst of these theoretically bad educational measures, Gentile's reforms granted the Church certain solid benefits. For one thing, at least a primary school Catholic education was encouraged. In practice, therefore, the fascists were conceding to the Church more than the liberals had ever done, and with a much better grace as well.

Another issue that demonstrated the double-edged character of the regime in the mind of the *Civiltà* was that of fascist syndicalism. Fascism, the journal claimed, had shed its formerly anti-proletarian image upon obtaining power, perhaps for pragmatic reasons, perhaps in reflection of Mussolini's earlier socialist past. In any case, its desire for action through national unity led it to condemn the class struggle and also to sense the need for some kind of cooperative and just industrial system. Lacking justice, Italian

---

<sup>55</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1922), IV, 291-301, 511-512; (1923), II, 218, IV, 289-298; (1924), III, 97-110, 193-206; (1925), IV, 215-230; (1926), I, 25-32; (1927), I, 97-106; II, 491-504; III, 15-20.

<sup>56</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1924), I, 385-398, 517.

## THE WORD

economic and social life would always be darkened by a sullen hostility of a large segment of the population harmful to fascist goals. This seeming recognition of the rights of workingmen offered hope for the reconciliation of management and labor.

The minute, however, that "pragmatic" fascism attempted justification of its new, pro-corporative arguments, it revealed its erroneous statist principles and transformed these into economic ideology. "Doctrinal" fascism, founded upon the concept of the Leader whose will was transmitted through the State, conceived of syndicalism as a dependent, monopolistic, instrument of the government. Not only would such a "workers' movement" ultimately prove to be distasteful to laborers, but, lacking historical roots, it would remain ungainly and uncontrollable, subject either to complete breakdown or eventual Bolshevik penetration. The only solution to the industrial problem was a free syndicalism, Catholic in spirit, opposing both the class struggle and the taint of owner or State dominion and manipulation:<sup>57</sup>

Just as yesterday Catholics were against Red precursors and masters of monopoly, so also today they remain firm advocates of true liberty in face of the encroachment of fascist exclusivism.

Neither the brutal club of reactionaries, nor the paternalistic umbrella of conservatives is useful against the socialist whirlwind. It is necessary to take

---

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, (1923), I, 412-423; 1925, IV, 437, 440.

refuge in a more spacious and solid edifice...the {free} professional organization.

*La Civiltà Cattolica* always defended Catholic Action alongside the pragmatic toleration of a willful fascism. Public educational means of teaching the Catholic ethos of the correction and transformation of nature in Christ, along with the presence of strong social pressure groups, were essential to guidance of an always basically unsound fascist outlook. Hence the journal's critique of the effort to create in the *Balilla* a compulsory and monopolistic youth movement that was completely fascist in spirit. A pragmatic Catholic acceptance of fascism had to be accompanied by the right to organize youth in a firmly Catholic way. But the *Civiltà* felt no compulsion to defend the Italian Popular Party, whose implicit claim to being *the* "Catholic Party" it vigorously denied, basing its critique on its standard anti-partisan argument. From the very aftermath of the March on Rome, the editors urged the *popolari* not to oppose the fascists in a way that would encumber the real work of the Church in Catholic Action. The *Civiltà* expressed concern that the Popular Party might endanger "a solid national reconstruction", incite certain fascists "to return to the deprecated method of violence", and lead more excitable Blackshirts to confuse Catholic Action with Dom Luigi Sturzo's organization---although the former "has nothing and ought to have nothing in common with any political direction".<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately, the journal argued, the *popolari* were pursuing just the sort of policy that yet again revealed the

---

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, (1923), II, 272; Invernizzi, pp. 59-145.

## THE WORD

underlying problem of a Catholic Party. Faced with a legitimately established government that enjoyed significant popular support, was open to Church pressure, and seemed eager to restrict the atomistic license encouraged by nineteenth-century liberalism, Catholics ought to count their blessings. They should sense in Mussolini's critique of the liberal State the spirit of their own hostile analysis. Instead, the Popular Party was interested solely in the *maintenance* of the former liberal-democratic system—which was understandable, since that system was indeed essential to the attainment of its own, narrow partisan goals. An interest in constitutional democracy was by no means illicit, but the rise and fall of constitutional democratic States, especially hypocritical ones, was not an issue of moral importance upon which the cause of the Church as such depended. As much as men might argue over such matters on the *rational* level, it could never be depicted as though it were a specifically *Catholic* concern.

Catholics had a primary concern for the common good, which, as Church doctrine had long taught, was not tied to any particular form of government. It was ironic, the *Civiltà* noted, that Catholic voters who had first been allowed to participate in Italian politics to fight materialist socialists were now being mobilized by the Popular Party to fight alongside such political naturalists to defend liberal democracy against a government which happened to be ever more friendly to the Church. Why join with men who revealed little sympathy for Catholicism and who would, given their past record, turn against the Church at the earliest possible moment, for the sake of such a non-essential matter as the particular shape of Italian political institutions? A call

to do so could only reflect the sad truth that the *popolari* had succumbed to the spirit of the age, and wanted whatever served their partisan concerns to be proclaimed as inherently Catholic and even dogmatically binding.

The *Civiltà* regularly maintained its attack on the *popolari*, despite charges of servility and opportunism, always stressing the same theme. Indeed, opposition seems only to have strengthened the *Civiltà's* bluntness, and in sometimes startling ways. There was no hope of securing a truly Catholic State in Europe under the present hypothesis, the editors wrote. One had in Italy the second-best thing: a friendly, though admittedly irrational authority, one which was open to Catholic influence, and – perhaps most importantly – one which had no intention of abdicating its power. It would be servile to do nothing against an unjust action of this government; it was by no means vile or opportunistic to accept a powerful historical reality, with all its inconveniences – just as one accepted a less than satisfactory marriage or the Third French Republic – and seek to aim it towards the good. A similar approach would be necessary, though with less chance of success, under a legally constituted liberal or socialist government. But to commit the Church against a formidable historical reality that seemed disposed to work for the common good, and to do so for the sake of the survival of parties and the partisan spirit was a real betrayal, a true secularization of her mission. If the Church appeared to be running the risk of associating herself with fascism by supporting the legal government, this was a fact of life with which she had to live. She would run the equal risk of appearing to support liberalism or socialism should she oppose Mussolini's regime.

## THE WORD

Confirmation of the legitimacy of the policy that the *Civiltà* advocated seemed obvious to the editors once the Lateran Accords of 1929 were signed. For modest concessions, great benefits were gained. Catholicism was recognized as the sole religion of the State, basic education was placed in the Church's hands, and, in consequence, the old territorial issue was successfully resolved. Even the sequestration of one *Civiltà* issue, due to the journal's criticism of a ferocious speech by Mussolini in the Parliament interpreting the Concordat in what it considered to be an unacceptable sense, gave little indication that the journal might contemplate a change of outlook. Once more, the editors' question remained the same. Would the Church have gained as many goods had the government been entrusted to a Catholic Party committed to the partisan spirit of the liberal democratic State? This, they were convinced, was doubtful in the extreme.<sup>59</sup>

Charles Maurras' *L'Action Française* evoked a similarly complex---and sometimes quite ill-informed---reaction in the pages of the interwar *Civiltà*. This movement's attack upon anticlerical influence continued to win for it numerous adherents among Catholics, after 1918 as before, giving it great influence in seminaries, at episcopal palaces, and even in the College of Cardinals. And yet, despite seeming to be at one with *La Civiltà Cattolica* in many of its basic themes, and certainly adopting a more consistently pro-Catholic political program than Italian Fascism, the Jesuit journal tenaciously

---

<sup>59</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica* (1929), I, 293-295, 481-488; III, 97-105, 289-294.

supported the condemnations that befell the movement at the hands of Pope Pius XI in 1926.<sup>60</sup>

Only one constituent part of the *l'Action Française* movement was spared the journal's criticism, and that was the first of its historical elements: the League. The League's president during the course of the 1920's was Bernard de Vesins (1869-1951), an undoubtedly pious Catholic. More importantly, it had been established as a pragmatic pressure group from the outset, did not require a universal political platform to function, and had, indeed, fought good Catholic fights against the nefarious effects of the unilateral abolition of the Concordat since the time of its foundation. It was, the editors therefore argued, in a sense, a kind of Catholic Action organization, especially since the bulk of its members were solidly faithful. As practicing Catholics of "good sense", however, the *Civiltà* urged the pious members of the League to cease reading the movement's daily newspaper and abandon the leadership of Charles Maurras and Leon Daudet (1867-1942). For both these men were said to be pagan classicists, "unbelieving and licentious novelists", with Daudet in particular a supporter of a "school of corruption" which even "the worst pages of the lustful D'Annunzio could not surpass".<sup>61</sup>

*L'Action Française* was attacked for three different reasons. To begin with, the Roman journal disliked Maurras' historical positivism, which, it noted, made of secular concerns the primary factor in a people's life, and brought him to defend

---

<sup>60</sup> Achille Ratti, pp. 359-645; Chiron, pp. 329-392; Petit, pp. 53-252; Weber, pp. 200-231, 72-308.

<sup>61</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1928), I, 145-151; II, 142; Chiappe, pp. 628-647.



## THE WORD

the position of the Church in French society on political grounds only, “in function of the national interest”, and not “for the profound principles of Christian philosophy”.<sup>62</sup> Secondly, the *Civiltà* saw the movement’s insistence upon the suitability of only one traditional form of government as indicative of a “narrow minded politics of ‘conservative at all costs’”, that was especially dangerous to believers insofar as it demanded recognition as “the Catholic Party” in France.<sup>63</sup> If the Church needed to restrain an Italian Popular Party insinuating that true Catholics must adhere to its dogmatic commitment to democratic liberalism, then she also had to critique *l’Action Française*’ claim to be the Catholic Party for its positivist support of the legitimate monarchy as well. Such choices might, once again, be suitable for debate on the rational plane, but they simply could not guide believers *as believers*. And, finally, the editors intensely disliked the movement’s encouragement of political violence, which not only worked to destabilize the nation internally in an age of already overly chaotic disruption but also stimulated that nationalist venom that continued to wreak havoc with efforts to build a just international order.

This last issue was of especially deep concern to Pope Pius XI, whose revulsion over nationalist excesses in World War One had been intensified by his horror at encountering the hold of nationalist ideals over much of the Polish clergy during his brief tenure as nuncio to the new Republic at the end of the global conflict. At that time, he had been told that to be Polish was the equivalent of thinking as an orthodox

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, (1927), I, 385-398; III, 398.

<sup>63</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1927), III, 398.

Catholic. The idea that Frenchmen might make the same point threatened even greater danger to the Church's cause in Europe. Be that as it may, the *Civiltà*, while admitting the movement's general anti-liberal position, echoed the pope's critique of *l'Action Française*, and excoriated it--- inaccurately with respect to its supposed absolutist tendencies---for being anti-modern in a wrongheaded fashion.<sup>64</sup>

In combating liberalism with its false liberties, it passes to the defense of a censurable absolutism or of another form of at least debatable return to the old regime. In defending nationalism, it passes to a condemnation of all forms of 'internationalism', including the spirit of pacification among peoples, etc. In demanding, in conclusion, the principle of authority, it exaggerates and changes its nature, substituting, for example, the idea of material force and violence for that of moral force, justice, and love....

The editors, quoting Pius XI, went on to claim that the French movement espoused a vision of religion that was secularist and therefore "liberal" in its own manner:<sup>65</sup>

They have discredited political and social liberalism by giving way to an indeed worse form of liberalism, religious liberalism; this is not a good means of serving the cause of a monarchism that wants to reserve for the Catholic religion the first place in

---

<sup>64</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1927), I, 297-298; Achille Ratti, pp. 95-122.

<sup>65</sup> Quotation of Pius XI, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (1927), II, 476.

## THE WORD

society, at least as an element of order and as the best auxiliary of authority.

Catholics, therefore, could follow the leaders of *l'Action Française* only accidentally, with respect to specific issues. Meanwhile, they were as obliged to reject their theses, as they were those of an ideological fascism:<sup>66</sup>

These men are indeed able to agree with us in some practical approach, or on some speculative point: as, for example, in rejecting revolutionary liberalism and similar things; but the agreement could never be complete, being determined per se by reasons diverse in motivation and ends opposed in intention.

In short, the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history could not be handed over to the care of a movement or party with an all-encompassing political vision of its own—fascist, democratic, liberal, nationalist, monarchist, or whatever else this might be.

Unfortunately, the understandable thesis-hypothesis nuances of the *Civiltà's* approach to interwar politics were themselves to prove very problematic in this age of danger on all fronts—especially when they were sometimes somewhat ill informed. For what the Church actually obtained politically in Italy and in France was, in the long run, in many respects precisely what she did not desire—aid for the success of a vision of “nature as is”. Condemnation of the *popolari* as a secularist force did not prevent fascism from

---

<sup>66</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (1927), I, 297-298.

pursuing its own vitalist agenda in a threatening and—as we shall soon see—highly contagious manner, continuing to serve the naturalist and liberal anti-communist agenda even while escaping the salubrious effects of what proved to be an often rather timid Catholic Action movement. Furthermore, condemnation of *l'Action Française* did not free the Church from subservience to other secularizing political ideologies. Instead, it simply encouraged French Catholics with fervent liberal democratic convictions to begin their own machinations anew. It was the continuing supporters of the old *Sillon* Movement who picked up the pieces from the papal and *Civiltà* attack upon Maurras' organization, taking over the French episcopacy and Catholic Action entities of all kinds. And these men, as will become obvious in the next chapter, were destined to renew an alliance with their former Americanist friends to build an order in which the entire outlook of the *Civiltà*, with all of its concern for the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history, was more effectively destroyed than ever before.<sup>67</sup>

### *G. A Portuguese and Austrian Model?*

Another profoundly instructive means of illustrating the tremendous dilemmas of an era when dangers appeared on all fronts is by looking at militant Catholic confrontation with the problems of naturalism from the standpoint of what was happening in the smaller countries of Europe. This is particularly valuable because the inability of Catholics in weaker States to affect events on a grander European scale parallels the situation in which the Church as a whole found

---

<sup>67</sup> Petit, pp. 299-342; Jemolo, pp. 183-282.

## THE WORD

herself in the troublesome thirty-one year period from 1914-1945, and since it offers a full-fledged "bath" in all the difficulties that emerged from attempting new steps in the pilgrim dance of life in modern times. The following, highly detailed examination of developments in a Portugal and an Austria where powerful Catholic voices played a *major* role in interwar political life is especially interesting and useful. For it once again demonstrates both the basic continuity of the main themes of the Ninth Crusaders in the twentieth century as well as a willingness to engage in political and social experimentation to incarnate them that---given the very narrow room for maneuvering that national resources and the troubled times in general permitted---can seem either hopelessly pedantic and utopian on the one hand or simply tragically impotent on the other.<sup>68</sup>

Portuguese Catholics felt little affection for the Republic replacing the Braganza Monarchy in 1911. Republican liberalism and anticlericalism sapped whatever good will may have existed. Opposition to the Republic's evangelical secularization was fostered by interpretations of the Fatima visions of 1917, which intimated Portugal's special role as a dike against the anti-Christian tide in the modern world. Opportunities opened for believers to combat the revolutionary hydra with the 1926 military *coup d'état* that placed the government in the hands of a junta led by General Manuel Oliviera Gomes da Costa (1863-1929). The entry of Dr. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) into the government in 1928 as Minister of Finance, and his elevation

---

<sup>68</sup> Mayeur, XII, 36, 39, 403-417, 610-615.

four years later to the position of Prime Minister, represented a major victory for their cause.

Salazar, who remained in power until 1968, was an ex-seminarian and an influential member of Portuguese Catholic Action. A monkish bachelor all his life, he gained a scholarly reputation as Professor of Economics at the University of Coimbra, whence he was called to political power. Salazar's actions as Prime Minister so impressed many of his fellow believers that, as his own university proudly claimed; "the Catholic world acclaims him as its most eminent citizen".<sup>69</sup> American Catholic institutions, such as Fordham, granted honorary degrees to a man whom Coimbra described as the "priest and prophet of the new social order".<sup>70</sup> His reforms continued to be official policy, at least in theory, until the *coup d'état* that toppled the regime that he inspired in 1974.

Austria, struggling for a *raison d'être* after the collapse of the Dual Monarchy, nurtured an influential Christian social movement under the leadership of the priest-Chancellor, Fr. Ignaz Seipel (1876-1932). It fell firmly into more intransigent Catholic hands, however, only after the accession of Engelbert Dollfuss (1892-1934) to Seipel's position in 1932. Dollfuss, like Salazar, a practicing Catholic and ex-seminarian, was otherwise quite different in character. A gregarious, indeed, ebullient man, he was born of Tyrolean peasant stock, was happily married, and had served during the war with distinction. Dollfuss was no intellectual, though he did gain some reputation as a specialist on peasant problems for the Christian Socials during the 1920's.

---

<sup>69</sup> Segretariado da Informacao Nacional, *Bulletin* (August, 1938), p. 20.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

## THE WORD

An opportunity for a Catholic counterrevolution in Austria appeared with a parliamentary crisis in 1933, after Dollfuss' assumption of executive power. The president and two vice presidents of the Austrian National Assembly resigned at this time in a dispute concerning a controversial proposition supported by the German National Party. Parliament lacked a legal procedure for filling simultaneous vacancies in all three chairs. The Chancellor took advantage of the inability to reach a compromise to declare the legislature to be a victim of suicide and to begin administering the country by decree. A moment had arrived for him, as for Salazar, to correct "the mistakes not of fifteen years merely, but of one hundred and fifty years of intellectual and political delusions."<sup>71</sup> Dollfuss' exuberance made him a danger for the National Socialists, whose desire for political union with Germany was opposed by the Chancellor. The result of their enmity appeared in 1934, with, in Chesterton's words, "a set of horribly arrogant invaders...entering a place in disguise and butchering a poor little man...who happened to be fighting to keep one little corner of Germany still a part of Christendom".<sup>72</sup> Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg (1897-1977) continued his work, although under increasingly impossible conditions, until the *Anschluss* of 1938.

Salazar was a rigorous political theorist, and, hence, may be invoked to provide the conceptual framework for what is

---

<sup>71</sup> Bundeskommisariat für Heimatdienst, *The New Austria* (London, 1937), p. 8; L. Teixeira, *Profile of Salazar* (Lisbon: Segretariado da Propaganda Nacional, 1938), p. 63.

<sup>72</sup> *London Times*, 2 August, 1934, editorial page.

to follow. Austrian divergences with his thought can be indicated when they appear. Certainly, there could be little disagreement regarding the chief goal that Salazar identified for the movement that he led: a typical Ninth Crusade root and branch extirpation of the entire revolutionary order of things, and, with it, the whole modern *Zeitgeist*:<sup>73</sup>

We are against class warfare, irreligion and disloyalty to one's country; against serfdom, a materialistic conception of life, and might over right. We are antagonistic to all the great heresies of today, all the more because we cannot see that any benefit has accrued through their propagation; for they have rather served the new barbarism by sapping the foundations of our civilization...We are anti-parliamentarians, anti-democrats, anti-liberals, and we are determined to establish a corporative state.

Further attention must be devoted to three points emphasized in this declaration of intent, all of which we have seen eternally to recur in the literature of the Ninth Crusade: the materialism and barbarism engendered by modern political and social thought; the need to replace the liberal State with a more socially authoritative system for the attainment of the common good; and, finally, intimately tied to these first two themes, the "corporative" model as an essential key to ensuring proper order as well as individual human freedom and fulfillment—a model that many Catholic

---

<sup>73</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, translated by R. Broughton (Faber & Faber, 1940), pp. 26, 29.



## THE WORD

theorists had worked to develop more thoroughly throughout the latter nineteenth century.

Modern materialism, Salazar insisted, stemmed, ultimately, from an absurd effort to build a social order upon the intellectual foundations of "doubt".<sup>74</sup> This sin, most closely associated with liberal thought, was, he argued, endemic to naturalism as a whole, discernable under the most luxuriant ideological foliage. It rendered the attempt to fight one branch of "The Revolution" with another of its offshoots a dubious enterprise at best. The abandonment of efforts to uncover the true philosophy of society, through the application of man's natural rational faculties, had not left the West without a reigning *Weltanschauung*. It had simply handed it over, by default, to the mindless, yet tyrannical guidance of a utilitarian outlook that emphasized might over right, and bodily needs over spiritual and intellectual ones.<sup>75</sup>

Several familiar examples of irrational, materialistic, utilitarianism-by-default can be noted from Salazar's thought. One is the fact that the average liberal government, after speaking of the impossibility of learning the truth, found itself eventually compelled to reintroduce some substitute "contractual" reality. It recognized that without this substitute reality, society would crumble. Liberalism was "constrained by its principles to act as if {it} had none"; it was "driven to act inconsistently in order to exist". Hence, the need for "attributing infallibility to the decisions of a parliament, the verdicts of a court, and the acts of an

---

<sup>74</sup> A. Ferro, *Salazar: Portugal and Her Leader* (Faber & Faber, 1939), p. 29.

<sup>75</sup> Teixeira, p. 63.

executive power"; the need for its democratic offshoot to create the myth of the wisdom of the People; and, finally, the inevitable need for shaking the policeman's nightstick at those unwilling to believe. Instead of remaining subject to a law that sought rational or divine pillars, modern man became the slave of material force. These, the reader will recognize, are all familiar themes from intransigent journals such as *La Civiltà Cattolica* and writers like Taparelli d'Azeglio.<sup>76</sup>

A second example of the victory of matter over spirit in the modern world, more blatant than the first, was identified in economic theory and practice. Dr. Salazar discussed this point with reference to Portugal's limited capacity for economic growth. No reforms, he argued, could transform Lusitania into Eden. Situated on the edge of Europe, poor in mineral deposits and farmlands, Portugal simply lacked opportunities for development on a scale equaling that of the rest of the continent. Still, it was questionable whether contemporary Europe's vision of Eden was, in practice, as enticing as imagined. Her rejection of fixed moral principles gave her a purely quantitative measurement of wellbeing; a utilitarian standard "detrimental to and beneath human dignity"; a subtle infection that ever increased her thirst rather than allowing it to be quenched. European man had been tricked into believing that mountains of artificial and insipid consumer goods had become "dreadful necessities". The "mechanization of life" was his frightful fate. Cities without souls, architecture without animation, luxuries without pleasure were the final, anti-human consequences of

---

<sup>76</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 269; Teixeira, p. 58.

## THE WORD

the “liberating” philosophy of doubt.<sup>77</sup> Again, these are familiar themes, reiterated in numerous nineteenth century intransigent circles.

Any truly solicitous regime, Salazar insisted, must turn its energies towards understanding the true, objective foundations of social order. Only when the real order of things was enshrined in law could justice and freedom be assured and injury to man’s rational faculties be avoided. Only when the truth guided the government could arbitrary methods forcing irrational substitute realities upon whole populations be rejected, along with “totalitarian concepts...which tend to deify the State, the People, a given doctrine or individual”.<sup>78</sup> Again, it was useless to argue that one might make rational errors in determining how to deal truthfully with nature. The price of eliminating possible error was the inevitability of backing, by default, into a barbaric, materialistic and anti-rational nightmare.

Although always insisting upon the importance of religion, Prime Minister Salazar placed much emphasis upon the fundamental effectiveness of Reason in guiding State actions. “We wish to organize and strengthen the country by means of principles of authority, order, and national tradition”, he argued in a characteristic passage, “in harmony with those eternal verities which are, happily, the inheritance

---

<sup>77</sup> Salazar, *The Principles and Work of the Revolution* (Lisbon: SPN, 1943), p. 14;

*Doctrine and Action*, pp. 154, 156, 157; Texeira, p. 51; Ferro, p. 47; Garnier, p. 109.

<sup>78</sup> Portugal: *The New State in Theory and Practice* (SPN, 1938), p. 9.

of humanity and the sustenance of Christian civilization."<sup>79</sup> The impression given—and it is an impression legitimated by the mainstream of Catholic natural law theorists and certainly one that was shared by Taparelli—is that political science is *primarily* a secular enterprise, although one that is, of course, provided its greatest practical strength through the support and supernatural insight that Faith gives to Reason.

Yet such statements mask the fullness of Salazar's religious inspiration. This becomes clearer in his discussion of the need for a spiritual awakening. Any lasting political and social improvements, Salazar insisted, and any consistent social application of the rational faculties, had to be preceded by a spiritual transformation of the individual. "Noisy" modern civilization could not ensure this, nor could Maurras, with his contention that politics was "the great factor in a people's life".<sup>80</sup> Salazar hoped to rebuild the life of the spirit in order to enable man's reason to see through the materialist stupidities preventing the attainment of order and peace:<sup>81</sup>

From a civilization which is returning scientifically to the jungle, we are separated unceasingly by spiritualism—fount, soul, life of our History. We shun feeding the poor with illusions, but we want at all costs to preserve from the wave that is rising in the world the simplicity of life, the purity of customs, the sweetness of feelings, the equilibrium of social reactions, the familiar air, humble but dignified, of

---

<sup>79</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 229.

<sup>80</sup> Ferro, pp. 247-248.

<sup>81</sup> F. Cotta, *Economic Planning in Corporative Portugal* (P.S. King & Son, Ltd., 1937), p. 185.

## THE WORD

Portuguese life—and through these conquests or reconquests of our traditions, social peace.

Still, how was this seemingly vague spiritual transformation to take place? It was to occur through overwhelmingly Catholic means, in recognition of the Church's role as the "mother of intelligence".<sup>82</sup> Public schools, recognizing "the singular importance of the Catholic religion in the molding of Portuguese character" would "take adequate precautions for overturning the corruption of morals", and teach orthodox doctrine "to pupils whose parents or guardians do not lodge a request to the contrary".<sup>83</sup> *Mocidade*, the Portuguese Youth Movement, would ensure "that Christian doctrine and morals should be a living force in the minds of the boys, springing from their own personal observation of cause and effect and of conduct of life."<sup>84</sup> Measures long desired by Catholic militants were the practical path to spiritual renewal. Hence, the Cardinal-Patriarch of Lisbon's enthusiastic endorsement of the regime in 1938:<sup>85</sup>

There has been, and is, a spiritual renaissance in Portugal. It is a miracle. The soul of the nation is born again in the grace of its people, who are renewing their energies at the source of all life. The constitution of Portugal, while not officially Catholic, is based on

---

<sup>82</sup> Ferro, p. 29.

<sup>83</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 163.

<sup>84</sup> *Bulletin* (SIN, July, 1939), p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* (March, 1938), p. 14.

Catholic principles guaranteeing the freedom of the family, the Church, of education, and by that freedom, encouraging them to grow.

Chancellor Dollfuss and the movement that he led were also convinced that society could not be built upon doubt and that the materialism of modern Europe was no answer to man's problems. He, too, believed that the spirit had to be reawakened in order to stabilize Austria. The chief difference from the Portuguese—a difference accepted by the Papacy, and dictated by Austria's pressing need for a mass movement strong enough to resist the allure of Nazism—was the more open Catholicity of their political enterprise. Dollfuss argued that Austria's new "imperial mission", following the demise of the old Empire, was to give "the example of a real honest attempt at forming a Christian State";<sup>86</sup> to make Catholicism "inherent in our public and political life" and manifest itself "as the formative factor in the development of the State":<sup>87</sup>

I am convinced that it is the will of a higher power that we should maintain Austria, this land of ours, with its glorious history, though now on a smaller scale; I am convinced that this Austria is to give an example to other nations in the shaping of her public life; that we in this land of Austria have a great and valuable service to render to the German people as a whole.

---

<sup>86</sup> G.B. Shepard, *Dollfuss* (Macmillan, 1961), pp. 99, 187; J. Messner, *Dollfuss: An Austrian Patriot* (Burnes, Oates, & Washbourne, 1935), pp. 96-99.

<sup>87</sup> Messner, p. 158; Also, 99, 90, 181.

## THE WORD

With us, to be German means also to be Christian at the same time. As the German people were once brought by Christianity out of paganism to the highest pitch of civilization, so it is our ambition now once more to realize in our German land a devout, humble, and truly practical Christianity. Perhaps the time may come when what we are striving to bring about in little Austria will also be achieved outside our borders, wherever there is a will and a way.

We intend to renew the spirit of our country in the sign in which western Christendom was delivered from the power of Asia two hundred and fifty years ago; the simple sign of the Christian Cross.

For the Austrians, objective order was to be found in "immutable-divine Christian law".<sup>88</sup> Political reforms were secondary, since "only Christ can save men's souls, and only He can help society".<sup>89</sup> "The greatest sin and most heinous crime" that the anticlericals had committed was that of having trained "masses of the people" to become "irreligious egoists".<sup>90</sup> In recompense, the new Austria would "take care that children in public instructions receive a religious and moral education", and ensure that every teacher be trained to "regard it as important that Catholic principles should prevail

---

<sup>88</sup> Schuschnigg, p. 90; Messner, pp. 55, 181.

<sup>89</sup> Shepard, p. 187.

<sup>90</sup> Messner, pp. 62-63.

## 1000 BLACK LEGENDS

in the education of the people".<sup>91</sup> To promote the Catholic moral perfection of youth was to promote social improvement and sound statesmanship:<sup>92</sup>

We want, with the help of grace and the Sacraments, to become better men. If our Catholic Youth Movement is so guided that {the young} will learn to avoid vice, {and} cultivate truly Christian charity from an inner conviction, then they will become a young and healthy source of an entirely Christian nation...We must arouse within us a truly Christian spirit of endeavor. If we succeed in making ourselves real Christians instead of make-believe Christians, then I have no anxieties about the future.

If they are taught what is the supernatural end of man: if they are told what they must do and what they must avoid; if, above all, they are taught the fundamental precept: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself'; if children are brought up not on mere humanitarian slogans, but on Christian principles, so that they may become men of character, men with a sense of responsibility; then the State is most keenly interested in their education...It is sound statesmanship to foster and encourage a life of religion.

If you, my young friends, talk of taking your part in public life, let me tell you one thing today: just as you can only be a good soldier if you have learned to

---

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29, 162, 178; Also, pp. 12 and 145; Gregory, p. 340.



## THE WORD

obey, so you can only take an effective and useful part in public life if you have tested yourselves in the virtues which are in the very blood of the German manhood; if you have honestly tried with the help of the means offered by our religion to become better men...

Struggle against barbarism and materialism in modern life also meant encouraging only that measure and quality of economic progress that left a nation's spiritual life, intellectual goals, and *esprit de corps* intact. Hence, as Salazar indicates, an ideological capitalism had to disappear. After all, this had failed to recognize "the statesman, the judge, the lawyer, the doctor, the priest, the artist, the professor, the man of learning are not mere ornamental flowers of a surface civilization".<sup>93</sup> Liberal capitalism had placed "villains" in control of society, plutocrats who "do not recognize the rights of labor, moral exigencies, or the laws of humanity".<sup>94</sup> Economic rules of the game there might be, but it was crucial to remember that these had to bend "in accordance with the community aim", or, as Dollfuss argued, "to the law of love".<sup>95</sup> Individual property, although "a rational imposition of human nature", and "one of the essential bases of social preservation and progress", could not be allowed to work against the well being of the nation as a whole.<sup>96</sup> Its use had to be modified in such a way as to aid as many Portuguese as

---

<sup>93</sup> Texeira, p. 50.

<sup>94</sup> *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 120-121, 195-198; Messner, pp. 68, 113.

<sup>95</sup> Messner, p. 113.

<sup>96</sup> Cotta, p. 13 for the Charter of National Labor.

possible to become property owners themselves, and then to act in a Christian Portuguese fashion with their lands. Portugal, Dr. Salazar claimed, had to be reconstructed into “a more humane and Christian country”, where “excessive and inhuman” economic ambitions were discouraged; a “middle land”, one “where neither multi-millionaires nor paupers are possible”. The best means of restoring property was abandonment of atomistic liberal capitalism in a way that did not encourage its collectivistic, materialist, socialist counterpart.<sup>97</sup>

Our reformers emphasized two methods of achieving the desired goal, the first of which was an attack on liberal political thought, with its emphasis upon parliamentary constitutionalism. An anti-parliamentary approach was obvious in both the statements and actions of the Austrian and Portuguese reformers. Dollfuss claimed to feel the “finger of God” in an enthusiastic peasant response to his announcement, after the suicide of the Austrian Parliament, that “nobody can say when it will be allowed to take up its dubious activities again”.<sup>98</sup> And as far as Dr. Salazar was concerned, parliaments and “word games” were synonyms:<sup>99</sup>

The truth is that I *am* profoundly anti-parliamentary. I hate the speeches, the verbosity, the flowing, meaningless interpolations, the way we waste passions, not round any great idea, but just about

---

<sup>97</sup> Ferro, pp. 48-49; Salazar, *Road for the Future*, p. 148, 157-158; *Doctrine and Action*, p. 58.

<sup>98</sup> Shepard, pp. 102-103; Schuschnigg, pp. 124, 137-138, 141-142; Dollfuss, p. 108.

<sup>99</sup> Ferro, p. 244.

## THE WORD

futilities, vanities, nothingness from the point of any national good...Of course, there are occasional ideas of value, but it is mostly just fine phrases, just words!

Aversion to parliamentary government was due to the fraudulence of liberal claims to defend human freedom through its operation. We have seen that intransigent Catholics understood man to be capable of perfecting his personality and becoming "free" in the traditional sense of the world, only through his recognition of the proper demands of his social nature. The individual's improvement could take place solely in the framework of all the various associations "which spring up and are spontaneously organized in the heart of the nation"; those "natural extensions of and supports to human activities", all of which matured man through the duties that they imposed upon him and the vistas that they opened up to him; all of which mediated between the individual and the community at large; and none of which could be supplanted, one for another.<sup>100</sup>

Human institutions are not 'chains' for man to break through, impediments hampering the fulfillment of his aims. They are barriers to the vagaries of his liberty, a shelter for the frailty of his nature, a sure guidance amid the hesitations of his conscience, an aid to enable him to obey the laws imposed upon him.

---

<sup>100</sup> Teixeira, *Portugal: The New State*, p. 59.

The State, in this vision of political life, was meant to be simultaneously both strong and limited--something that liberal thought claimed to be an impossible paradox. Its guidance by the moral law and human reason rather than by individual, liberal willfulness made its foundation both firm and conscientious. Its submission to an historical community, the nation, which stood above the individual corporations, compelled it to see "everything in the light of its duty and capacity to save the interests of all". The State had to be vigorous enough to make an "unequivocal statement of responsibilities and duties", and to harmonize inevitable clashes among the various associations.<sup>101</sup> Yet the very vibrancy of its numerous meditating institutions was to the nation's constant protection against the State becoming Leviathan. One had to be blind to the evidence of history, Dr. Salazar concluded, *not* to recognize that traditional corporate societies, harmonized through the action of a strong, rational State, had been beneficial to human freedom:<sup>102</sup>

The medieval institutions, attesting the cooperation between the sovereign and the subject, produced a well-balanced community enjoying the benefits both of liberty and authority. Under the traditional monarchy, a strong government did not run counter to civic freedom, which in politics, economic life, and society ensured the rights of the individual.

Salazar, like Ninth Crusader Catholics in general, argued that modern "atomism" – what Mgr. Ketteler had called the

---

<sup>101</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 183; Schuschnigg, p. 271.

<sup>102</sup> SPN, *Portugal: The New State*, p. 7.

## THE WORD

“chemical solution of humanity into individuals, into grains of dust equal in value, into particles” – had actually ruined prospects for personal and social perfection.<sup>103</sup> This “false conception of individualism”, which dismantled corporate life in the name of human liberation, left man in an unnatural, solitary condition.<sup>104</sup> It released him, “manacled and powerless”, either into the hands of strong and vicious individuals who consciously or unconsciously profited from society’s destruction, or into the grips of the God-State, which had been called upon to bring about the end of corporate life.<sup>105</sup>

Perhaps a better expression of Salazar’s view would be to say that he believed, as did Taparelli, that the individual was handed over to a God-State, which itself was then manipulated by the strong and the vicious. We have seen that this, indeed, is what the liberal parliamentary system appeared to guarantee to many Catholic thinkers from the middle of the 1800’s onwards. The liberal State was a “fiction created chiefly under the erroneous principles of the last century”.<sup>106</sup> It established a civil order subject to atomistic individuals “artificially disassociated from the interests and preoccupations which gave them their true place in the social scene”.<sup>107</sup> It thus could represent no true popular will.

---

<sup>103</sup>R. Bowen, *German Theories of the Corporative State* (McGraw Hill, 1947), p. 85.

<sup>104</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 286.

<sup>105</sup> Teixeira, p. 61.

<sup>106</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 120; *Portugal: The New State*, p. 11.

<sup>107</sup> SPN, *Portugal: The New State*, p. 11.

Unbound by any moral law, it could do what it wished, guided by private and occult groups who were enabled to throw responsibility for their crimes onto “The People” as a whole. Hence, it fashioned the worst of possible systems, one in which the State did *not* make an unequivocal statement of responsibilities and duties, and one in which the true holders of authority were disguised and could not be held accountable for their actions at all.

Two developments symbolized this degeneration of the State in the eyes of Salazar and the Austrians more than any other. One of these will in no way be a surprise to readers now familiar with the themes developed by the intransigents. This was the replacement of true social corporations in the liberal parliamentary order by the “party”. The political party was nothing other than a self-interested, materialist enterprise, a “big employment agency where one struggled to queue up for the distribution of offices awarded when one’s party was victorious”.<sup>108</sup> The party was anti national, keeping the population in a “state of feverishness and permanent excitement” which it “wasn’t natural to expect from all men at all times”.<sup>109</sup> It left the State in a “gloomy and mean melancholy” by magnifying “matters of secondary importance...into scandals {true or false} that completely absorbed both time and effort”. It posed as a friend of the people “to lead them to an agitation which {they} themselves {did} not desire”.<sup>110</sup> Parties rejected a specific proposal, as

---

<sup>108</sup> Ferro, p. 145; Schuschnigg, p. 25.

<sup>109</sup> Garnier, p. 206.

<sup>110</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 92, 247.

## THE WORD

Schuschnigg complained, “not because of its demerits, but simply because it was supported by the other side”.<sup>111</sup>

A second negative force was the Press, which Salazar and Dollfuss, perhaps after three quarters of a century more experience with it than their Ninth Crusader forbears, felt discernibly less hope for using properly than *La Civiltà Cattolica* and *l'Univers*. The Press had betrayed its proper mission of providing “the spiritual food of the people”.<sup>112</sup> Instead of pursuing this, it spend much time stimulating idle “democratic curiosity” in order to do little that was more elevated than selling newspapers to those in search of entertainment. This was bad enough, but it also served as a powerful tool of “private and occult interests”, which helped invent a fraudulent “public opinion” that “complained of evils that do not exist” in order to promote whatever their agenda might be.<sup>113</sup>

Concern for the common good dictated the demolition of this liberal system. Given the dangers of the age, an “authoritarian government”, a dictatorship of “Reason and Intelligence”, was required in its place.<sup>114</sup> Such a government would be provided with an executive authority whose clearly delineated organs would have “much wider powers than those which they employ at the present time”,<sup>115</sup> and become “the moving force in the life of the State”.<sup>116</sup> These

---

<sup>111</sup> Schuschnigg, p. 153.

<sup>112</sup> *Salazar...Says*, p. 28; *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 30, 52, 247.

<sup>113</sup> Ferro, p. 28.

<sup>114</sup> *The New Austria*, p. 5; *Salazar, Doctrine and Action*, pp. 38, 127.

<sup>115</sup> *Salazar, Doctrine and Action*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

administrative organs would thereby do a favor to the population as a whole, since they would no longer be “slaves to the opinion of the masses, which is different from, and of a much lower category than the true mind of a nation”.<sup>117</sup> The truly popular government that they would provide would not be ruled either by partisan pseudo-societies or by those media-manipulated masses who cheer one day and “may rise up in rebellion the next day for equally passing reasons”.<sup>118</sup> Parliament and parties had to disappear, along with the very language used to defend them. “Even our political phraseology will need revision”, Salazar insisted, since “most of the words we are accustomed to use in our politics refer only to the past and will be inapplicable to the present. The old ideas, habits, political machinery and everything else will have to go”.<sup>119</sup> The Press as such would stay, but regulated to remove its manifest evils. Irritating and unjust to the few serious journalists as this might be, Salazar argued that only censorship could ensure the expression of true public opinion. “In any case”, he complained:<sup>120</sup>

I think it is very extraordinary that many should be so irritated by the barriers set up by constituted authority (who at least may be supposed to have the welfare of the community at heart) and yet do not raise their voices in protest against the enslavement of thought by huge capitalist organizations, by private and occult interests, by the brute force of wealth.

---

<sup>117</sup> Ferro, p. 34.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37; Also, Messner, p. 139; *The New Austria*, p. 22.

<sup>119</sup> Ferro, pp. 100, 255; Schuschnigg, in Messner, p. 56.

<sup>120</sup> Ferro, p. 28.



## THE WORD

Both Salazar and the Austrians were conscious of the dangers of the dictatorship their strengthened State seemed to raise. The Portuguese Prime Minister warned of the temptations to which this regime "on the road to fulfillment" might be subject, especially if its officials were not "saints and heroes".<sup>121</sup> It could easily end by becoming a goal in itself. The Austrians sought to establish a "clear dividing line between authoritarian government and forcible dictatorship".<sup>122</sup> "As in the peasant's home, the farmer must rule the household", Dollfuss explained, "so the public administration needs a ruler". Yet, "as in the peasant's household that rule must not be arbitrary if progress is to be made, so also in the government of the state there must be no arbitrary rule".<sup>123</sup>

Totalitarianism was to be avoided not by illusory liberal checks and balances but by solid respect for Reason, along with the corporate institutions that both natural law and historical experience had been shown to be valid in a nation's life. The reformed State was under obligation to work to resurrect the power and effectiveness of these various corporations, each of which was meant to labor in its own sphere to do what the government itself could never properly do on its own.

Concern for corporate life had to begin with concern for the family. Both Portugal and Austria were adamant about leaving the family a wide autonomy. "The basis of all

---

<sup>121</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 238, 147; also, 81-84.

<sup>122</sup> Schuschnigg, p. 271.

<sup>123</sup> Messner, p. 135.

society”, Dollfuss declared in 1934, “and especially of every society organized on Christian principles, must be the family”.<sup>124</sup> Salazar called it the primary organic element of the political order. The Portuguese Constitution insisted that it would do everything to maintain its strength.<sup>125</sup> A “Family Defense League” was developed which sought to counter such modern movements as feminism. Public recognition was given to the need for familial control of education.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Salazar, who was rather opposed to female participation in civil life, positively encouraged women’s social action in the realm of teaching. Hence, his support for an organization called the Mother’s Movement for National Education.<sup>127</sup> “Everything is based on the family as the {primary} unit of life in society”, the Cardinal-Patriarch explained, in praise of the regime.<sup>128</sup>

The Church was also ensured corporate freedom, her autonomy sealed by the Austrian (1933) and Portuguese (1940) Concordats. Canon Law was recognized as binding on priests. Church rights to acquire property were confirmed. Church officials could levy taxes. Full and consistent protection was offered to her by the State, and her moral strictures, such as her prohibition of divorce, were binding upon all who had themselves clarified their a relationship with her through contracting a canonical marriage in the first

---

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Doctrine and Action*, p. 101; *Portugal: The New State*, p. 13.

<sup>126</sup> Ferro, pp. 235-237, 301; *Bulletin* (May, 1940), p. 9; *Doctrine and Action*, p. 209.

<sup>127</sup> SPN, *Portugal: The New State*, pp. 14, 54.

<sup>128</sup> *Bulletin* (March, 1938), p. 14.

## THE WORD

placee.<sup>129</sup> Austria was seen by many as being so favorable to the Church as to be guided directly from Rome, a charge that Schuschnigg denied as anticlerical propaganda.<sup>130</sup>

The idea that the government was getting orders from the Vatican, or that the Vatican sought to exercise influence upon the administration, has been spread by the invention of fantastic stories, the purpose of which was to becloud public opinion, and prepare the ground for a feud against religion which might then be directed to political ends.

Schuschnigg could have easily pointed to the fact that neither country was willing officially to re-establish Roman Catholicism as the national religion. This was avoided, partly in recognition of the hypothesis—the reality of significant numbers of non-Catholics and totally secularized individuals living peacefully within the body of the nation—but also with the clear intent of avoiding resurrection of the “friendly” secularizing errors of the past. It was one thing for the modern State to be guided by the truth, religious as well as rational. It was quite another for a single corporate entity, the Church, to be given privileges beyond those due to any legitimate corporation within the State. All that the Church required was the kind of full corporate freedom that corporatism in general promised, since this gave her the control over the clergy and the laity allowing her to function

---

<sup>129</sup> *Bulletin*, XXVI (May, 1940), pp. 9, 6-7; Also, Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>130</sup> Schuschnigg, pp. 256-257.

## 1012 BLACK LEGENDS

smoothly; nothing more and nothing less. Salazar, who was criticized severely by many of his fellow Catholics for his failure to relent on this point, defended himself vigorously, evoking themes with which we are quite familiar:<sup>131</sup>

Such things can and must be so...It must be so because political activity corrupts the Church, either when she wields it or suffers its effects, and it is to the general good of all that sacred things and persons be handled as little as possible by profane hands or agitated by mundane interests and passions. I consider it dangerous for the State to arrogate to itself such power that it can violate heaven; equally do I think it unreasonable that the Church, on the grounds of the higher value of spiritual interests, should seek to increase her actions to the point of interfering with those things which the very Gospels declare to belong to Caesar.

Both sides would have failed to have learned the lessons of the past if they had not become aware how privilege can corrupt, how protection can lead to the trimming of essential liberties; how a religious policy can deviate from the defense of the interests of the Church and seek other ends which impair the legitimate action of the State, and which, therefore, the latter cannot countenance.

---

<sup>131</sup> *Bulletin*, XXVI (May, 1940), p. 5; Garnier, pp. 162-164, 168; Teixeira, p. 40.

## THE WORD

It is important to grasp the full import of Salazar's argument. This can only be seized by understanding it in the context of his other pronouncements. Salazar does not mean that the State ought to "make believe" that Catholic teachings do not concern it. Rather, he is speaking of the serious danger of what I have elsewhere labeled an "indirect secularization"; the kind of secularization through which Catholic Action becomes too closely tied with purely political parties, decisions or ideologies. Salazar was partly worried that a proclamation of the reestablishment of the Church would convince Catholics that Portugal had been magically purified by this basically rhetorical action alone. The State could then justify all its future decisions by insisting that it had declared itself to be Catholic. All its measures would take on a doctrinal flavor, as though Catholics must agree with them as articles of faith. Similarly, the State could find that its legitimate autonomy would be hampered by the clergy's attempt to guide the so-called Catholic government, even though priestly ordination gave it no special protection in such an enterprise. Better that the Church should devote her energy to putting her own house in order; this alone would give her *proper* influence over the State, in her role as a teacher. Were she to equate the new Portugal with Catholicism, then the body of the faith would have to be expanded to incorporate positions on all kinds of issues on which the Church had no supernaturally confirmed right or need to speak---just as with a "Catholic" political party.

One of the most crucial undertakings in the entire enterprise of rebuilding corporate order, and one upon which was greatly stressed by the reformers, was that of its introduction into economic life. State interference in

economics, beyond obvious measures such as the control of foreign investment, ownership of basic industries fundamental to national survival, and general principles regarding minimum wages and maximum prices, was said to be disastrous. "Real progress can only be achieved when the State is prepared to abandon all forms of activity which can best be performed through private channels", Salazar argued; "the maintenance of healthy social conditions depends on allowing a wide margin of liberty to private initiative...".<sup>132</sup> There existed a real danger with bureaucratic regulation that "gradual extension of such control may embrace spiritual and intellectual values, the emotions and family life".<sup>133</sup>

A modern corporate system, a modified replica of medieval guild life, could, Salazar believed, solve many problems simultaneously. Through it, the State could be enabled "to reap the benefits of all its productive forces and to uphold private property, personal initiative, and legitimate competition...".<sup>134</sup> A commercial life lived through corporate institutions would mean an "auto-economy", a "self-directed economic system". The State could intervene in this only "to see that the law was duly observed",<sup>135</sup> and, then as a "teacher or trainer", or a "representative of the mass of consumers, whose interests it would harmonize with those of producers".<sup>136</sup> Unrestricted capitalism, fascist statism,

---

<sup>132</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 122, 168, 343.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343; Also, pp. 16, 120, 122, 145, 166-167, 196-197, 249, 342; Teixeira, p. 56.

<sup>134</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 22-23; 160.

<sup>135</sup> SPN, *Portugal: The New State*, p. 9; *Doctrine and Action*, p. 23.

<sup>136</sup> Cotta, p. x; Also, Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 145-146, 161, 342.

## THE WORD

socialism, and communism, might all be avoided in one fell swoop.<sup>137</sup>

Austrians emphasized the same benefits, but, again, always in a more openly pious tone. “The plan”, Kurt von Schuschnigg wrote, was “that by progressive development, the State would be relieved from dealing with those affairs which the corporations were in a position to deal with themselves in their own sphere of influence”.<sup>138</sup> Austrian corporatists laid stress on the value of the guild as an instrument for ending the class struggle. Dollfuss indicated that the employer and worker would be linked together in it like the peasant and his helpers round the dinner table after a day’s work on the farm. Their union would be still more solid, he added, if, as in the peasant’s family, their day were ended with the Rosary. Guild solidarity would ensure the worker’s sense of dignity and, indeed, would give him a kind of property of his own to cherish. The humanity and intimacy provided by the guild, its incorporation of the “law of love”, its efficacy as a religious instrument of perfection, appealed to his Christian conscience. Indeed, Dollfuss always associated the Austrian corporative effort with Pope Pius XI’s encyclical letter, *Quadragesimo anno*, which he went so far as to commend to the League of Nations from the speaker’s podium at Geneva. This encyclical, he said, contained the “principles of a reform of society which {was} to lead to the overcoming of materialism and the solution of the social question irrespective of religious creed”. The end result of corporate order was that “all would take pleasure in {their}

---

<sup>137</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 22; Also, pp. 39, 166.

<sup>138</sup> Schuschnigg, p. 270.

work...and realize that it {was} harmony and not the stirring up of dissension among men that {made} everybody happy and contented".<sup>139</sup>

Dollfuss claimed that Austria's efforts to realize this rather utopian sounding vision would be useless unless "the whole people {became}, as it were, actuated with the new spirit which {was} to animate the new Constitution".<sup>140</sup> Yet too many opponents of Catholic corporatism haunted the Austrian political scene to make this saturation possible. National Socialists, for whom Dollfuss' Christian Austrian mission was a serious obstacle to *Anschluss*, were not cooperative. The Chancellor's non-Catholic allies in the *Heimwehr*, a nationalist organization that also called for a corporate State, were susceptible to Nazi propaganda and little moved by the religious rhetoric underlying many of his programs.

Dollfuss exerted some energy trying to win to his cause supporters of the Social Democratic Party whose power he had crushed and whose leaders viewed him as a clerico-fascist--a term, one might add, popular with his Catholic capitalist opponents as well. "We meet you not with contempt or distrust", he insisted in one of his many speeches to labor.<sup>141</sup> We have established a "fundamentally Christian" constitution, containing "all the elements of the best and purest social philosophy".<sup>142</sup> We wish to provide not merely the necessities of life, but also "the power to believe that

---

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 213; Messner, p. 130; also, pp. 60, 119, 122, 129, 135, 145, 153.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>141</sup> Messner, p. 74.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.



## THE WORD

Christian charity is truly a living thing which embraces all men".<sup>143</sup> There is, the recurring theme runs, no need for class struggle in a corporate society:<sup>144</sup>

At a time when the employment of labor was organized wholly according to Liberal and Capitalistic principles, it was intelligible—though unjust according to our Christian conceptions—that on the other side class warfare should have been taken as the basis for the defense of the worker. But if among employers of labor there is a sincere readiness to cooperate in the new political, economic, and social constitution, a readiness to take as the foundation of social and economic life the relation of man to man, viewed at a new angle and regarded as the source of mutual duties and obligations, then the antithesis of class warfare no longer exists, and labor must seriously consider whether it is not its duty to show a sincere readiness to cooperate in the new order of things.

Salazar urged the introduction of the corporate economy slowly, "so as to try a system which has not yet been adequately tested".<sup>145</sup>

All new establishments which lack experience...must be built up slowly and laboriously. It is always

---

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 21; Ferro, p. 17.

difficult to apply novel principles to old societies with ingrained habits and a different outlook. Indeed, it is so difficult as to appear impossible to those persons who cannot brook delay...Revolutions, to be profound and human, require many years of resolute application and genuine revolutionary laws, for only when the real mind of the people is attained can the movement be said to have reached its objective. In the same way, though it is not absolutely impossible to regulate production, and to set up definite boundaries and channels of development, the effective and affective collaboration of the various classes and branches of production in a country where competition and speculation were reckoned inseparable from trade, can be secured only with great difficulty and with endless patience.

A rather detailed framework for this slow but steady establishment of corporative order, an outline frequently altered, was in place by the middle of the 1930's. "Pre-corporative" programs were undertaken and propaganda campaigns mounted. Ultimately, each given enterprise in industry was to possess a workingman's syndicate (*Sindacato nacional*) and an employer's association (*Gremio*). These would repudiate all the classic instruments of the liberal capitalist order, such as lockouts and strikes, as well as reject the Marxist concept of class warfare. The various syndicates of a specific large-scale industry were to be linked together in "federations", and the employers' associations into "unions". All, together, would, in the last analysis, be joined in a given guild. Functions such as aiding the sick and serving as clearing houses for employment would also be performed by

## THE WORD

these entities. Labor courts, under the guidance of the National Institution of Labor and Providence, would settle disputes that might develop.

Special organizations, such as the National Foundation for Joy in Work, were also formed, partially to spread propaganda for the New Order. They were created to stimulate "the atmosphere of pure idealism" in which the syndicates were created; "to keep burning the flame of enthusiasm and of confidence which the social concept of the new Corporate State rekindled in the soul of the working classes".<sup>146</sup> Their function was also to "aid the leisure of the Portuguese workers in such a way as to ensure for them the greatest physical development and the raising of their intellectual and moral level".<sup>147</sup> *Casas de Povo* in rural regions, and *Casas dos Pescadores*, among fishermen, were designed for similar purposes, the aim of preserving national traditions always being emphasized. Hence, concerning the latter:<sup>148</sup>

With regard to education, it will be the duty of these associations to set up schools for the children of fishermen so as to give them a good all-round education which, in time, will contribute to the raising of their standard of living; local traditions and customs will be piously preserved and proper respect will be paid to those religious beliefs which are so

---

<sup>146</sup> *Bulletin*, I (May, 1937), pp. 8-9; X (February, 1938), pp. 63-64, 77-85; 102-103, 110-111.

<sup>147</sup> Ferro, p. 19; Cotta, pp. 155-160, 169-171.

<sup>148</sup> SPN, *Portugal: The New State*, pp. 40-41.

strong in the hearts of the fishing population of Portugal.

Two major problems continuously afflicted the Portuguese in their corporate endeavors. The first was the statism that Salazar himself claimed to dread. A system designed to lessen State interference in daily life seems to have permitted its intrusions to grow exponentially. This tendency was already clear in the pre-corporative stage of the plan. Ministers of Agriculture and Commerce and Industry were allowed to intervene regularly in corporate life. An Undersecretary of State for Corporations, operating under the aegis of the National Institute for Labor and Providence, was ubiquitous. A Corporative Council that included Salazar and many other ministers became the ultimate watchdog of the entire system. Bureaucratic interference on such a major scale was, perhaps, inevitable, given the fact that the reformers were attempting to reintroduce artificially something that had grown up spontaneously in the Middle Ages. In any case, they themselves often recognized how "inorganic" their construct was. Salazar admitted that "floods of complaints" came into his office regarding bureaucratic errors and staff inefficiencies. Although he claimed not to be surprised by such criticisms, he did express concern that "they should be repeated without any satisfaction being given".<sup>149</sup>

A second problem, giving the lie to the enthusiastic language of much Portuguese propaganda, was that of lack of popular cooperation. Salazar indicated in 1937 that he was pleased enough with the growth of syndicates. These had understandably grasped their aims and duties, given that

---

<sup>149</sup> Salazar, *The Road for the Future*, p. 90.

## THE WORD

“those who own little are always unselfish”. But *Gremios*, he complained, left much to be desired. “Instead of entering into the spirit of the corporative state”, he argued, some “may have tried to drive away probable competitors” through their structures. Indeed, a number of people, he chided, “have thought that the corporative organization would be a means of multiplying middlemen, removing competition, and safeguarding against all comers the positions acquired by some...”.<sup>150</sup>

Lack of cooperation in agriculture was especially blatant and irksome. It had proved to be extremely difficult to fit Portuguese agriculture into the corporate structure, due to uncertainty regarding its organization on a geographical or crop basis. By 1937, however, farmers’ associations were established on a district foundation. These were then gradually combined into regional entities. Bitterness due to ineffectiveness was always near the surface. Salazar reacted by calling farmers “by nature selfish and self-sufficing”.<sup>151</sup> Farm workers could not see the need for cooperation with those outside of their districts, and landlords would not pay the minimum contribution demanded for participation in the corporate entity. Proprietors, ultimately, were obliged to take part in agricultural bodies, since, “in matters of this kind, experience has taught that it is not good enough to trust man’s better nature”.<sup>152</sup> Still, by the end of the thirties, one

---

<sup>150</sup> Ferro, pp. 20-21.

<sup>151</sup> Ferro, p. 19.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*; SPN, *Portugal: The New State*, pp. 40-41.

had as yet discovered "no perfect form" of agricultural order.<sup>153</sup> None would ever be found.

This renewed corporate order was meant to give a more sound representation of the popular will than any atomistic parliament. Hence, its structure was to be reflected in the political order:<sup>154</sup>

It is our intention to establish the social and corporative State in close correlation with the natural constitution of society. The families, the parishes, the municipalities, the corporations wherein all citizens co-exist in possession of their fundamental juridical liberties, are the components of the nation and as such should have direct intervention in the constitution of the supreme bodies of the State; this is the most accurate definition of the representative system.

This Constitution must take account of the natural organization of the people and ensure that all estates alike will have an active part in the conducting of public affairs, while avoiding all those obstructions to legislation arising from the inadequacy of the present Constitution. Such popular representation, being the symbol of the organic life of the community, thus does justice to the State as the visible expression of that organic life.

---

<sup>153</sup> *Portugal: The New State*, p. 40; Also, *Bulletin* (August, 1937), pp. 11-12; Cotta, p. 103; Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 29, 160, 243.

<sup>154</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 103; Messner, p. 139; Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, p. 39; Also, Ferro, p. 242.

## THE WORD

Accordingly, as the latter develops, the state will more faithfully reflect the nation as an organized whole, while the part played by the individual in the creation of such assemblies will correspond more closely to the part he plays in the national life as head of a family, producer, member of a Church, or in his connection with education, public assistance, or sport. This may be described as the 'Policy of Real Life'.

Salazar, for whom parliaments were designed for "ratification of the general fundamentals of juridical rules",<sup>155</sup> made it clear that this representation would be purely consultative, given the innate concern of corporations for limited, particular goods.<sup>156</sup>

In the first place, whatever may be the scope of vested interests in the corporations, there will always be lacking in them the representation of national interests...Secondly, because it would be most dangerous without the long preparation acquired by experience, for a particular interest to be defended by, or its activities defined, either by other vested interests or in collusion with them.

Both Portugal and Austria did, therefore, establish corporative representative institutions, but with restricted responsibilities. A Corporative Chamber, including representatives of Lisbon and Oporto, various state

---

<sup>155</sup> Salazar, *Doctrine and Action*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>156</sup> Salazar, p. 253.

## 1024 BLACK LEGENDS

administrative agencies, presidents of corporations and other national interests was created, and a ceremonial Head of State, chosen by families, was also established. Austria formed a *Bundesversammlung* composed of four distinctive consultative organs representing economic activities, provinces, cultural entities, and national interests as a whole. This advised the *Bundestag*, which was itself made up of representatives of the *Bundesversammlung*. A Head of State elected by *Bürgermeister*s from across the country presided over the whole structure.

There is no doubt that there were enormous problems with the Portuguese and Austrian experiments, from both a Catholic as well as a purely political standpoint. Several of these have been indicated above. They would not have been human experiments if such problems had not existed. Nevertheless, insofar as anything could be done politically to attempt some twentieth century transformation of the social order in a way that was respectful of both nature and the corrective and transforming mission of the Word in history, these nations seem to have attempted it. Insofar as anything could be theoretically sketched out to achieve a twentieth century Catholic cleansing of modernity without falling into the same ideological and intellectual errors as the enemy, Salazar appears to have outlined it. But, ultimately, as this brilliant thinker repeatedly lamented, the contemporary Christian statesman faced two almost insurmountable difficulties in a land like his own. One obvious obstacle was the fact that small nations were practically helpless in setting goals for themselves when the large powers were indifferent and hostile to them. And perhaps more importantly still, the



## THE WORD

western world had lost its taste for truth, honor, and glory – maybe even forever.<sup>157</sup>

*H. Christian Opposition to the Correcting and Transforming Word*

The growth in willful intensity throughout the nineteenth century, leading ultimately to the First World War and its revolutionary aftermath, left its impact upon the entirety of the Christian world. We have already seen that many Protestants, whatever the logic of the concept of total depravity might be, were, in practice, horrified by naturalism and its political and social consequences. Evangelicals, Reformed Christians, and Anglo-Catholics engaged in many initiatives that any Catholic concerned for correction and transformation in Christ could wholeheartedly approve. Moreover, Karl Barth's (1886-1968) critique of the manipulative political use of religion in the First World War was a great sign of health on the theological plane. So was much of the spirit of the early twentieth century peace and ecumenical movements, both of which bitterly excoriated the blindness of nations marching thoughtlessly and relentlessly from one spirit-killing disaster to the next.<sup>158</sup>

Despite papal approval of a number of Protestant social, theological, and antiwar initiatives, none of the popes of the period could accept a regular co-operation with fellow Christians that acted as though doctrinal differences had somehow ceased to retain their crucial importance. All such

---

<sup>157</sup> Garnier, pp. 7, 83; Salazar, *Road for the Future*, p. 78.

<sup>158</sup> Mayeur, XII, 259-345; Jedin and Dolan, X, 458-473.

“doctrine free” cooperation ignored the reality of the continued, logical, destructive impact of substantive Protestant teachings upon each of the reformed denominations. The *logic* of these teachings promoted theological modernism and weakened traditional religious beliefs and practices that many *illogical* Protestants admittedly cherished. Moreover, sometimes those favoring a revival did so by emphasizing selective—and often purely irrational—charismatic, esoteric, mystical, or liturgical practices that guaranteed temporary fervor while laying the groundwork for innumerable future woes. Without a correction of underlying principles, even the best of the theological hopes for improvement would be dashed, and willful choices would be made that promised more sophisticated secular manipulation.<sup>159</sup>

Russian Orthodoxy had become more and more popular in the nineteenth century among catholicizing forces within the Anglican Church that could not accept the principle of an active Papal Primacy. Links with the Russian Church helped to justify the idea of the validity of a broadly “Catholic” *via media*, permitting basically solid doctrine and liturgy without submission to Roman authority and its supposedly legalist obsessions. The Russian *diaspora* in Paris and London following the Revolution and the Civil War aided this interest in Orthodoxy as a non-Roman, non-legalist path to religious sanity.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Mayeur, XII, 87-115, 259-297, 617-694.

<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*, 769-779, 813-819; Jedin and Dolan, X, 458-488; Zernov, pp. 134-187; T. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Pellican, 1993).

## THE WORD

Russian thinkers and their western sympathizers thus broadened knowledge of the growth of Hesychast spirituality noticeable in the East since the last years of the Eighteenth Century. Along with this was spread an awareness of that particular vision of the relationship of the individual and the community promoted by the supporters of the concept of *sobornost*, which many deemed to be the answer to western secularism. The “alternative good story” of a spiritual East coming to redeem a West that was hopelessly legalist, secularist, and atomistic, in both its Roman religious envelope as well as in the revolutionary garb stemming from a “naturalist” Romanism, was appropriated by a wide range of figures, from Dostoyevsky to influential members of Catholic as well as Protestant circles. While already highly visible in the 1920’s and 1930’s, this was destined to have its most substantial effect in the decades after the second global conflict.

Obviously, the Ninth Crusade recruited men of the deepest and most unquestionable zeal for militant evangelization and transforming action both abroad and at home. Nineteenth and early twentieth century Catholics, like militant Protestants as well, began to speak of the distinction between the Outer Missions (those focused on bringing the Faith to non-Christian peoples) and the Inner Missions (those aimed at the secularized populations of what were considered generally as already Christianized lands) as two parts of an overall enterprise of evangelization. Building upon the experience of generations of missionaries in the tradition of Matteo Ricci, some of those engaged in such labors became more and more convinced of the need for a deeper effort to “get under the skins” of the groups whom

they were trying to evangelize—to “inculturate” the Faith, as one would say in our own day. They hoped in doing so that Christianity could be stripped of any appearance as an alien force, and be seen as something best suited to the development and perfection of the communities in question instead. The names Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) and Vincent Lebbe (1877-1940) are very important in this regard with respect to the Outer Missions, while the Inner Missions took a great deal of inspiration from men like Joseph Cardijn (1886-1967) and his conception of a Catholic Action specialized according to the nature of the communities it targeted. If anything, laborers in the Outer Missions and Inner Missions grew still more concerned about their failures, both foreign and domestic, by the 1910’s. This was due to the fact that their lack of success was made painfully obvious by native resistance to conversion and the general indifference to religion that activists noticed among their fellow soldiers in the trenches during the First World War.

An influential explanation for such lack of success was offered to them after the conflict ended by representatives of the personalist movement.<sup>161</sup> Personalism, as it developed in the interwar period, perhaps ought to be referred to as a tendency rather than a specific idea. Many diverse circles of thinkers used the term and some of the themes associated with it. It is in this sense that Jacques Maritain (1882-1973),

---

<sup>161</sup> For the entire argument on the missions and personalism, see Mayeur, XII, 116-58, 451-522; Jedin, X, 229-409, 583-600; J. Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left: 1930-1950* (U. of Toronto, 1981); *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940-1945* (McGill, 1997); Cholvy and Hilaire, III, 19-66; Meinvielle, pp. 89-262, 281-300, 134-142.

## THE WORD

principally thought of in conjunction with the related, more structured, and sometimes rather critical vision of Integral Humanism, may be cited as a personalist.

More directly identified with the term personalism as such is Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), editor of the journal *l'Esprit* and destined, like Maritain, to have a wide impact beyond Europe in radicalizing the Catholic camp after the Second World War. Mounier had pre-war contacts with a kaleidoscope of thinkers engaged in similar speculations: Jean Danielou (1905-1974), the future cardinal; Jean Guittou (1901-1999), who would one day become a close friend and advisor to Pope Paul VI; Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948)—the most important representative of the spiritual, “non-legalist”, Russian Orthodox position—and a network of friends who met at Jacques Maritain’s home outside Paris; Henri Daniel-Rops (1901-1965) and his fellow members of the organization *Ordre Nouveau* (New Order); Belgians inspired by the “spiritualized Socialism” of Henri de Man (1885-1953); proponents of European cooperation like Otto Abets (1903-1958), the future Nazi ambassador to a defeated France; and a group of “revolutionary National Socialists” gathered in the early 1930s around the Hitler rivals Gregor (1892-1934) and Otto Strasser (1897-1974).

Personalism had its roots in late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century romantic and vitalist thought concerning the importance of “energy” and “action” as guides to truth. Lamennais’ heritage played a major role in transmitting such interest among Catholics, and modernists in further disseminating it. The emphasis upon energy and action as a program for life was enhanced still more by meditation upon the experience of those front-line soldiers

during the First World War who heroically sacrificed themselves together in a common cause despite their divisions into so many different religious, political, and social factions at home.

Insofar as one can summarize a highly variegated vision, personalism can be said to argue that the individual, trapped inside his private intellectual and behavioral concerns, is a dead man. To become a full "person", capable of realizing his deepest potential and fulfilling his true destiny, he must find a way to get out of himself and his deadening introspective existence. This he can achieve by diving into the richer life provided by communities and the "natural values" they incarnate and pursue. Which communities? Which natural values? The communities and natural values in question were those that moved men to cohesive, energetic, effective action by means of a unique, discernable, vital "mystique". Action in union with such mystiques transformed limited, sterile individuals into truly microcosmic personalities.

Catholic personalists saw the kind of believer who approached his faith as a set of precepts that might be studied intellectually and then put into practice on the individual level as a self-crippling, introspective personality. Ninth Crusade Catholicism, with its emphasis on speculative theology, private devotions, and concern for individual sanctification, was said to produce just this type of faithful. A better grasp of the Christian Faith, a richer life, and a full perfection of "personhood" required something quite different. It demanded the individual's abandonment to the "mystiques" of the energetic and highly effective communities that he saw around him. Yes, these might appear to be promoting *purely* "natural values". Nevertheless, the energies that they unleashed, and the successes they

## THE WORD

enjoyed, demonstrated that there was something more at work through them: the providential power of the Holy Spirit in history. The Catholic missionary's task was that of "witnessing" to his faith in a quiet, humble fashion, by nurturing the natural value of the community to which he was sent so that it might be brought to its innate perfection. Such witness would also be enriching for him, since he would learn things about Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit in history that he could never have known before plunging into the mystique and life of the vital group in question.

One day, the Holy Spirit would guarantee the "convergence" of all these seemingly contradictory mystiques. The result would be the establishment of a community of communities capable of producing what would, in effect, be super-persons, "the grandest transformation to which humanity has ever submitted." The seeming nightmare provided by a variety of often quite violent twentieth century forces hostile to the Faith was actually a splendid call to hope. One was witnessing through their maturation "the bloody birth of a true 'collective being of men'" – mysterious indeed, but Spirit-guided and therefore eminently Catholic.<sup>162</sup>

Believers must not sit in judgment of mystiques on the path to convergence. For they could not even fully know what the Catholic Faith entailed and where the Holy Spirit was leading it until the natural values that the various mystiques enshrined had all unfolded and then merged together. Rather than criticism, *total immersion* in energetic

---

<sup>162</sup> Hellmann, *Knight Monks*, p. 178.

communities and their mystiques was required. Such immersion demanded a root and branch obliteration of all previous education and practice that gave the militant missionary a different perspective from someone who was already a part of the providential community to which we was sent to witness. Reliance on the dry, intellectual, introspective teachings and private devotions of Ninth Crusade Catholicism presented an obstacle to victory. Christ and His Spirit were to be found in the vital community and its mystique—not in textbooks of theology mulled over by self-limiting individuals who stubbornly refused to become truly active and effective persons.

Nineteenth-century Catholics opposed to Lamennais knew what to expect from *his* vision. Their critique, enunciated in the writings of Louis Veuillot and the Jesuit editors of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, also points to the problems of Christian personalism. All calls for submission to vital, active, effective community guidance from the time of Lamennais to that of Mounier have always entailed two consequences: first of all, the destruction of any means of distinguishing between a good and bad manifestation of communal energy; and, secondly, the determination, in practice, of what is or is not acceptable as a “natural value on the path to maturation” through the *Diktat* of charismatic interpreters of the “right kind of vitality”. Tossing away the crutches of the self-crippling, introspective individual has regularly ended in immersion in anti-Christian community passions to begin with, and enslavement to the obsessions of “vanguards of the people” who explain what a society “really” energetically feels forever thereafter. “Spiritualization” of everything natural, as practiced by the personalists, has regularly ended in the naturalization of a world that is really meant to



## THE WORD

undergo correction and transformation in Christ. The progress of the Holy Spirit in history becomes merely another way of describing the triumph of the strongest human will. Those subscribing to this vision find themselves incapable of responding to any energetic fraud; “barren in the face of a Ramakrishna”, as Jacques Maritain complained.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, they are also helpless in combating the frightful willfulness of successful, charismatic, and criminal twentieth century ideologies—fascism among them.

And, indeed, many personalists looked at the early fascist victories of the Second World War from a hopeful perspective. A number of them, long convinced of the innate weaknesses of the liberal bourgeois “Established Disorder,” expressed little surprise over the conquests of Nazi Germany. What really concerned them was whether Catholicism could find some way to turn a potentially apocalyptic situation to its own advantage. For fascism was seen to be a “monstrous prefiguration” of the new personalist humanity waiting to be born. It clearly revealed the presence of strong will, virile manliness, self-sacrifice to the community, and even, in the context of the war effort, a commitment to the construction of that European-wide super society which many thought to be crucial to a more successful stimulus to the creation of spiritualized personalities.

Pétain’s so-called National Revolution was appreciated by French personalists both because of its anti-liberal bourgeois character and its freedom from the gross “materialist” aspects of Nazism. They hoped to make Vichy France a wartime laboratory for educational and evangelical

---

<sup>163</sup> Hellman, *Mounier*, p. 42.

schemes designed to reshape the world in a spiritual way. One major example of educational experimentation incorporating both contemporary Catholic ideas as well as features of the fascist *Ordensburgen*—the castle training centers for the new elite of German youth—was the *École Nationale des Cadres* at the Château Bayard above the village of Uriage, near Grenoble. Founded in the waning months of 1940, this institution became especially significant by June of 1941, when the Vichy regime determined to require a session at the *Ecole* for all future high government functionaries.

The teachings of a vast array of Catholic luminaries and their fellow travelers were marshaled under the banner of the National Revolution to play a role at Uriage. Still, under the day-to-day direction of Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac (1906-1968) and the guidance of the Study Bureau of Hubert Beuve-Mery (1902-1989), Mounier's "communitarian personalism" was central therein. This was true even after political problems led to Mounier's removal from its staff. For his vision continued to prosper through the similar teaching of his friend, Jean Lacroix (1900-1986), and their common master, Jacques Chevalier (1882-1962), professor at Grenoble and sometime Vichy Minister of Education.

Allied with personalism at Uriage was the radicalizing influence of the budding New Theology. This arrived via the Dominican houses of Saulchoir and Latour-Maubourg, the Jesuit center at Fourvières, the journals *La vie intellectuelle*, *Sept* and *Temps present*, the French scouting movement, and specialized Catholic Action groups stimulated through the activity of Joseph Cardijn with young Christian workers in Belgium. Segonzac and Beuve-Mery had frequented such circles before the war. They happily brought to Uriage priests like Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), Jean Maydiou (1900-1955),

## THE WORD

Victor Dillard (1897-1945), and Paul Donceour (1880-1961). These men, in turn, introduced students to the writings of Lamennais, Henri Bergson (1859-1941), Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), Charles Péguy (1873-1914), Marie-Domenique Chenu (1895-1990), Yves Congar (1904-1995), Karl Adam (1876-1966), Romano Guardini (1885-1968), Charles de Foucauld and, perhaps more importantly than anyone else, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). Uriage also had links, direct and indirect, with Frs. Louis Joseph Lebreton (1897-1966) and Jacques Loew (1908-1999), founders of the Catholic social movement, *Economie et Humanisme*, which was destined for a significant “progressive” future in Latin America as well as in Europe.

Students at the *École* were thus familiarized with currents of biblical, historical, spiritual, liturgical and philosophical thought that, while marginal at the moment, would become immensely powerful and instrumental in guiding the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar Church. And this team, “ensconced in a chateau up in the mountains with a commission to completely rethink and transform the way France educated its young people”, was absolutely and enthusiastically convinced that it was *the* prophetic guide to the future.<sup>164</sup>

Correction and transformation of the world, according to the doctrine taught at Uriage, was, once again, dependent

---

<sup>164</sup> Courrier de Rome, *La ‘Nouvelle Théologie’* (Courrier de Rome, 1994); Mayeur, XII, 168-186, 451-522; Jedin and Dolan, X, 229-336; Hellman, *The Knight Monks*, p. 56; M. Cointet, *L’Église sous Vichy* (Perrin, 1998), pp. 140-161; Cholvy and Hilaire, III, 19-66, 107-166.

upon the creation of "persons" as opposed to "individuals." Hence Uriage's stunning ecumenism, testified to in a myriad of ways. One could see Segonzac's ability "to form friendly relations, on the spiritual plane, with Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Moslems, agnostics," since he "preferred (rooted) people...in their own setting, in their own culture".<sup>165</sup> Uriage's Charter proclaimed the truth that "believers and non-believers are, in France, sufficiently impregnated with Christianity", so that "the better among them could meet, beyond revelations and dogmas, at the level of the community of persons, in the same quest for truth, justice and love".<sup>166</sup> And Mounier, in full-fledged Teilhardian rapture, prophesied the mysterious and convoluted growth of the "perfect personal community," where "love alone would be the bond" and "no constraint, no vital or economic interest, no extrinsic institution" would play a role.<sup>167</sup>

Surely [development] is slow and long when only average men are working at it. But then heroes, geniuses, a saint come along: a Saint Paul, a Joan of Arc, a Catherine of Siena, a Saint Bernard, or a Lenin, a Hitler and a Mussolini, or a Gandhi, and suddenly everything picks up speed...[H]uman irrationality, the human will, or simply, for the Christian, the Holy Spirit suddenly provides elements which men lacking imagination would never have foreseen.

---

<sup>165</sup> Hellman, *Knight Monks*, p. 83.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>167</sup> Hellman, *Mounier*, pp. 85, 90.

## THE WORD

May the democrat, may the communist, may the fascist push the positive aspirations which inspire their enthusiasm to the limit and plenitude.

As John Hellman explains, “Mounier’s belief that there was an element of truth in all strong beliefs coincided with Teilhard’s vision of the inevitable spiritualization of humanity”.<sup>168</sup> This belief, Uriage as a whole made its own.

Let it be emphasized once more that the message taught at Uriage was not a rational one. Its ultimate justification was the prophetic intuition of teachers giving witness to the coming New Order and their strength of will in leading men to creative action. Any appeal to logic, either in support or criticism of strongly willed commitment to the natural values they approved was dismissed as either belaboring the given or as dangerous, decadent, crippling, individualist scholastic pedantry. Better to bury the temptations of a sickly rationalism through the development of the obvious virtue of “manliness” – a virtue defined in completely anti-intellectual ways: the ability to leap onto a moving streetcar; to ride a bicycle up the steep hill to the *École* like Jacques Chevalier; to look others “straight in the eye” and “shake hands firmly”; to endure the sweat-filled regimen labeled *décrassage* devised for students under the inspiration of General Georges Hébert; to sing enthusiastically around the evening fire in the Great Hall; to know how to “take a woman”; and, always, to feel pride in “work well done.” Such manliness was said to have deep spiritual meaning in and of itself, aspects of which were elaborated in lectures like de Lubac’s *Ordre viril, ordre chrétien*

---

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

(*Virile Order, Christian Order*), and Chenu's book, *Pour être heureux, travaillons ensemble* (*For Happiness, Let Us Work Together*).<sup>169</sup>

Finally, let us stress that Uriage's teaching was unabashedly elitist. In fact, the particular mystique of the *École* was that of developing the natural value of leadership. "The select youth of Uriage" were said to be "the first cell of a new world introduced into a worn-out one"<sup>170</sup>, "entrusted with the mission of bringing together the elite from all of the groups that ought to participate in the common task of reconstruction in the same spirit of collaboration".<sup>171</sup> Since they were destined to reveal the eternal supernatural significance of the natural values witnessed to by the mystique of all virile communities, Uriage students were in some sense priestly figures as well. Each class was consecrated and given a great man's name as talisman. Segonzac especially "took upon himself a certain sacerdotal role, even regarding the wives and children of his instructors".<sup>172</sup> This entailed also a "separation between the leaders, the lesser leaders, the lesser-lesser leaders, the almost leaders and the not-at-all leaders" irritating to some of the interns. "The central team," as one of them indicated, "were gods".<sup>173</sup>

Nevertheless, for those manly spirits ready to leap off of streetcars moving towards indeterminate destinations, sit down in a café, and indulge in a little logical scholastic

---

<sup>169</sup> Hellman, *Knight Monks*, pp. 4-52, 68-92, 139-162.

<sup>170</sup> Hellmann, *Knight Monks*, p. 65.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

## THE WORD

debate, the education imparted at Uriage might easily seem to be *sacrificing* the corrective and transforming mission of Catholicism at the altar of fascism rather than taming the “monstrous prefiguration of the future” that it represented. But, then again, the reader is all too familiar with such spiritually disguised labors on behalf of the Coalition of the Status Quo. He knows that this particular manifestation of an age-old phenomenon emerged out of the same concern to restore a shattered western social order by appeal to the non-rational will of virile communities stirred to action by charismatic prophets central to the school of Lamennais. And it was, of course, to this heritage that the teachers of Uriage appealed.

Yes, many of the particular obsessions of contemporary fascists may have been of secondary importance to the Catholic personalists we have been discussing, but the canonization of a submission of the individual to the will of the leaders of a non-rational community was common to both. What difference did it make if Uriage teachers employed Catholic-friendly words and phrases like “person” and the “Mystical Body of Christ” in their enterprise? How could one know what, exactly, these words and phrases signified when rigorous philosophical-theological examination of their meaning was ridiculed as decadent and unnecessary to men with “deep faith” working to lead men to the better world in the making? Alas, the consequences of this fascist mentality for Catholicism were, ironically, only fully to be seen when fascism itself was thought to have been unconditionally defeated, after 1945. And the postwar age that followed was to prove to be a time when the “business as usual demands” of “nature as is” were to triumph more

## 1040 BLACK LEGENDS

completely than at any moment since the conversion of the Roman Empire; an era when the very Mystical Body of Christ herself, the “salt of the earth”, seemed to lose her savor—to the detriment both of true community and the dignity of the individual human person.



## **When the Salt Loses its Savor: Mindless Rout and Voluntary Enslavement to the Words**

### *A. Conquering Heroes and Catholic Personalism*

Fascist Europe was doomed by the time that the United States and the Soviet Union were linked with Britain in the war against Germany. These first two countries were to prove to be the real victors in that conflict. Both found that that victory was useful as a postwar propaganda tool in demonizing the opponents of their guiding ideologies: Americanism---re-baptized in the postwar world under the more suitably international, freedom and diversity friendly name of “pluralism”---and Marxism-Leninism. All they needed to do in order to maintain this demonization was to keep the drama of the Second World War alive as a never-ending “current event”. Memory of the war was to prove to

be a “Punic terror” that might always be evoked to stimulate a fear sufficient to maintain unity among any of their wavering troops.

By repeatedly recalling the evils perpetrated by Hitler, the victorious ideologies were able to drive home the argument that everything non-Marxist or non-pluralist was, *ipso facto*, National Socialist; that anyone who opposed tyranny, bloodshed, and genocide had better fall in behind their banners and dread the consequences of breaking rank. Human awe in the face of victorious armed strength, combined with terror at the prospect of being labeled a fascist, badly crippled and even totally silenced opposition of any kind. The only weak point in this powerful ideological weaponry was the fact that it could be—and swiftly was—used by the two victors against one another as well as against their common enemies. Marxist-Leninists were the new fascists for the pluralists, and pluralists for the Marxist-Leninists—another example of the age-old divisions within a Grand Coalition of the Status Quo solidly unified only in its joint disdain for the corrective and transforming mission of the Word Incarnate.

Although Marxism-Leninism, for a time, seemed to match American pluralism in its appeal as victor, it was ultimately the latter force that won the contest for exploiting a good story about the good war on its behalf. Using the innate and often unconscious power and prestige that came from conquest, the United States worked mightily to reshape the spiritual, intellectual, economic, and social systems of Western Europe in order to channel them to the service of its own pluralist vision. What could be more appealing to a world worn out by the incalculable human suffering accompanying ideological hatred and deadly political conflict

## ITS SAVOR

than the pluralist offer of a practical, pragmatic "method" for dealing with the diversity and divisions of modern life; a method guaranteeing freedom for all beliefs and cultures to co-exist peacefully, subject only to the dictates of a "basic common sense" ensuring "public order"? What could be more suitable than the peaceful, "free marketplace of ideas and life styles" that it cherished? Persecution would end and every tear would be wiped away. If attempts to resist such a magnificent vista were not indicative of sympathy for the genocidal madness of the defeated fascists, then they could only represent a state of insanity pure and simple.

Gradually, the influence of the pluralist message over every aspect of life, over every judgment regarding what one should think and how one should behave, became more and more inescapable. It was reinforced in daily imagery, from morning until night, from infancy until old age. So pervasive was it that the average youth in the Old World came to understand his counterpart in America even without a common spoken language and even as his own particular tradition became more and more incomprehensible to him. The pressure exerted upon individuals and institutions by the subtle and overt presuppositions and demands of the daily environment created by the American pluralist vision was, in short, overwhelming, rendering the idea of any protection against its ravages or any open resistance to it from any quarter whatsoever utterly utopian. This was a Defender of the Peace of whom Marsilius of Padua might truly be proud.

Many European Catholics were as awed and acquiescent before the victors as everyone else on the Old Continent. The enormous difficulties of explaining a Christian position built upon theological, philosophical, and cultural arguments

rejected by them frustrated a second group of Catholics into silence. A third Catholic element did speak out against whichever of the two victorious ideologies it deemed more dangerous, while remaining quiet regarding the errors of the other, and eventually even praising its own similar acceptance of the demands of "nature as is". Yet another segment of the Catholic population, ashamed by the fact that some fellow believers had either been attracted by fascism or had seen in it a useful tool against a much more dangerous Marxist threat, enthusiastically embraced the message of the victors to compensate for sins which, uncontested, might be used as a pretext for casting aspersions upon the whole Church's honor. And, finally, the atmosphere created by the "good story" about the "good war" allowed misled Catholics who were actively committed to Marxism or pluralism an audience and an impact that they otherwise might never have had. This was especially true if those activists had performed courageous deeds during the great conflict that might give them enormous prestige in the postwar anti-fascist world.<sup>1</sup>

Mention of this last group brings us back to the Catholic personalists. There is no denying that fascism, with its vibrancy, was intensely appealing to many personalists. But the dominant National Socialist strain of fascism was unavoidably and unacceptably tied to the *Volkspinzip*, and personalists, despite their other temptations, never succumbed to that of modern racism. After all, different races

---

<sup>1</sup> On the atmosphere in the Catholic world down to the opening of the Council, see Y. Chiron, *Paul VI: Le pape écartelé* (Perrin, 1993), pp. 77-168; G.B. Scaglia, *La stagione montiniana: Figure e momenti* (Studium, 1993); Cholvy and Hilarie, III, 127- 255; Jemolo, pp. 283-310

## ITS SAVOR

could be just as energetic in the support of their beliefs and traditions as the Nazis were of Aryan supremacy. In fact, it was precisely this truth that had led important missionaries into the personalist camp in the first place. In any case, a number of personalists courageously and openly opposed Nazi racism from the outset, both through membership in the Resistance Movement as well as in journals like the French *Témoignage chrétien*. They thereby gained understandable prestige as heroic exemplars for future generations.<sup>2</sup>

Even more significant in assuring personalist condemnation of *all* of fascism, non-racist as well as racist, was the simple fact that it had not been sufficiently vital to win the Second World War. Through defeat it lost the credibility it had once possessed as an engine of success. Victory in that conflict had been carried off by the Soviet Union and the United States. One might thus legitimately conclude that Marxist-Leninist and American-guided communities were those that possessed the greatest vigor and successful energy---and therefore the infallible stamp of approval of the Holy Spirit.

Both conviction and prudence thus told personalists who had openly tried to collaborate with a non-racist fascism that the entire movement, at least as presently constituted, had to be jettisoned. Nowhere was this more felt than at Uriage.<sup>3</sup> The deportation of French youth to forced labor camps, the increasing control by Germany of internal Vichy affairs, and the outright takeover of the Unoccupied Zone in the latter

---

<sup>2</sup> Chélini, pp. 213-311; E. Poulat, *Les prêtres-ouvriers: Naissance et fin* (Cerf, 1999), pp. 179-375; Cholvy and Hilaire, III, pp. 67-125.

<sup>3</sup> Hellman, *Knight-Monks*, pp. 182-254.

part of 1942 had already moved the leadership of the *École* closer to the growing Resistance Movement, long before allied victory was absolutely assured. This tendency matured by December of that year, when Uriage's enemies at Vichy managed to have it expelled from the Château Bayard.

But Uriage never did anything haphazardly. Building upon its sense of constituting a modern band of crusading knights, the exiled *École* leadership in 1943 created a Chivalric Order whose inner circle was bound by special vows of a character that Fr. Maydiou compared spiritually to those of matrimony. Members of the Order were to sally forth to show the various elements of the Resistance how to perfect their "mystiques" in the Uriage manner. Thus, high-level emissaries were dispatched to contact de Gaulle and "flying squadrons" into the countryside to guide the *maquis* so that their deficient mystiques could be "transcended spiritually" and "converge" in the construction of the better world of the personalist-Teilhardian Faith.

The enthusiasm with which this labor was undertaken was genuine, but especially so with respect to the Marxist component of the Resistance Movement. Many, if not perhaps most personalists, felt a preference for the vital energy of the Marxist-Leninist element in the United Nations Alliance. Despite the fact that its classic mish-mash of Enlightenment mechanism and willfulness violated the basic Catholic understanding of man's simultaneously natural and supernatural, individual and social character, the Soviet communal emphasis was more immediately satisfying to the personalists' pronounced social sense. One sees this not only among members of the Order but also in the writings and labors of priests and bishops trying to understand the "mystique" of the proletariat in German labor camps and

## ITS SAVOR

ordinary French factories. Systematic training for the latter purpose was offered, from 1943 onwards, under the patronage of the supra-diocesan *Mission de France*.

Uriage teachers were themselves deeply involved in these priestly activities. Fr. Dillard, for example, canonized the Soviet citizens he encountered in the labor camps and insisted that all industrial workers were born to carry out their tasks with the aid of specific virtues denied to other people. But an Uriage-like openness was noticeable in other, similar-minded circles. All such enthusiasts explained that there were "riches in modern disbelief, in atheist Marxism, for example, which are presently lacking to the fullness of the Christian conscience".<sup>4</sup> Enlightened spirits thus had "to share the faith in and the mystique of the Revolution and the Great Day (i.e., when all spiritually valid approaches would converge)",<sup>5</sup> as did one priest who asked to die "turned towards Russia, mother of the proletariat, as towards that mysterious homeland where the Man of the future is being forged".<sup>6</sup>

One major problem with this enthusiasm was that the Catholic peoples who ultimately came under Soviet control did not show themselves as open to the charms of Marxist-Leninist communal energy as its personalist supporters had done. Yes, a movement of so-called Pax Priests, with an underlying theme of shared Catholic and Marxist pathways to international harmony and social justice, eventually did develop. However, it was tainted by its association with the governments of the Peoples Republics and the practical

---

<sup>4</sup> Poulat, *Les prêtres-ouvriers*, p. 408.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

material benefits that could be gained for its adherents through such an alliance. In general, the experience of Soviet Marxism-Leninism, linked as it was with the reality of a party dictatorship backed by the military strength of the Red Army, did not become popular with the believing Catholic masses. This was especially true in those post-war years when the Papacy vigorously preached an anti-communist message. Moreover, insofar as the Russian authorities did feel the need to cooperate with religious forces, they usually found attempts to collaborate with national Orthodox Churches simpler and more fruitful than efforts to manipulate an international Roman Catholicism. Rome was as resistant to the allurements of the Marxist Defender of the Peace as she had been to that of medieval times.<sup>7</sup>

Another difficulty with Marxist-Leninist communal energy was its closure to the crucial prophetic mission of the personalists. One must remember that the sons of Uriage always retained their wartime sense of being a priestly nation, a people set apart, chosen to judge which aspects of burgeoning mystiques were and were not acceptable on the road to convergence. Marxism-Leninism, like fascism, was indeed acceptable in spirit. But it was acceptable as yet another "monstrous pre-figuration" of a happier future that had to be spiritually transcended in order to fulfill its true destiny. Uriage personalists were called upon to "witness" to the Marxist-Leninist "mystique" by raising it to a higher and fully appropriate level of consciousness---inside the Soviet Bloc as much as elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the Stalinist cult of personality, the omnipresence of the Red Army, and the jealous apparatchiks

---

<sup>7</sup> Mayeur, XII, 731-742, 788-813; XIII, 385-398, 427-436.



## ITS SAVOR

of the postwar era stood in the way of their prophetic vocation. Worse still, with the fall in 1964 of a highly anti-religious Nikita Khrushchev who at least possessed the virtue of rocking the Soviet boat to promote the meritorious within the communist ranks, "security for the apparatchiks" became the primary goal of the whole of the shaken party membership. Hence, the growth of that pervasive cynicism that affected not only the Soviet population at large but the system's functionaries as well. For party functionaries understood that they survived as an elite only by demanding as little as possible in the way of labor, discipline, and the cultivation of "special virtues of the proletariat" from the common run of socialist mankind.

None of these realities meant that Marxism was no longer still worth "transcending"; only that different paths to ensuring fulfillment of the sacred socialist mission were required. Divergent paths would have to be found outside of the sphere of influence wherein ran the writ of the apparatchiks and the Red Army. Still, many other vital cultural forces, some of which had already begun to attract personalist attention before 1939, were manifesting their potential for mobilizing energetic mass support in more pronounced ways during the postwar era. Some of these, like the feminist and sexual liberation movement, were vigorous in the western world. But, perhaps even more importantly, numerous other vital forces were to be found in the newly independent nations of Asia, Africa, and Oceania as well as in the semi-colonial protectorates of Latin America. Such energies reflected either flips on familiar European Enlightenment themes on the one hand or a resurgence of local, native beliefs and customs on the other.

Of course, all these vibrant developments of western and indigenous cultures also desperately needed witness and prophetic transcending to ensure their perfection and ultimate convergence in the Holy Spirit. Latin America became particularly appealing to personalists and fellow travelers like Mounier, Chenu, Lebreton, and even Maritain. Here, such men found social unrest in conjunction with an accelerated industrial development fueled by foreign capital, all of which seemed to portend the growth of a new and seemingly more "spirit-friendly" Marxism throughout the region. The energy unleashed by Fidel Castro (b. 1926) and Che Guevara (1928-1967) excited an especially explosive enthusiasm. Personalists thus began to hope that they would be able to use Latin America as a proving ground, diving into its "real world of the oppressed", giving testimony to its budding message of impatience and rage with "structures of sinful dependence", and rousing it to the kind of Marxist liberation that the Holy Spirit wanted but the apparatchiks of the Soviet Bloc stubbornly refused to permit. Yes, the mass of inert Latin American believers might not yet understand its own victimization---just as the bulk of Catholics had not grasped what the spiritually awakened Lamennais had to tell them. But that was always the job of the prophet: to shake a sleeping people out of its dogmatic slumbers to an appreciation of its true energy and the goal towards which it was unconsciously striving.<sup>8</sup>

Dictatorial and aging apparatchiks were certainly an obstacle to the emergence of a better world, but they were not

---

<sup>8</sup> On Latin America, see Mayeur, XII, 941-1022; XIII, 509-577; Jedin and Dolan, X, 672-750; P. Letamendia, *Eduardo Frei* (Beauchesne, 1989), pp. 13-182.

## ITS SAVOR

the only danger standing in the path of vital energies and their future convergence. Traditional Catholicism itself, which from Uriage days had "feared the insistence on bringing together men with different 'mystiques'", was increasingly seen to be at least as great a threat as an unresponsive Soviet Marxism, arousing in personalists "a 'manly' impatience with clericalism, dogma and the orthodox".<sup>9</sup> Catholic authoritarianism, manifested in its insistence upon adherence to frozen teachings and rituals, had to give way to changes dictated by diving into the living realities and vibrant energies of the day. Hence, the deeply committed Fr. Dillard ended by saying that his work in the vibrant forced labor factory was more important than his Mass, and, indeed, that the very machine on which he toiled itself actually had a soul of its own.

Mounier is particularly instructive with respect to this intensifying dismissal of the whole of the Church's traditional teaching and practice. His vision had always logically involved the possibility of shelving entire realms of Christian scripture, theology, and spirituality, should they clash with the "emerging convergence." By the last years of the war, "there was little place for sin, redemption and resurrection in the debate; the central acts of the Christian drama were set aside".<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche's critique of slavish Christianity now seemed to him to be unanswerable, and he "came to think that Roman Catholicism was an integral part of almost all he hated. Then, when he searched his soul, he discovered that the aspects of himself which he appreciated least were his

---

<sup>9</sup> Hellman, *The Knight Monks*, p. 88; also Meinvielle, pp. 224, 262.

<sup>10</sup> Hellman, *Mounier*, p. 255.

'Catholic' traits".<sup>11</sup> Doing what one willed was the *unum necessarium*. Not surprisingly, everything rational from the Greek tradition that had been used to support Christianity and dampen the vital will was execrated along with Catholicism as well. The Socratics, for him, were indeed Seeds of the Logos---and, as such, had to be driven into the wilderness with a fiery sword. Those obsessed with Catholic dogma, Catholic practice, and the philosophical hunt for the Logos all required diagnosis and serious psychiatric help.

Hence, Mounier now flatly denounced old-fashioned Christianity and Christians. Christianity, he wrote, was "conservative, defensive, sulky, afraid of the future." Whether it "collapses in a struggle or sinks slowly in a coma of self-complacency," it was doomed. Christians were castigated, in Nietzschean style, as "these crooked beings who go forward in life only sidelong with downcast eyes, these ungainly souls, these weighers-up of virtues, these dominical victims, these pious cowards, these lymphatic heroes, these colourless virgins, these vessels of ennui, these bags of syllogisms, these shadows of shadows...".<sup>12</sup> Metaphysical speculation, Mounier declared, was a characteristic of "lifeless schizoid personalities." ...He referred to intelligence and spirituality as "bodily diseases" and attributed the indecisiveness of many Christians to their ignorance of "how to jump a ditch or strike a blow." "Modern psychiatry," Mounier wrote, had shed light on the morbid taste for the "spiritual," for "higher things," for the ideal and for effusions of the soul...Thus, once again, he dismissed many forms of religious devotion as the result of psychosis,

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

## ITS SAVOR

self-deception or vanity. Prayer was often a sign of psychological illness and weakness that analysis could do much to heal. Vigorous exercise would help as well.<sup>13</sup>

This brings us back to the liturgical question, the liturgy obviously being one of the most important aspects of daily Christian life that would have to change with the emergence of a new and more vital personalist order. Uriage recognized as much, and was therefore permeated by the spirit of “pastoral concern” characterizing the more recent liturgical movement. This movement, in fact, was formative in shaping its own understanding of the importance and methodology of accommodation to active “mystiques” for the sake of the creation of the self-sacrificing individuals that true personhood required.

Fr. Maydiou was already active before the war, together with “friends of *Sept*”, celebrating new style Masses, during which the priest faced the people and provided a French narration.<sup>14</sup> Fr. Doncoeur, terrified that vital life was passing inert Catholics by, became enthusiastic for pastoral liturgical developments in Germany as early as 1923. He used the model of games and sports events, along with the general desire of youth to cooperate as a group, to guide the French scouting movement down a new liturgical direction:<sup>15</sup>

Games can also be an excellent preparation for worship, which to the little ones appears to be very

---

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>14</sup> J. Duquesne, quoted in D. Bonneterre, *Le mouvement liturgique* (Fideliter), p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Bonneterre, p. 38.

little different from a game. This should not scandalize us. The word game is not in the child's vocabulary, and particularly in the realm of scouting, it is a synonym for diversion. A game is an action, passionate insofar as it is sincerely played. Well, official worship is eminently sincere. Children sense this. They find satisfaction in this atmosphere of truth. They savor this serious action, wherein all participate, body and soul, this collective and ordained action, similar in nature to those grand modern sports events wherein modern youth finds its discipline and sometimes its mystique. But the little faithful heart senses well that worship is more noble than sports. Worship is the Big Game, the Sacred Game which is being played for the Chief of Chiefs....Among the troops the Mass is generally a Dialogue Mass at which all actively participate. Certain among them make the offering. The cadets which Father Doncoeur leads each summer with knapsacks across France's roads also have the Dialogue Mass. Gathered before the altar, they respond to the liturgical prayers, make the offering of the host which will be consecrated for them at the Offertory....

Concerned as it was with using all communal tools to build persons possessing the "leadership mystique", Uriage turned the entire day into a "manly" liturgical experience. Bonfires were lit, backs slapped, virile poems and hymns composed, and special pageants mounted. Uriage claimed that all of these were, of course, inspired by "deep feeling," constituting demands upon the developing persons of the community, rejection of which would have been a breach of

## ITS SAVOR

*Volksgemeinschaft* equivalent to an individualist sin against the Holy Spirit. Interestingly enough, all of this new, “natural”, participatory, creative---and expensive---liturgical life was being elaborated while Frs. Maydieu, Doncoeur, Chenu, Congar and others were bringing into existence what would be the extremely influential “Center for Pastoral Liturgy”, designed to effect similar changes in ordinary ecclesiastical life.

Worker-Marxist-Soviet mania from 1942 onwards increased the reformers demand for a liturgy based upon a pastoral response to particular mystiques to fever pitch. This often played upon Pius XII’s well-known willingness to take risks on the pastoral level if real success could be demonstrated to emerge from them. In any case, Henri Godin’s (1906-1944) famous work, *France: Pays de Mission?* (1943), outlining worker dechristianization, had created a sense of crisis in France that the pope could perhaps be counted upon to take seriously. This book argued that the loss of Church influence among the working class was so dire that all prudence had to be tossed aside. Lack of any precise plan for how to guide the pressing need to dive into the worker mystique was attributed to the spontaneous genius of those participating in the program and their unflinching faith in the Holy Spirit.

One thing alone was certain: the liturgy and the priesthood were out of sync with the vital world of the laboring man. All that was associated with what Paul Claudel disparagingly called the “mass with one’s back to the people” had therefore to be abandoned.<sup>16</sup> Such a mass had become the

---

<sup>16</sup> Cholvy and Hilaire, III, 274.

precious toy of little minds and bigots who could not understand the New Order emerging around them. Hence, also, the critique of Fr. Dillard, who dismissed any supposed difficulties emerging from a total rejection of an anachronistic Catholic priestly mission. He insisted that his worker clientele would be able to sense the superior spirituality of what others might be tempted to call a secularized clergy due to a *je ne sais quoi* emanating from its own fresh sacerdotal mystique:<sup>17</sup>

My Latin, my liturgy, my mass, my prayer, my sacerdotal ornaments, all of that made me a being apart, a curious phenomenon, something like a (Greek) pope or a Japanese bonze, of whom there remain still some specimen, provisionally, while waiting for the race to die out.

Religion as they [the workers] knew it is a type of bigotry for pious women and chic people served by disguised characters who are servants of capitalism....If we succeed in ridding our religion of the unhealthy elements that encumber it, petty superstitions, the bourgeois "go to Mass" hypocrisy, etc. we will find easily with the Spirit of Christ the mystique which we need to reestablish our homeland.

Yes, there was no doubt that the constraints of traditional Catholicism had to be relaxed, along with those of nefarious Soviet apparatchik influences, if the good spirits of Marxism and other energetic movements in Europe and the Third World were to come to fruition and converge. But how,

---

<sup>17</sup> Poulat, *Les prêtres-ouvriers*, 329, 333.



## ITS SAVOR

practically speaking, could this work of liberation be accomplished? The only other viable political and social vision was that of American pluralism, and this outlook did not at first appear to many personalists to be all that promising. “The Americans,” Beuve-Mery, who went from Uriage to the management of the highly influential postwar French newspaper, *Le Monde*, complained, “could prevent us from carrying out the obligatory revolution, and their materialism does not even have the tragic grandeur of the materialism of the totalitarians”.<sup>18</sup>

Still, a number of personalist fellow travelers, Jacques Maritain prominent among them, were much more hopeful, arguing that American pluralism was an immensely powerful revolutionary force suitable for breaking down many petrified traditions—if only it were witnessed to properly. Through the Marshall Plan and its support for supra-national, continental economic reconstruction, pluralism’s powerful vision had already begun to break down traditional authorities and work for that European union that so many personalists—along with the Nazi New Order itself—had also longed to achieve. Maritain argued that American pluralism might even lend itself to a convergence with the most vital spiritual elements of a Marxism whose true transcendent mission was being botched by the Soviets.

Besides, one simply could not deny that the impact of the pluralist message of a practical openness to a world of diversity was as strong on European Catholics as it was on everyone else on the war-weary Continent. They, too, were tired of a divisiveness that had seemingly produced nothing

---

<sup>18</sup> Hellman, *The Knight Monks*, p. 213.

but hatred and conflict. The words of the conqueror were beautiful words indeed, and Maritain could point to the fact that American Catholics were among their most fervent propagandists. Pluralism could become *the* Defender of the Peace and *the* Defender of Freedom for everything and everyone, including fresh, exciting, energetic developments noticeable in the Old as well as the New and Third Worlds. It could, therefore, powerfully aid the work of personalists in witnessing to their many vital mystiques and assuring their convergence in fulfillment of the message of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps. But the Holy Spirit in question was one whose teaching would have been recognizable to Lamennais, Rousseau, Ockham, Marsilius of Padua, and, ultimately, Isocrates as well.<sup>19</sup>

### *B. Diving Into American Pluralism*

For what, exactly, would “diving into” the “mystique” of pluralism actually entail? The best way to begin to give an answer to this question is by briefly recalling what we learned about pluralism’s Americanist youth in the last chapter: namely, that the American message to the world means more than what its simple words of “peace” and “freedom” seem on the surface to indicate; it also means everything that comes along with these words in its historical and sociological baggage train.

In practice, diving into pluralism’s “lived reality” signifies immersion in the experience and teaching of the first important society in the western world that never knew a

---

<sup>19</sup> For the union of the Soviet and American “magisterium” see Meinvielle, pp. 216-39, 257, 260, 291.

## ITS SAVOR

stage of orthodox Christianity. It necessitates becoming one with a culture deeply influenced by the atomist doctrine of total depravity and the effects of its secularization on the one hand and by the desires of the founding moderate Whig Enlightenment oligarchy and their consequences on the other. It then entails praising what emerges from this union *both* as a purely pragmatic tool for providing a tranquil, free, prosperous social order in a multicultural America *as well as* a sacred, providential gift of God, destined for missionary transport everywhere around the globe.

American pluralism thus brings with it experience of the *full* development of the initial Protestant animus against a blasphemous, tyrannical, fleshly, Word-drenched Church. That animus, expanded through secularization beyond its original anti-Roman focus, gradually manifested itself in an attack upon *all* authoritative institutions providing guidance for individual human action. It came to see in the American system a ticket to an atomistic Eden where the “unbound rhinoceros” could pursue his personal agenda without fear of condemnation from Faith, Reason, or his equally liberated neighbors. Hence, diving into this lived reality means approval of “unbinding the rhinoceros”.

But becoming one with the American mystique also brings with it experience of the *full* development of the moderate, Whig Enlightenment ideal. That form of the Enlightenment sought a civil order ruled over by a weak State. This weakness permitted satisfaction of the material interests of the dominant elements in private society. Such domination began with an oligarchy whose conservatism also led it to preserve a traditional language of respect for a Christian-sounding God---who respected the need to keep

His distance from daily human affairs. Diving into *this* lived reality means justifying satisfaction of the material wishes of the strongest unbound rhinoceros in society as an integral part of mankind's last, best hope for maintaining a peace and freedom in accord with both common sense and God's Providence.

Still, the Whiggish passion for maintaining civil order was forced to work together with the radical dedication to pursuit of an atomist freedom. And that more radical fervor was itself, in turn, constrained to take the much more conservative moderate Enlightenment tendency seriously. These two concerns proved to influence one another, guaranteeing the development of the system in a way that both changed and yet confirmed the founding oligarchy's original designs. It is necessary to examine this two-fold effect before the picture of the lived reality of the American experience and the consequences of diving into it is complete.

America changed in that the Founders' conviction that they could maintain the dominance of the existing propertied Whig elite as an obvious dictate of both common sense and God's Providence proved to be misplaced. John Locke's principle of toleration---with its "multiplication of factions" to a degree that would render any community or coalition of forces that might try to threaten the power of the original revolutionary planter-merchant oligarchy impotent to effect real change---was indeed supposed to work on its behalf. But the radical conception of the meaning of American freedom, in practice, gave to societies and individuals prepared to do whatever was necessary to satisfy their own ideas and material desires the chance to expand the borders of what eighteenth century men said that common sense signified and permitted. Growing insistence upon the need for openness

## ITS SAVOR

rendered it progressively more difficult to "close" the vision of "freedom" and "common sense" within more limited Moderate Enlightenment bounds and take its notion of God's "natural law" seriously. A development of visions of radical freedom increasly blocked appeal to any faith-filled or rational standard for judging the validity, justice, and prudence of any desire or action of any specific group or individual. The path to replacement of the existing elite was simply to use one's freedom more willfully than the Founders had conceived possible. This allowed a new community or individual to become so significant and powerful as to require "integration" of its concerns into the syllabus of ideas and behavior patterns deemed acceptable by the existing establishment if only for the sake of peace and quiet. But such a fresh and still more "unbound rhinoceros" could itself come to dominate society and define anew what God, common sense, "the will of the Founders", toleration, peace, and progress meant. The civil religion could be counted upon to drill in the argument that a universal liberty continued to triumph under the orderly domination of the new and still more arbitrary elite. Some of its own members might even honestly believe this tale of a unique, simultaneous American guarantee of peace and freedom to represent the truth.

Despite the change of personnel, however, the *kind* of order favored by the founding oligarchy---an order permitting the tranquil enjoyment of material desires and possession, free from the unwanted interference of a dogmatic Church and a powerful State---was to an overwhelming degree confirmed under all subsequent elites. Those strong conservative influences whose passion for order allowed for the integration of new elements into existing

## 1062 BLACK LEGENDS

society continued to be exerted and have an enormous impact. Such influences, as always, urged everyone to renounce the private use of political freedom to shape the public society in which men lived according to particular spiritual and intellectual convictions. For the men of order argued that it was precisely such attempts to unify thought and action that had been the historical cause of horrible division and bloody disturbances of the peace.

Concerns for the maintenance of public peace in a country promoting a radical freedom increased exponentially due to the multicultural waves of migrants arriving in the United States from 1848 onwards. A Protestant rooted America found the path to unity in the midst of such diversity through an anchoring in the one characteristic every fallen man shared in common: Original Sin. Free citizens were to be unified through a systematic exploitation of the common fallen human passion for willful satisfaction of material desires. The result was that Americans learned that they were really expected to use their liberty in but one single, concupiscent fashion---for the attainment and protection of material possessions. In other words, even though the *theoretical* freedom granted to communities and individuals under the American pluralist "mystique" was one allowing them to "be themselves" and potentially even to "go wild", in *practice*, that freedom became a liberty merely to hunt for and protect property in a myriad of communal and personal fashions. This reductionist freedom, based upon promoting the chief consequence of Original Sin, then had to be praised as the greatest gift to the human mind, heart, and soul known to history. Whether that gift was granted by God or nature was left to individual taste to determine---but not to impose upon others.

## ITS SAVOR

Strong and unscrupulous men whose eyes were open gradually realized that the “even-handed” American pluralist methodology put them in a position “freely” to create a public “order” in which they devoured the weak. Once again, this could, theoretically, be done in the name of an ideology, but the tendency of the system was to create an order based upon a *materialist* expression of strength and willfulness. And the logic of this tendency was to degenerate and ensure construction of an order based upon the dictates of ever more willful libertine or criminal strongmen. All these strongmen maintained their alliance with honest American pluralist ideologues who did not realize that they were being “mugged” by their own beloved system. They also allied their cause with that of dishonest rhetorical word merchants who made their living by justifying and ennobling the oppression of the weak and the gullible, exploiting the powerful American civil religion and its images to ease their labors. It was all these developments that guaranteed that the system “spiraled downwards”, ending in that boring, materialist, intellectually barren sameness---that “tumultuous monotony”---already depicted for us by Louis Veuillot as a chief characteristic of the coming, global “Empire of the World”.

Communities and individuals resisting the lived reality of the American system could---and did---hold back the logic of its growth and development. But those who “dived into” its “mystique” to help to bring it to its perfection assisted in unleashing its full fury. They, at best, would end by embracing a thoughtless, soulless, materialist existence; one wherein the dance of life, with all of its many spiritual and intellectually difficult problems, would come to a halt. In

other words, at best, the truly law-abiding pluralist minded community or individual would commit spiritual and intellectual suicide. For this is what the pluralist Defender of the Peace ultimately demanded of men—although from the lawmaker's standpoint the action performed should more properly be labeled euthanasia rather than suicide. Having "dived into" the lived American reality, they could only use their freedom either to praise the privilege that they had been given to live their lives serving the material interests of the current masters of the system or, worse still, to dominate society by playing this materialist game still better than their opponents.

All modern proponents of Protestant and Enlightenment "freedom" insist that a new age of Reason and Liberty dawned for mankind with the return to the proper understanding of "nature as is" promoted by the Renaissance and the Reformation. Anyone who questions this glorious victory is answered not by rational argument but with haughty condescension. He is condemned as an enemy of God and man, and one who lacks that faith in Progress that is urgently required to assure the full development of a *novus ordo saeculorum*.

American pluralism and its Divine Republic continue this "tradition" with a special vengeance and a particular success. Nevertheless, they sow the wind with their dogma of a pragmatic and order-friendly openness to freedom and diversity. In consequence, they reap the whirlwind of impassioned, irrational, willful dominance over the truly serious and peaceful man. Abandoning God's Law and Reason, the civilization they produce has nothing left to restrain it. And yet the irony is, as Louis Veillot noted, that those who consider themselves the victors and the rulers of



## ITS SAVOR

this civilization cannot even sin with any real gusto. It is a cheapened, inhuman way of life in arid suburban shopping malls and freeways to nowhere that stirs their ambitions and libido. Every aspect of modernity smacks of death. It was fitting, therefore, that American pluralism should arise to give to modernity a thoroughgoing culture of living death---a living euthanasia---to sate its thirst for eternal slumber.

*C. Vae Victis! The Captive "Catholic Moment"*

Conquered peoples, as Horace noted, have sometimes taken their captors captive. But not all conquerors are Romans, and frequently the consequences can be quite different. The vanquished can come to adopt their conquerors' language, customs, heroes, and religions as their own. Indeed, they can reach the point of recoiling in horror at the mere mention of their earlier beliefs and ancient champions. Barring this, they can end up forgetting them entirely and even denying that they ever existed. This cultural conquest can have certain positive effects when the victor is something or someone better than the vanquished. We are rightly edified, as was St. Ambrose, at the contemplation of ancient Rome, humble enough to surrender her gods and a number of her traditional customs, once conquered by the superior truth of the Word Incarnate. We can rejoice at the thought of a powerful tribe like that of the Franks under Clovis, abandoning itself to its Roman and Catholic cultural conquerors and forsaking its pagan barbarism in consequence. But we should be saddened whenever we encounter a high civilization, heir to the most profound truths and cultural achievements, which so learns

to adore a debased conqueror that it voluntarily silences the songs of the glories of its own princes, warriors, and thinkers. We should be saddened when it no longer recognizes its former accomplishments or beliefs when confronted with them, and even uses the arguments of its masters to eclipse them further.

Contemporary Catholic civilization throughout the western world, and the Catholic peoples who benefited from it, fit into this second and truly pathetic category of the conquered. In our day, the vast majority of Catholics, clerics and laymen alike, consciously or unconsciously, fall on their knees daily only to commit religious and cultural suicide. They recite the tawdry slogans of their conquerors, beg instruction in their masters' religion and customs, and burn incense before a host of "heroes" who are non-Catholic at best and vehement enemies of the Christian God and man at worst. Although the demoralization leading to this dreadful reality has been very long in preparation, it is only recently that we have seen such mass hara-kiri actually performed in public. This ignoble defeat, as T.S. Eliot lamented of the destruction of modern man as a whole, has been achieved "not with a bang, but a whimper".

Second Vatican Council proved to be the tool—not the prime cause, but the chief tool—through which the conqueror imposed his marching orders upon the Mystical Body of Christ. Pope John XXIII's Council ensured that Catholic personalists and their allies, taking advantage of the pluralist spirit sweeping the western world due to the victory of the United States in the Second World War---and the pressure employed to maintain it afterwards---could seize control of the powerful machinery of the Universal Church. Having done so, they then encouraged a Catholicism that "gave

## ITS SAVOR

witness" to various vital energies. These ranged from Marxism to the final logical expressions of the moral and materialist visions of the Enlightenment, both Radical and Moderate, to Latin American Liberation Theology, and to Third World religions---in short, to anything "strong", whose inevitable "convergence" in fulfillment of the "plan" of the Holy Spirit had to be prepared by men who believed themselves to possess a prophetic vision.

The result has been the greatest disaster for the spread of the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history. That message, the *only* truly different, vital, energetic force in human life, was the one force that these prophets of the Spirit would not permit to have further impact within a camp of the saints whose consciousness had been raised. They would not allow such an impact because it seriously *could* and *must* change man and society. Hence, the conquest of the Church and Catholics by the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, its word merchants, and its program on behalf of "business as usual" demands of "nature as is" leading to the triumph of the strongest wills was prepared. Hence, the "spiraling downwards" of control of the Catholic world into ever more ideologically insane, libertine, or criminal hands was assured. And, sad to say, clergy and laity alike enthusiastically praised this disaster all the while that its dreadful consequences were painfully manifesting themselves.

Let me hasten to add that I am by no means arguing that the Church would have been in magnificent shape should Second Vatican Council never have occurred. Her ecclesiology and her understanding of her true strength as Christ continued in time were still not rigorous enough for

that to be true. Readers will remember that many disputes over ecclesiological problems had emerged after 1563. These disputes had not been resolved at Trent and they were in no way fully thrashed out at Vatican I in 1870 either. It is hard to see how almost any specific issue emerging in the 1960's would have surprised the controversialists of the previous four hundred years. The papal-episcopal college question, Church-State relations, the advisability of liturgical changes that included the use of the vernacular, and the need for a clearer teaching on the full meaning of the sacrament of matrimony were all matters familiar to past disputants. The only way for much of this discussion to appear unusual is to think that Trent and Vatican One pronounced dogmatically on more matters than they actually did. Many Catholics certainly believed this to have been the case. Thus, when the present crisis began, they were woefully mistaken regarding exactly what the definition of Papal Infallibility did and did not demand of them in the way of faithful obedience.

Moreover, we have seen that the Church was experiencing "dangers on all fronts", making any move to deal with one dilemma an invitation for another to take shape and dominate the future course of events. Many Catholics did not respond to these dangers in a balanced fashion that was open to the fullness of the message of the Word in history. And even though Church authorities, highly alarmed over the situation created by a general European loss of faith, had made preparations for the shift of the center of gravity of Christianity to other continents, it was inevitable that their laudable work brought still further confusion and missteps in

## ITS SAVOR

its train. But all of this was noticeable before 1962, and was merely exacerbated by the Council.<sup>20</sup>

On the procedural level, the disastrous developments briefly outlined above must be ascribed to Second Vatican Council's failure to follow the wisdom of Trent. Trent, the reader will recall, had opted for a simultaneous treatment of pastoral and doctrinal questions, even in the face of tremendous pressure to ignore the latter. It had sound reasons for making this choice, given the fact that powerful new heretical forces were highly active in contemporary Europe and ready to shape any purely "pastoral" decisions to fit their packed doctrinal program. Doctrinal clarity gave Trent a much more solid control over pastoral initiatives.

But we have seen that erroneous beliefs and ideologies merely increased in number and violence over the following centuries. If anything, what might not have been as clear more than four centuries earlier, ought to have been absolutely transparent by the 1960's: namely, that a "pragmatic" policy that did not address real, existing, powerful divisions of belief could easily lead to the triumph of hidden doctrines promoted by determined minorities. Nineteenth century intransigents had warned that anyone who failed to appreciate the errors of the modern definition of freedom and tried to act "pragmatically" on the basis of its teaching would drag what was, in historical fact, a weak Church into a "free" and "open" co-existence and

---

<sup>20</sup> For the Council, see Mayeur, XIII, 21-111; Jedin and Dolan, X, 96-151; Chiron, *Paul VI*, pp. 168-251; R. Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* (Tan, 1967); M. Davies, *Liturgical Revolution* (Angelus, Three Volumes, 1987), II (*Pope John's Council*).

competition with immensely willful and strong enemies. And, under such conditions, she was, at least humanly speaking, bound to lose. Such “pragmatism” would, in reality, be tantamount to tempting Providence.

A *Catholic* pragmatism, one that was dictated by the message of the Word Incarnate, recognized the central importance of doctrinal clarity, authoritatively taught, in defending the only truth that could honestly set men free. It understood just how much weak, struggling, sinful human beings needed all the concrete assistance they could get in order to grasp the fullness of truth and to do what was right and necessary for both their earthly happiness and their eternal salvation. Accordingly, it preached the obligation to correct and transform human societies and institutions so that they themselves would embody and teach sound natural and supernatural lessons. The omnipotent God could indeed protect the Church within a “free market place of ideas and life styles”, where truth was accorded no privileged place among the seductive and often violent advertising of ideological commodities. But He would do so through the heroic sufferings of His faithful and not through the merits of the personalist or pluralist “method”. A true Catholic pragmatism could not legitimately force believers into the spiritual equivalent of a game of poker with a team of card sharks and then blithely demand supernatural intervention from God to protect them. What one was likely to get, in consequence, was a new but disguised dogmatic teaching, uniting the Church with the State and the world more tightly than thinkers from Marsilius of Padua to Lamennais could ever have dreamed possible.

Still, even though Trent’s reasons for rejecting a purely pastoral approach towards dealing with problems within the

## ITS SAVOR

universal Church were as valid as ever, and the intransigents had identified further grounds for following in its footsteps, the anti-dogma camp had also gained many new adherents in the intervening period. Trent's own emphasis on the importance of demonstrating practical success had helped to give "pragmatic-minded" prelates, priests, and lay activists some justification in the decades and centuries following its closure. Readers have seen that these "pragmatists" came to include Jansenists, Mennaisians, liberal Catholics, modernists, and personalists. Numerous, pressing, scientific, political, and social changes exposing gaps—if not errors—in the Church's corrective and transforming labors also worked to bring pastoral matters to the forefront of many faithful and concerned Catholics' minds and hearts. In short, "pastoral" became a "good word" whose recitation could cover a multitude of treasonous acts, sins, and doctrinal stupidities.

The post-war climate of opinion offered the "purely pastoral" camp its latest and most powerful source of support. Taking advantage of the *Zeitgeist*, a partisan organizational talent that had gone from strength to strength since the end of the First World War, and a powerful sense of mission, the personalist-pluralist alliance steered Second Vatican Council away from the much more Tradition-friendly methodology its original program envisioned. Instead of a Tridentine-inspired, joint dogmatic-pastoral approach, a purely pastoral language and strategy was adopted. This ended by serving the cause of the willful manipulators of freedom and the word merchants profiting from their custom. In the name of a practical, pragmatic openness to understanding and dealing with the new and diverse needs of "modern man", the inevitable happened. The council

## 1072 BLACK LEGENDS

proceeded to confront a host of problems on the basis of a personalist and pluralist definition of what the words “pastoral” and “pragmatic” meant. And we have now clearly seen that this definition works in union with a vision of nature, man, and freedom that are not only different from traditional Catholic teachings on the subject, but also totally destructive to the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history.

Vatican Council as such could not and did not claim to act infallibly once it specifically proclaimed its intention to deal with issues on the pastoral as opposed to the doctrinal plane. Therefore, it could only bind consciences to those of its edicts that actually recalled already known teachings on faith and morals. Unfortunately, however, the personalist-pluralist victors at the council had as little interest in the substantive teaching of the “old” Magisterium regarding infallibility as on any other subject. Their concern was simply how the principle of infallibility could practically be used to promote their agenda. Joining together to interpret the council’s “spirit”, they were happy to play upon believers’ respect for the traditional teaching Church to give to what were purely pastoral decisions the aura of dogmatic pronouncements---more than that, the *sole* dogmatic pronouncements that modern Catholics were obliged to heed and obey in the future. Hence, the victory of a powerful faction serving an ideology blessing an irrational mindlessness was unjustifiably cloaked with the authority of the Holy Spirit – that same Holy Spirit whose infallible doctrinal guidance was at first rejected, lest it manifest the intolerant, closed, and pastorally divisive behavior that authoritative direction was chastised for displaying in the past.



## ITS SAVOR

Moreover, the fideism underlying the personalist and pluralist mentality choked a true Catholic inquiry into this mysterious return of the Holy Spirit from exile, just as it choked a true examination of anything else that happened at the council. Instead, it used its usurped magisterial role to demand Catholic recitation of the usual slogans regarding the need for pragmatism, openness, freedom, and peace as an alternative to serious Faith and Reason. Harping on its mandate from the Holy Spirit, it then tossed to the winds that entire corpus of nineteenth and twentieth-century theological, philosophical, political, historical, psychological, and sociological wisdom that had painstakingly analyzed exactly why such pastoral methodology could only end in a willful assault upon the full message of the Word in history. It ignored the fact that such pastoral methodology had actually already engaged in a similar assault once before, in the eighteenth century. Along with this wisdom went the guidance of the Church Fathers, previous ecumenical gatherings, the decisions of nearly two millennia of Popes, the canonical tradition, and everything else that could be cited to understand the extent of the council's authority or put it into its proper historical and dogmatic perspective. The conquerors of the council insisted that a failure to heed their interpretation of its decisions, if not a sign of insanity pure and simple, could not signify anything other than a stubborn closure of one's heart to the triumphant judgment of the Holy Spirit. In short, the triumph of openness was celebrated by shutting the door imperiously on the whole teaching of the Word Incarnate in history and the Seeds of the Logos harmonized together with it. "Words" alone were allowed to proclaim the Incarnate Word; words that servants of "nature

as is", from Isocrates to Marsilius of Padua and beyond, would have much appreciated – and similarly abused.

Before moving on, let us remember that another extremely dangerous contemporary accusation lurked behind every attack upon a critic's stubborn closing of his heart to the will of this new kind of Holy Spirit: namely, his possession of a "fascist mentality". The fascist label was used as an effective club to brutalize and silence any and all criticism. The outside secular world, ecstatic over the council's acceptance of the reigning *Zeitgeist*, joined in the rhetorical game, with the late Pope Pius XII turned into the symbol of an evil fascist spirit still festering in the bosom of the Catholic beast. Ironically, a Church that had been consistently chastized for the slightest interference in the realm of the State was thereby proclaimed guilty of not having interfered enough, at least where the Nazis were concerned, and of continuing to harbor villains justifying this unforgivable failure of ecclesiastical responsibility in her sacred precincts. The agents of a purge deemed to be essential to the restoration of Church health were personalists who, more than anyone else, had themselves nurtured a philo-fascist outlook in the interwar period. And, sadly, all this was to prove to serve a new and global unity of Church and State, designed to ensure the "public order" dear to the hearts of legalists of all previous ages on the basis of a religion submissive to the demands of "nature as is" alone.

Pity the poor opponent of the "Spirit of Vatican Two" who wandered into the realm of the post-conciliar personalist interpreting the infallible Magisterium of the Catholic Church! He was like someone going to a dinner party given by a man who had declared cannibalism to be the expression of his and all his other guests' deepest spiritual longing.

## ITS SAVOR

Terrified at the thought of taking exception to his host's proclivity lest he be identified as an unrealistic, shriveled-up, anti-social individualist lacking faith in the action of the Spirit—and a fascist to boot—the poor soul would be eaten alive; devoured, ironically, at the command of the only *true* representative of the principle of the Triumph of the Will who was present. At least the victim could console himself with the thought that he was not alone in his misery. The same fate was ready to befall all of the teaching tools of the Mystical Body of Christ; all the teaching tools, and Catholics in the United States, Europe, and the Third World along with them.

*D. The Corrective and Transforming Tools Taken Captive*

Needless to say, such a revolution required a massive weakening of all existing Church teaching authorities and Catholic pastoral initiatives working to correct and transform the world in Christ.<sup>21</sup> Every thought and action of every pontiff, council, curial office, bishop, priest, religious, and faithful could now boldly be criticized by the infallible heralds of the Holy Spirit—Stalinists in Catholic garb—whose own judgments could, by definition, never be brought into question. The rhetoricians of the movement promoted this critical weakening of the Church's administration and heritage at the council and in its aftermath through the Press, the numerous organizations lobbying for change in Rome, and the "experts", the *periti*, who served as the spokesmen for the winning faction's prominent bishops. All these forces,

---

<sup>21</sup> For the below, see Mayeur, XIII, 112-341; Jedin and Dolan, X, 96-177; Chiron, *Paul VI*, pp. 253-344.

together, cited conciliar documents such as the pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, as well as the Declaration on Religious Liberty, as proof that the Church was now committed to working together with broad "human values" that taught her "signs of the times" requiring neither censure nor ecclesiastical guidance. Post-conciliar committees did especially yeoman service in carrying out the task of dismantling and destruction. They continued to utter the voice of the Holy Spirit in slogan after slogan, mantra after mantra, as they sucked out whatever traditional substance could legitimately be found in the now "dogmatic" pastoral decrees and refilled them with suggestions for a renewal in line with the *Zeitgeist*. Replacement of appreciation for dogmatic truth by an openness to substance-free sloganeering was essential for the creation of that false "pilgrim spirit" ready to accept everything that the prophets of the here and now presented to the orphaned "People of God", without the slightest pretence of its Catholic correction and transformation.

Of all the doctrines that had to disappear, those of the Mystical Body of Christ and Christ as King of the universe were symbolically the most important. Both, together, emphasized much too clearly the direct connection of the Church with the Word Incarnate, her fleshly character as an organized society, and the practical effect that Christ's appearance in history must have on man and all of nature. Both, together, forced society to seek to organize itself according to "the common good" rather than whatever "worked" to provide "public order". The term "People of God", stripped free of any of its more traditional interpretations and loaded down with Ockhamite, Mennaisien, personalist, and pluralist meaning, gave to the

## ITS SAVOR

Church that democratic atmosphere in which modern factions have most effectively worked to enforce their will on their undiscerning and self-immolating victims.

Such essential changes of emphasis on the doctrinal level were accompanied by a retreat from the ultramontanist-inspired, papal-centered administration of the Universal Church favored since the second half of the nineteenth century. This was exchanged for a "collegial" approach to ecclesiastical governance, one that sought to hand greater power over to national episcopacies and local ordinaries. But these latter forces had proven themselves historically to be much more vulnerable to narrow secular pressure and self-interested factions than the Papacy. In consequence, the ever-more self-confident personalist and pluralist interpreters of the now painfully hyperactive "Holy Spirit" could control their decisions even more effectively. The natural human values these prophets promoted were identified as the ones that the bishops and the Spirit Himself preferred—to the detriment of the other members of the Blessed Trinity and the Church's Magisterium as a whole. Ecclesiastical government thus fell from episcopal as well as papal hands. Constant papal traveling added to the destruction of normal administrative activity. It kept "the cat" so busy planning, taking, and assessing pastoral visits---along with potentially bankrupting the dioceses to which he traveled---that "the mice" could play at their massive work of dismantling the past and substituting the guidance of approved "natural energies" virtually undisturbed.

Meanwhile, traditional disciplines designed for the formation of Catholic theologians and philosophers, beginning with speculative theology and ending, ultimately,

even with Holy Scripture itself, were swiftly emasculated as well, discredited as “contingent, outside forces” weighing down upon the energies of the present moment. Submission to such vital signs of the time promised a bright new day “when all will prophesy” with the spirit of “immediacy” of the first Christians. “Real world” problems, “felt reality”, “contextualization”, “the kerygma of travel”, and other slogans that storytellers of past eras would have envied inventing were dinned into the ears of seminarians, students, and congregations to the confusion of the faithful and the enhancement of the power of the servants of “nature as is” inside the Church. And these slogans were destined to change whenever the Roman, national, diocesan, and parish committees of personalist and pluralist experts that equated their voices with that of the Holy Spirit felt the need for new, prophetic bumper stickers to cement their hold on an “energetic People of God” unfailingly commanded to keep still, be silent, and obey.

Before moving on to discuss the effects of this weakening of Church authority on the political and social environment that reformers of all past ages saw to be of such great importance to the substantive labor of correction and transformation in Christ, let us first turn our attention to its impact upon the public prayer life of the Catholic world. For, as we have repeatedly reiterated, the daily worship of the Church is undoubtedly the most crucial of all the tools required for telling the varied members of the Mystical Body of Christ a good story about the true story of the Faith and its consequences for man and nature.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> For the following, see Davies, *Liturgical Revolution*, I (Cranmer’s *Godly Order*) and II (*Pope Paul’s New Mass*); K. Gamber, *The*

## ITS SAVOR

This tale, the traditional liturgy told in a truly Word-friendly fashion. That liturgy was aimed entirely towards the worship of the Almighty and “seeing things” through His eyes. The most obvious sign of this orientation was its guidance by a priest who---*pace* Claudel---“did not turn his back on God”. In relating its story about things divine, the traditional liturgy consistently focused upon the central truth that mankind can only understand life and fulfill its real promise by means of a total subordination to the Trinity and its plan for Creation. Yet, just as the Father sent the Son for our Redemption, that same God-centered liturgy also identified man’s mission to nurture the whole of his created environment in order to gain its assistance in aiming his mind and heart to all the perfect gifts that only come from above, from Divine Light. In fulfillment of this mission, Catholics put all of the magnificent tools of nature to use in God’s worship, and with a rational and classical respect for the hierarchy of values in the process.

The holistic traditional liturgy then reinforced Catholic men in their mission regarding all the rest of their temporal activity. Believers left Holy Mass awakened to the Divine Light and to God’s grace. They therefore expected to see the whole of nature used, liturgically, to tell a good story that pressed them onwards to understand and fulfill the goal of the entirety of existence. Regularly awakened to the value of each and every aspect of nature in the service of God through exposure to the traditional liturgy, believers readily

---

*Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background* (Una Voce, 1993); D. von Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality* (Longmans, 1943).

understood that they required the aid of authoritative communities as well as aesthetic tools. For, despite what those who wished to leave the individual naked and exposed to the Triumph of the Will might argue, serious disciples of the Word recognized that human beings did not reach “adulthood” through liberation from their various *natural* “structures of dependence”. Truly awakened Catholics grasped the importance of employing the authoritative labors of as many of these structures of dependence as they possibly could find, because all were a positive stimulus to a full grasp of reality and to proper, effective human action.

Moreover, they recognized that none of these natural tools could ever be rejected in the name of the “sea change” promised by preachers of an immediate apocalypse or millennium; that none became superfluous due to the arrival of some fresh, charismatic guide. None of these tools could be rejected due to having reached a “higher consciousness” as interpreted by prophetic voices that were not those of Christ’s Church. True students of the Word, enlightened by a liturgy that focused them on the riches of God rather than passing parochial enthusiasms, realized that *all* natural aids to human knowledge and action would *always* be necessary, each and every one, and this until the end of time—so long, that is to say, as they accepted the corrective and transformative ministrations of Christ; and so long as believers stood on constant guard against their sinful misuse of all such gracious gifts of God.

Turn of the century modernism may have failed chiefly because of its exaggeratedly intellectual character. If reformers were to have a renewed opportunity to reshape the Church, they were indeed well advised to go about their business through the more powerful and popular tool of the



## ITS SAVOR

liturgy. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the post-conciliar interpreters of the hyperactive Holy Spirit followed this counsel. The result was that the most immediate and effective consequence of the kidnapping of Second Vatican Council was a liturgical revolution. And what emerged from the attendant upheaval was an incomparable victory for the business as usual demands of an uncorrected and untransformed nature.

No one ought to be surprised either by this liturgical revolution or its consequences. We have seen that interwar experiments testified to its imminent arrival. And if personalists insisted that Catholicism was obliged not merely to take into account but to bend unquestioningly to what was defined as the “Spirit of God tending towards convergence” in each and every vital community and culture that it encountered, the Church was equally bound radically to alter her liturgical practices to suit the pressing demands of her vital environment.

But diving into a naturalist atmosphere inevitably had to put men to sleep regarding the full promise of the created world. It had to teach them to end their hunt for nature’s “logos” at the uncorrected, passionate, community level—merely the first step in their enlightenment from a Socratic and Word-drenched standpoint. It had to teach them to stop looking for nature’s *logos* at a level that encouraged those communal “happenings” wherein societies worshipped themselves: exactly the kind of liturgical prayer that Rousseau suggested as the expression of the civil religion of the natural, virtuous State. And guidance of worship by what took place at this level alone was a direction ensuring indulgence in all of the evils identified throughout the course

of the present work; indulgence both in what Dietrich von Hildebrand called ordinary or "classical" sins, as well as in all the bizarre sicknesses that ideological and libertine madness had discovered and cultivated in man in recent times.

Worse still, liturgy conceived of as a response to uncorrected nature was bound to seek yet more guidance each time a vital, active interpreter of spirits identified yet another energetic community with a message to which an open, pastoral Church must give witness. A Catholicism that continually pursued such novelty, while abandoning, as insensitive prejudice, all education and tradition standing in the way of a wholehearted acceptance of each new message coming in from the external world, was stripped of any means of judging whether it really ought to be ready to incorporate the teachings it received from its environment into the liturgy or not. Indeed, in the long run, its self-dismantling deprived it of any means of nurturing any memory of any doctrinal, philosophical, or historical point of reference to which to relate the liturgy at all.

Even giving the benefit of the doubt to the liturgical proponents of "listening to energetic nature"---presuming, that is to say, that they expected to hear messages basically in line with what they customarily took for granted as True, Good, and Beautiful---the awakened Catholic of an intransigent mentality knew exactly what lay in store from their approach. Turning inward, away from the focus on the truly other, involved, as Dietrich von Hildebrand so well described in *Transformation in Christ*, an ever-deeper plunge into the untutored self; into its temptation to view what was cheapest, most immediately impressionable to the senses, and most parochial as somehow more "real", more rewarding and more expressive of the will of God.

## ITS SAVOR

This began, for many contemporary liturgical revolutionaries, by tapping into soldiers' memories of hearing Mass on the back of a jeep, amidst their comrades, with the sounds of artillery around them. Liturgists stirring up such memories contrasted the "truth" of that soldierly experience with the "artificiality" of their liturgical and parish life under normal peacetime circumstances, calling for reform to recapture the lost ties with this more serious "reality". Such a mentality also explained why certain priests in German labor camps, close to the pre-war liturgical movement, treated the hell that they endured therein as providing a more clear and "normal" teaching about the truth of life than the refined peacetime world that had nurtured them.

While in no way denying the potential value of the wretched wartime experience in focusing someone on existential questions, it is necessary to note that its possession of a *certain* merit is beside the point. The crux of the matter lies in whether or not the experience of overpowering hellishness should become the supreme and sole guide to the construction of the liturgy; whether Christian order should be built upon the vivid context of experienced hell; whether the man who wished to found Christendom upon reflection aiming upwards was merely a slave of a crippled past or the authentic voice of the mission of the Word in history. Modern, personalist-inspired liturgists opted for reality as hell. And this, as Professor David White notes, helps us to explain why our contemporaries devour Dante's *Inferno* while his *Paradiso* goes generally unread. It is because "real nature", for them, is hell, and hell is the defining element of their lives. Were heaven to be opened up before them, they would not want to enter into its precincts. The spirit of the death camp

constructed by the doctrine of total depravity guided their whole mind, their whole heart, and their whole soul.

Whatever the case, the post-conciliar liturgical revolution abandoned that primary focus on God that unveiled the full meaning of the Word in history and, by showing nature its true vocation, helped still more to focus human eyes on higher things. The public prayer of the Church was drowned in energetic communal concerns as interpreted by the strongest element most active in shaping devotional life. These concerns diversified *ad infinitum*, as each nation, diocese, parish, and faction within a local community discovered its own startling new spirit, needs, and message to teach. True to the development of the principle of total depravity through modern naturalism, this has meant that the more drab on the one hand and the more grossly sensual on the other, the greater these concerns have been identified with what was thought to be truly “real”. A single liturgical revolution thus translated into endless liturgical revolutions “listening” to every “need” from that of the capitalist robber baron to the homosexual—with the former making good money off of the new missals and calendars dictated by each further change in church architecture and ritual practice.

Let us reiterate that such new rites do not emerge spontaneously out of any true—even if misled—communal desire, but, typically, through the revolutionary mediation of vital teachers of the will of the community, who decide what can and cannot be “heard” as the authentic voice of “The People”. I once witnessed an example of this phenomenon when I saw a Hispanic community singing traditional hymns to the Madonna silenced so that it could be forced to stutter other unknown tunes, declared by the liturgical experts who had created them *ex nihilo* to be more consonant with the true

## ITS SAVOR

Latino spirit. Everywhere, the starting principle of the more serious liturgical movement—the need to go back to the ancient sources and their organic development—has given way to a reliance on no teaching other than that of these interpreters of the community will and a demand for “faith” in the spirit and signs of the times that they reveal. And everywhere, anyone criticizing the changes demanded has been chastised not on the basis of what such criticisms really are—a call back to true faith, to objective use of reason, and to a respect for that traditional spirit that any real culture always takes seriously. Instead, their criticisms have been maligned as something racist, elitist, restrictive, anti-pluralist, and, inevitably, fascist. Deny the wishes of the liturgical revolutionaries and the doors of the concentration camp swing open just around the corner.

This now brings us to the question of the political and social effects of the “pastoral” dogmatists. Their approach obviously required a rejection of any organization with the distinct purpose of promoting the corrective and transforming work of the Word in history. It obliged not just Catholic States and political parties but all Catholic Action groups as well to renounce whatever unique religious character they possessed as a precondition for survival. After all, the existence of such a Catholic aura represented an “outside context” and a “contingency” weighing down upon the immediate contemporary vitality of the population of any particular land. The People of God were meant to witness—not to teach a religious or a rational principle. They were meant to witness to the messages that their prophets wished them to bring to perfection “in the Spirit”, and *exactly* as those prophets interpreted them. If they did not do so, the court of

modernity had once again to proclaim judgment upon them as the philo-Nazis they obviously were.

Still, the voluntary abandonment of the Word-drenched mission had to lead to a Catholic subservience to whatever force was most powerful in any given nation, diocese, or parish. If the personalist, pluralist, post-conciliar prophet was already an enthusiastic spokesman for such a force, then all would go well for him, since it would show that he had chosen his vital energy accurately. If he had not read the signs of the times properly—that is to say, if he had not correctly judged who possessed the strongest will in the environment in which he operated—then he had but two options before him. He could bend his message to fit that of the still more powerful force triumphing around him, or he could seek to raise the People's consciousness to his own view through cultivation of some form of underground opposition to the stronger group or individual will.

Whatever the nature of the winning energy, the future for the Catholic peoples of the world was dim. The door to the influence of the libertines and criminals who most benefit from pluralism was opened wide into their communities. Invitations to accommodate themselves to their willful definition of freedom and use it to secure their own illicit desires while still calling themselves Catholic were too enticing for many to turn down. In the meantime, firm believers found that they were pressed to work more openly, more closely, and more approvingly with the dominant elements in the society around them than they had ever been expected to do by any past pontiff or monarch who had overstepped his proper authority. But the nature of this union of conquered Church and Triumphant Will differed

## ITS SAVOR

somewhat depending upon whether it took place in the United States, in Europe, or in the Third World.

*E. Captive Catholic America*

Let us broadly examine the *general* practical results in greater detail with reference first of all to the situation of Catholics in the United States, where pluralism had already long been the civil religion, protected by a host of powerful inquisitors in the courts, the Press, and the educational system. A study of America is especially important given that the model of the United States was supposed to dispel all doubts about the merits of the pluralist methodology as Defender of the Peace and Freedom of the believing Catholic population.<sup>23</sup>

“Diving into” and gaining the graces of the freedom and order offered by the Divine Republic meant obtaining something that “sounded Christian”, both because it could easily be related, historically, to its fundamental Puritan Protestant roots and because supporters of the Moderate Enlightenment always preferred to keep the language of God in their public speech even after they had lost all traditional faith in Him. We have seen that the system’s “godliness” was convincing to American Catholics of the turn of the twentieth century. It seemed even more credible to their post-Second World War descendants, thrilled, as they were, that their country stood out as the chief “God-fearing” nation sheltering the world against atheist Soviet Marxism, and,

---

<sup>23</sup> On Catholicism and the United States, see Mayeur, XII, 833-932; XIII, 255-341; Jedin and Dolan, X, 642-671.

therefore, the only “practical” alternative to godless Communism. But Catholic Church “freedom” within this system really meant a number of things that had precious little to do with the definition of the term “God-fearing” according to a Tradition that praised the Word over words and equated liberty with correction and transformation in Christ.

First of all, it meant the freedom to rip the communal authority of the Mystical Body of Christ to shreds, reducing it to the status of a religious “club”. All attempts to hold onto Church authority and, worse still, to try to use that authority to lead men to Christ, were chastised as assaults on “real freedom”, “common sense”, and “public order”. They were condemnable in the eyes of the anti-institutional, atomistic God of Protestantism, the anti-institutional Nature of the liberty-loving Moderate Enlightenment, and the postwar anti-institutional inquisition permanently on campaign against the revival of fascism.

Commitment to true freedom had therefore to be displayed in a very precise and by now quite familiar two-fold fashion: by a show of contempt for the Church’s real self, and through an enthusiastic acceptance of the one unquestionable doctrine guiding human life--an “inclusive” openness to diversity. This was expressed by vigorously favoring whatever had *not* been approved of or encouraged by authentic Catholic tradition. As suggested above, each “open”, “inclusive” advance required a new statement of principles, a new program of renewal, a different kind of educational curriculum, and, very frequently, a fresh diversion of ever more limited parish funds to alterations in the physical structure of the local church. These changes always replaced something distinctly familiar with ideas and



## ITS SAVOR

symbols that were not. And such changes were destined to continue so long as there was something new to "integrate"; even, as Jean Mienveille said, the vital, lived message of the Antichrist himself.<sup>24</sup>

An embrace of the freedom to be inclusive predictably led to the domination of the Catholic branch of the American Pluralist Church by precisely those sort of strong, clever, unscrupulous individuals and groups to which the American scene had historically been inclined to give birth. There is no need to explain once again why and how this resulted in the overwhelming influence of commercial, sexual, and psychologically disturbed crochets, as well as the pseudo societies that promoted and sustained them. Plato, in *The Republic*, explained this phenomenon much better than I could do here, even without having experienced the history producing such results.

Suffice it to say that openness, freedom, inclusivity and fear of intolerant divisiveness disturbing the peace of the American desert led to the "deconstruction" of even the most sublime Catholic themes on purely sexual grounds; to a concern for justifying everything religious on the basis of its market appeal or adherence to "professional business standards"; to democratic votes determining which doctrines were acceptable in the eyes of charismatic prelates, pastors, religious, theologians, journalists, and certifiable madmen; to the churning of all Catholic life through endless committees, councils, chanceries, and advertising firms, making approach to what were supposed to be compassionate, pastoral-

---

<sup>24</sup> Meinveille, on the problems of the "double magisterium", pp. 159-169, 292-293.

minded, post-conciliar bishops something akin to seeking audience with semi-divine oriental potentates.

Hence, the Catholic branch of the American Pluralist Church came to mirror the war of all against all found everywhere in the atomistic society that it adulated. It regularly intensified this war under the pressure exerted by groups and individuals who expanded the borders of what "common sense" must accept for the sake of peace and consensus. Let us once again remember that it was this "multiplication of factions" constantly battling one another that James Madison praised in the *Federalist* as the special political and social tool of the American Defender of the Peace. Peace, this system certainly has provided, at least for the moment, although the tranquility coming with it has little to do with the "peace that passeth all understanding" that was dear to the Church's former self.

Secondly, individual believers discovered that their apparently radical *personal* as opposed to communal freedom did not guarantee them the right to be "more Catholic than the Church". Given the influence of other powerful elements in American life, that personal freedom also had to be exercised in a way that did not disturb the peace and order preferred by the supporters of the Moderate Enlightenment and their heirs. It also had to be "inclusive" and avoid "divisiveness". Of course individual Catholics had the liberty to present their own varying magisterial teachings for the guidance of their restricted, impotent, cocktail party worlds. Nevertheless, their practical, public, political, social, and economic lives had to be different; more in line with the dismal vision presented to the children victimized in *Hard Times*, as expressed by whoever could most powerfully interpret it in their immediate parochial circumstances.

## ITS SAVOR

Pluralist insistence on separation of thought and action thus gave individual believers the freedom to cultivate a profound psychological disorder; the freedom to become mentally ill; the freedom to live a schizophrenic existence. It is now worth exploring *this* horrible truth at some length.

Fallen man in general already suffers from the temptation to separate purpose and action and then to go along his path to eternity as though such clinical separation were not destructive. Pluralism constructs its whole methodology upon encouragement of this temptation, with major consequences for the unity of the human personality. It praises the man who thinks one thing about his purpose in life and behaves as though his actions in the society around him need not be coordinated with that goal. Hence, it permits him to believe that he has done his duty to the truth and to his conscience if he asserts his convictions about the meaning of existence but avoids the divisive actions in daily life that would give them concrete significance. Most men would like to be courageous but would also appreciate calm and lack of friction with their neighbors. Pluralism provides them a way to have both. It makes courage easy by defining it in a manner that disturbs nothing and no one--least of all the brave men in question and their ordinary routine. Whether a person sees the contradictory situation this prohibition leaves him in or not, it marks him in a way that deforms his personality. It obliges him to turn in upon himself, to deny the crucial importance of his social environment in shaping his destiny, to construct a dike against all energetic action founded upon Faith and Reason, and to declare an introspective sterility to be the normal condition of life. I am, therefore, in no way exaggerating when I say that pluralism

literally creates psychological disorders that drive individuals and societies under its influence insane.

Life in a pluralist world has the same disordering effects on even the most well-intentioned Catholics, so much so that they unconsciously prevent Christ from being King over themselves as individuals. Many orthodox bishops, priests, religious, and lay leaders do, indeed, still look for guidance from the Catholic Magisterium. Nevertheless, because they have been formed within a pluralist environment, they are subject to what St. Cyril of Alexandria called *dypsychia*. They have two guiding spirits; two guiding lights. Their Catholic Magisterium is combined with, and ultimately subordinated to, a second, Pluralist Magisterium. It is this Pluralist Magisterium that shapes their concrete daily actions, their whole way of life, their "second nature." This second Magisterium permits the first to survive, but only in the fashion indicated above: in the private sphere. Thus, as we have seen, it tells them that they have done all that they can legitimately do for their beliefs if they merely talk.

Talk is good, but it is not enough to assure Christ's reign. Popes, prelates, priests, and every living Catholic man, woman, and child could reaffirm and recite every word of every fine catechism, pastoral decree, conciliar and papal pronouncement, and canonical judgment from the time of the apostles down to the present, from dawn until dusk, without it necessarily making a bit of difference in their lives. A simultaneous commitment to the concrete Pluralist Magisterium would show the world that all such talk was simply impotent chatter. If someone lives under the influence of this second Magisterium, he will *act* only with reference to things that it considers important, undercutting the value of what he *says*. A well-intentioned, orthodox Catholic who has

## ITS SAVOR

digested the messages of pluralist culture that bombard him day in and day out will conclude that he cannot put true Catholic models into practice. He will presume that he must act in a way that pluralism considers to be practical and pragmatic. Pluralism reminds him that theology, philosophy, history and everything else that can really help him to understand the full implications of his Faith for his personal life are not “useful” in our sexualized, commercialized, democratic Empire of the World. This concrete Pluralist Magisterium drives home the argument that all of his fine Catholic words must remain just words lest they become dangerous and divisive. But it also assures him at one and the same time that Catholicism cannot help but prosper in a pluralist society. Hence, it teaches him the “good story” that distorting Christianity along pluralist lines in daily life is the best way to gain benefits for the Faith. In other words, his second Magisterium gives him a dagger to commit religious and cultural suicide. He uses it without ever realizing what he is doing since he is, after all, still reciting the correct orthodox words, in which he firmly believes.

Allow me to offer but a single example. I know of one good bishop—and there are many more like him—who delivers excellent public talks on Catholic catechesis. The Catholic Magisterium is honored in every one of his words. Still, he prides himself on being a practical, pastoral, post-conciliar leader. Therefore, his diocese is filled with practical programs of the kind suggested by the Pluralist Magisterium. But exactly the same type of irrational enthusiasts and willful bureaucrats who dominate unorthodox dioceses administer these programs. Both programs and administrators are focused upon the latest sexual obsessions, the most up-to-

date commercial gimmicks, or the best in anti-authoritarian democratic changes. The bishop does not think of stopping their antics, since he, too, has been shaped by pluralism. He fears that actions against them would render him naïve, impractical, undemocratic and divisive. To prove that he has no sympathy for such evil tendencies, he goes out of his way to encourage their projects. The faithful learn from such programs and such stewards exactly what it is that the bishop's orthodox statements really mean in daily life: absolutely nothing. If the faithful try to build their Catholicism upon the innumerable recommendations of diocesan bureaus and spokesmen, they will never have time to investigate Catholic Tradition as a whole, to see whether or not these "practical" projects are actually as good as they are told.

If the dilemma is pointed out to the bishop, he often reacts vigorously, but in a way that aids the pluralist cause and hurts Catholic Tradition still further. He calls attention to his personal orthodoxy, which no one doubts, but which is simply not sufficient to deal with the problems of the diocese. He acts as though his charisma as bishop guarantees the legitimacy of pastoral methods that cannot really lay claim to infallibility. If one insists upon the distinction of doctrine and prudential action and continues the critique, making reference to a variety of arguments from Catholic theology, philosophy, history, psychology and sociology to demonstrate what is happening around him, a fideist pluralist bell goes off in his head. He dismisses his critics on pluralist grounds, for closed-minded, divisive attitudes; for lack of "faith" in the methods dictated by the council and its "spirit." He points to the pope, who points to the council. Their statements reiterating Catholic doctrine are called forth

## ITS SAVOR

to assure the critics to have no fear. One might then try to indicate, yet again, that it is not the words of the council, the pope, and the bishop himself that are under question, at least when these merely repeat orthodox teaching, but the practical, contradictory methodology accompanying them.

Still, once this point has been reached, further discussion is hopeless. Nothing is permitted to bring into question the degree to which such methodology is *de fide* and valid. No rational evidence of what has transpired, in practice, by following it is allowed in court. The bishop insists upon defending the truth and simultaneously encouraging its enemies to subvert it. The new age of freedom and reason within the Church requires Catholics to abandon the free use of their faith and their reason to complain of the destruction of the diocese. At best, the bishop laments the manner in which some people reject "true" pluralism and deny the Catholic Church's right to have her full message heard. But when he does so it is he who is deceived. Many of the very servants he defends are active in smothering that full message and working, consciously or unconsciously, to make sure that Catholics do the only thing that "true" pluralism really permits them to do: emasculate and destroy themselves.

Finally, both the Mystical Body of Christ as an institution and her individual members are given the freedom to thank profusely the powerful, competing, civil religion preached by the American Pluralist Church not only for protecting them better than any other force in human history but for expressing their Catholic beliefs in a more godly fashion as well. This, in one sense, is nothing new. We have repeatedly seen that the *Zeitgeist* of each and every era produces

powerful “traditions” and “customs” of its own, sufficient to influence Catholics eager to “succeed” in their particular environment to ignore and even revile what their real traditions and customs teach them. Supporters of supposedly practical, prudent, pragmatic, successful, and therefore apostolic “traditions”, such as the “traditions” of the Sacred Empire, the corrupt papal and episcopal courts and curias of the late Middle Ages, or the Most Christian Kings and Divine Republics of the early modern era, all divinized ideas and practices that were actually not part of Catholic Tradition at all, but, rather, errors and abuses. They all then treated critics of such false traditions as wild-eyed and destructive zealots, even heretics, reminding us, once again, that nothing does more to aid and abet a nightmare than an unwillingness to admit that it really is disturbing our true peace and quiet.

From the end of the nineteenth century, American Catholics were pressured to join this unhappy historical club with greater insistence than ever before. They were more and more raised on the same national heroes, myths, symbols, rituals and sacred texts as their non-Catholic neighbors, and actually fought for these in two world wars. Patriotism seemed to demand that they jell the civil religion of their homeland together with their baptismal faith. Thinkers began to tell them to accept the dicta of the great men of America as Catholic in spirit, if not, indeed, integral to the Deposit of Faith itself; that the Founding Fathers were Doctors of the Church; that "tolerance", as the Founders' hero, John Locke, proclaimed, was the essence of “true” Christianity; that a full embrace of the American “heritage” actually enhanced the “Catholic Moment” in history.

With the added push given by Second Vatican Council and its exposure of Catholics to whatever was the strongest



## ITS SAVOR

force in the world around them, they now embraced this heritage with wild abandon. A corrupt eighteenth century vision was treated as though it were the perennial message of the Church. Everything desired by Puritan, Whig, and Moderate Enlightenment thought, as transmitted through the will of the Founders of the Divine Republic, gained ecclesiastical blessing. 1776 became the date when grace really entered the world for Catholics as well, leaving all those saints who were transformed in Christ without experiencing its impact lacking in serious foundation for their holiness. For sanctity was achieved not through dancing the dance of life according to the music of the spheres, but by mastering the rhythms suggested by the ever downward spiraling, materialist-inspired "common sense" of the American way of life.

Catholic subservience to the principles of pluralism had another side effect as well. Left to its own devices, the American Religion was bound to wreak havoc with the world that Catholics previously loved. When Catholics attributed the good that they saw in America to the truth of the false ideas guiding their nation, and even declared such ideals to be Catholic ones, they helped to bring on the impending disaster even more swiftly. They ceased to apply that healthy, distinctively Catholic pressure that had contributed to the defense of the remnants of a traditional-minded Protestantism so that both, together, might divert the sickly American tradition away from the logic of its own beliefs and towards more suitable goals. In doing so, they allowed the opportunity for American culture to degenerate more quickly and systematically into the nightmarish nowhere land we see around us today. With nothing uniquely Catholic to contain

it, a Protestant-Enlightenment society that had been falsely identified as Catholic-friendly has resulted in what it was bound to produce: a new Sack of Rome.

### *F. Captive Catholic Europe*

Let us remember that an all too similar version of this conquest of Catholicism portrayed as the will of the Holy Spirit has played out in Europe as well as in North America.<sup>25</sup> The strong, clever, unscrupulous individuals and groups that have taken advantage of the dismantling of the corrective and transforming mission of the Word in history have varied, due to circumstances, just as much in the Old World as in the New. Still, two variants on the same basic theme should be noted in discussing the situation in Europe.

One involves the fact that, unlike the United States, whose tradition was Protestant from the very outset, Europe had actually once been Catholic. It had also been home to a Greco-Roman culture whose Seeds of the Word had been cherished by a powerful Catholic Church that had, at times, actually tried to accomplish the work that Christ had given her to do. Even if that labor had to a large degree been abandoned over the past few centuries, the imprint of this combined secular and sacred heritage was still there, in many both open and hidden forms. If the notion of a Catholic State seeking the common good, and the concept of a proper role for Catholic parties and Catholic Action had had a lengthy history anywhere, it was in Europe. This meant that the demand for an assault upon that powerful, natural and

---

<sup>25</sup> Mayeur, XIII, 255-341, 385-425; Jedin, X, 505-641; Fattorini, pp. 95-113; Jemolo, pp. 311-321; Cholvy and Hilaire, III, 259-495.

## ITS SAVOR

supernatural teaching had to be, if anything, perhaps still more insistent, brutal, and complete than in an America where rejecting it came more easily. Europeans had to be shown that they were under a special obligation to make one crucial exception to the otherwise inexorable command to accept and bend to the dictates of vital energy. That exception was the vital energy still displayed by Catholic-Greco-Roman culture itself. This alone had absolutely no message to tell anyone. And it had no message for the Old Continent in particular.

Luckily for the supporters of nature as is, the Second World War had already devastated Catholic political parties and much of Catholic Action. Efforts to rebuild the latter in countries where it had once been very powerful, as in Germany, were negligible even before the council began. Interpreters of the Holy Spirit made sure that whatever Catholic political and social structures were still in place after Vatican Two rapidly disappeared in the name of “human values”, pluralism, and the fight against fascism. Concordats based upon the idea of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ rather than an amorphous People of God manipulated by willful strong men were abandoned. Christian Democratic Parties proved their commitment to openness by serving as the conduits for introducing divorce and abortion into Catholic lands and seeking “historic compromises” with anti-religious forces. Catholic Action groups, where they still existed, were all transformed into versions of the *Grand Sillon*, with emphasis placed upon the technocratic skills required for the work in the media, educational, industrial, and agricultural spheres that they tackled rather than the Catholic Faith and teleological end of the people that might militate in

their ranks. Efficient, professional, pragmatic success according to the standards of the naturalist world became the model for a Europe wandering faithlessly through the desert but filled with *gaudium et spes*.

Secondly, when the council met and for several decades thereafter, there was still a Soviet Bloc to confront. That Bloc was officially guided by a Marxist-Leninist vision that continued to exercise a certain charm over many personalist spokesmen for the Holy Spirit. Moreover, let us remember that thinkers like Jacques Maritain had argued that any problems presented by Marxism-Leninism for the Christian Faith might be transcended if only they were approached with the aid of the pluralist message emerging from the United States. Hence, the post-conciliar passion for an accommodation with the existing system reflected in the so-called *Ostpolitik* pursued by the Vatican during the reign of Pope Paul VI. This policy gave *gaudium et spes* to Pax priests in their efforts to cooperate with the Peoples Republics.

Unfortunately, all this openness was to a "vital energy" that was dying a slow and painfully embarrassing death. Rather than coming to grips with a truly natural reality, what *Ostpolitik* did was to aid in giving credibility to the Marxism of the cynical apparatchiks and political opportunists who more and more dominated the Soviet Bloc. Hence, rather than helping the cause of devout Soviet Bloc Catholics who continued to suffer from the cynical but still powerful evils of a dying Marxism, *Ostpolitik* merely aided in delaying its inevitable demise. That came, ultimately, from determined confrontation with communist regimes rather than attempts to accommodate them. And when it did come, unemployed apparatchiks and opportunists easily found their way, after the Soviet collapse, into the two fields of activity provided by

## ITS SAVOR

the pluralist system for the unnaturally ambitious: multinational corporations and organized crime.

Apart from these two differences, the contemporary conquered European Catholic world looks largely similar to its victimized American Catholic counterpart. This, of course, is not particularly surprising. Given the many common Protestant or Enlightenment influences that Europe shared with the United States, the themes emphasized by the conquered Catholicism of the Old Continent were bound to be largely those same commercial, sexual, and psychologically disturbed cultural crochets, translated into endlessly evolving liturgical and moral revolutions, familiar to Americans. Insofar as European influences were different, pressure from the United States, the homeland of the new Empire of the World, unceasingly helped to direct the consequences of the abandonment of the corrective and transforming message of the Word in history down the path dictated by the culture of the now global Defender of the Peace. Sad to say, the mindlessness that this demanded would eventually wipe out memory of the European past to such a degree that all of the ideological errors bringing on the disasters that made the peace of pluralism attractive to the Old World in the first place could be forgotten and some day perhaps even repeated anew.

*G. The Captive Catholic Third World*

We have seen that intransigents were convinced that the naturalist civilization they were fighting inside Europe was guilty of terrible injustice in its dealings with the rest of the globe. Instead of allowing a different world providing further

## 1102 BLACK LEGENDS

Seeds of the Logos to be corrected and transformed in Christ, western colonial empires often suppressed legitimate aspects of native cultures or prevented their evangelization for purely utilitarian and power political motives. Intransigent Catholics would therefore not have been surprised by post-colonial movements of all kinds: neither those that reasserted legitimate native pride, nor others that expressed an illegitimate spirit of vengeance, nor still others that proclaimed commitment to one or another ideological development of a false western naturalism that had made unhappy inroads among them.<sup>26</sup>

Tragically, another outgrowth of western naturalism, in the form of that twentieth century personalist and pluralist alliance that kidnapped Second Vatican Council to serve its own agenda, continued to try to manipulate what has become known as the Third World. These Western- bred forces have labored mightily to the detriment of Catholicism in Third World lands. But they have also done so to the detriment of the native cultures that the work of the Word in history truly does respect and can actually bring to as great a fulfillment as it did Europe's classical Greco-Roman heritage. Personalism and pluralism have accomplished this negative activity through the post-conciliar advances of Liberation and Third World Theology. Both of these theologies sought to bend the corrective and transforming message of Christ to the demands of "nature as is": always, of course, as such demands were interpreted by the strongest active wills in a given land, with the prophetic voices of the personalist European heralds of the Holy Spirit chief among them.

---

<sup>26</sup> Mayeur, XIII, 343-379, 509-741; Jedin and Dolan, X, 352-377; 672-804; Letamendia, *Frei*, pp. 87-232.

## ITS SAVOR

Liberation Theology is most associated with Latin America, a vast and very diverse region, composed of countries some of which are almost entirely European, others Indian or Black, and still others highly mixed in population. A number of Latin American nations had developed serious Ninth Crusader movements, including political parties and Catholic Action associations, all of them highly conscious of the importance of corporate and State institutions for individuals living in a properly ordered society seeking the common good. Many activists, such as Garcia Moreno (1821-1875) in Ecuador, were deeply marked by the militant spirit of the intransigents and maintained close ties with the evolution of ideas and initiatives in Europe. This spelled familiarity with and enthusiasm for critiques of the evils of Protestantism and liberal capitalism, both of which were protected in Latin America through the political and cultural influence of Great Britain and the United States. Alas, it also meant familiarity and enthusiasm for the various manifestations of personalism as well.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the Second Vatican Council encouraged the increased autonomy of regional and national episcopal organizations, along with that of local ordinaries. And just as everywhere else, these proved to be highly susceptible to the self-confident guidance of the voices of the Holy Spirit interpreting the Council according to the wishes of its prophetic, personalist and pluralist conquerors. The voices of Jacques Maritain, with his so-called Integral Humanism, alongside those of the heirs of the Mounier-Uriage school of Vichy France, were especially influential and very active in various Latin American nations' episcopal circles, in the Chilean Christian Democratic Party, and in

institutions like the *Instituto Catequístico Latinoamericano*, founded in 1961.

With rapid industrial and agricultural change and the attendant social problems intensifying traditional Catholic irritation with liberal capitalism; with military governments backed by the United States threatening to dominate everywhere; with Christian Democratic Parties expanded to embrace "human values" rapidly failing, the "vital energy" expressed by movements such as those of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara gained more and more support from personalist inspired activists in the region. Personalist thinkers, both European and native, then translated their practical acceptance of the "signs of the times" into that Liberation Theology that the hyperactive Holy Spirit now commanded the Church to embrace and teach.

Liberation Theology, which interpreted the Church's Social Doctrine and the spirit of the Council according to its own time-bound political concerns, proved to be yet another support for "nature as is" in modern, revolutionary form. According to its theorists, the primary need of all men was, not surprisingly, "freedom". Dependency of any kind was the only evil in life. Native freedom in Latin America, they argued, with some justice, had been devastated by much that had happened since Columbus' arrival in 1492. Evils connected with the Industrial Revolution intensified the damage still further. Rather than the Truth that sets men free, however, what was first said to be required to put things straight was a revolution that would liberate the region from the atomistic capitalist system nurtured by the United States and its military henchmen. And insofar as the native population itself did not recognize this to be true, its insouciance was predictably ascribed to its need for a



## ITS SAVOR

systematic course in “consciousness raising”. This could be given it by releasing it from traditional parish bonds and re-organizing it in “base communities” where it could be taught what it *really* felt, in its heart of hearts, by the liberation theologians trained to read its soul. Should it balk at such training, the machine guns of the guerrilla soldiers fighting the fascist proponents of dependency could awaken it to a more suitable response.

Perhaps more significant still for the future of Catholicism in the post-colonial environment was the development of Third World Theology. This emerged out of both Protestant as well as Catholic missionary circles and began, as we have already seen, with concerns regarding “inculturation”. Whatever the true merits of inculturation may be—and I think that there are a good number, always connected closely together with the doctrine of the Seeds of the Logos—its historical alliance and its radicalization in the Catholic world in conjunction with personalism and pluralism have been a disaster. Through their influence, any attempt to convert others has been castigated as the product of “racism” and “Eurocentrism” and as an insult to the “felt reality” of the people being evangelized. The very word “missionary” has thereby become a term of abuse.

What the former “missionary” was urged to do was to “give witness” to his Faith unaffected by “outside information”, including the entirety of the Christian Tradition and the Socratic tools harmonized with it. By insisting upon an unprejudiced dive into the vital, active milieu in which the “witness” works, no contact with a vital, active historical Christ outside of and above this milieu was permitted. The objective reality of the Incarnate God-Man was thus

ultimately called into question, the very concept actually being identified as merely a "western" understanding of the work of the Spirit in human life. But all cultures are thereby reduced to ultimate meaninglessness, with none being allowed the possibility of making an objective contribution to human life capable of influencing another. All cultures become like ships passing one another in the night, with no philosophy, no theology, and no Christ as polar star above them by means of which they might navigate with precious natural cargo safely from port to port.

"Contextualization" is the term favored by the word merchants in dealing with what remains of the "witnessing" mission. Contextualists are obliged to favor whatever they find alive in native cultures in the lands unfortunate enough to endure their ministrations. Their task is to bring such living realities to their natural perfection. This is true whether one is speaking of religions of blood sacrifice, cannibalism, or the primal significance of the maternal womb. Once again, the call for unquestioning faith in the spirit of God operating in the vital active communities one encounters---unguided by an historical Christ and the objective, corrected achievements of these traditional native cultures themselves---is a recipe for self-lobotomy. It denies all merit to reason and logical judgment, sarcastically denounced by many personalists as more of that useless baggage of the crippled individual who needs to be enticed into the supra-rational vitality of community-minded personhood for his own spiritual benefit. And it is no wonder that they do so! For the more one encourages abandonment to a spirit that neither dogmatic Christian faith nor objective norms of reason and science are allowed to judge, the less one will see what that "spirit of Christ" to which he is obliged to "witness" really is.

## ITS SAVOR

Indeed, this could, at times in history, involve something that *is* good and blessed by the hands of God. But practically speaking, in our own time, and under personalist and pluralist influences, it is most often a “spirit” inspired by a libido for the base and the ugly rejected as something sinful or blasphemous by the whole of the Christian Tradition; a “spirit” interpreted by strong willed individuals and groups who themselves arbitrarily determine the essence and contours of the irresistible progress of the Holy Spirit through time. Unfortunately, those who have lost the most in this victorious advance of Third World Theology are the believing and practicing Catholics in such regions. They, like the Greek and Roman Catholics of the ancient world, know the value of the new life that they have found in Christ, even when this required abandonment of previously venerated beliefs and customs. But, then again, their views do not count. Their consciousness needs to be raised. And the Empire of the World is on the side of the bullies in the war between sophist words and the Incarnate Word.

*H. Freedom Fighting and the Irrational Power of the Zeitgeist*

The central theme of this book has been twofold: first of all, the need to take the complete message of the Word Incarnate in history seriously in order to fulfill the corrective and transforming mission of Christ; and, secondly, the recognition that taking that message of the Word seriously is of supreme benefit for natural as well as for supernatural life. We have seen that the full teaching of the Word is effectively held captive in our own day. It needs to be liberated from the

darkness of its captors' caves, so that man and nature may come to recognize once more who, exactly, their true friends and who their committed enemies really are. Our last task in the remainder of this chapter is to outline the enormous difficulties faced by any freedom fighters taking up that liberating mission in a world where even the very salt of the earth—the Church of Christ—has lost most of its savor.

Let us begin discussion of our freedom fighters' task by noting that the one thing that they do *not* have to worry about is the availability of the materials needed to teach any potential students of the Word Incarnate the fullness of His truth. All of the information required for a solid Catholic Enlightenment is readily accessible in much of the globe, out in the open air for any interested party to consult at will. Every text that could demonstrate, intellectually, what is essential to Catholicism, what is transitory, and what has elbowed its way into the Christian enterprise simply to obtain an easier ride to its own peculiar destination lies at hand. Examination of what they have to say indicates how failure to be rigorous in relating pragmatic action to eternal truth has regularly led the faithful to indulge narrow, time-bound, and often self-destructive concerns that are ultimately not in harmony with the Faith at all; concerns that have resulted in hasty and dangerous alliances with predatory "friends", and retreat from their ill-considered embrace only to run headlong into still another disastrous tryst with different but equally mismatched lovers.

Readers will remember that it was just such concerns that caused many Catholics of previous eras so to misunderstand the character of Christ's message as to bury it under the "divine" guidance of secular "sacred States" of various kinds. It was also just such concerns that brought them to "correct"

## ITS SAVOR

their blunder through the singularly more egregious error of rejecting the necessary and proper cooperation of Church and State. And it was this more recent error that invited the imprisonment of the full teaching of Christ in the exceedingly dark cave of that disguised sacred system promoted by the personalism and American pluralism that dominate our own time and place.

It is of course true that digesting all this readily available knowledge is a task that requires a systematic, disciplined, and patient labor. It is a project that, similar to the work of reform in the age following the Great Western Schism, cannot be accomplished "on the cheap". The full message of the Word can only be learned on the intellectual plane by a study of the pre-Christian world and the "Seeds of the Logos;" through an examination of the Fathers, Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Revolutionary Era; by means of consulting popes, councils, speculative and positive theology; and through meditation upon the practical mistakes that have been made by believers throughout the entire life of Christendom and the pastoral successes that their long-time labors have obtained. In short, a solid academic knowledge of the Word comes only with immersing oneself in the whole of the Tradition. It is this that we have tried to offer the reader the possibility of beginning to appreciate with the present work.

But, unfortunately, the first problem that the freedom fighters face is not that of convincing a potential convert to *persist* at the intellectual labor involved in systematically learning and digesting the full message of the Word. *The problem of liberation is primarily that of breaking the hold of non-rational influences convincing a man that it is foolish to begin to*

*undertake the work of Catholic enlightenment in the first place.* In one sense this has been the difficulty that we have been studying from the very outset, through the repeated mobilizations of non-rational customs, alongside personal and group passions and willfulness, by conscious and unconscious members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo disturbed by the desire for deeper and higher wisdom. All these powerful weapons were mustered to block the ancient hunt for the “logos” of things, the acceptance of the good and perfect gift of knowledge that could only be completed by means of a revelation from the Father of Lights, and then the proper and harmonious use of the manifold natural and supernatural tools that the Incarnation taught us to cherish and employ to understand the full meaning and purpose of our lives. The chief barricade that freedom fighters face in rousing a potential convert today is that provided by the same arsenal of non-rational weapons, but writ large. For everything in their environment, shaped as it is by the modern naturalist *Zeitgeist*, works to stifle their efforts to stir men and women to open the book of the wisdom of the Word, take it to heart, put it into effective practice, and thereby also uncover the errors and the trickery of their willful oppressors.

What this means is that the freedom fighters’ battle is not primarily a struggle against any substantive ideas that lie behind the contemporary, naturalist Empire of the World. Rationally speaking, the defenders of that order are paper tigers. Rather, theirs is a conflict with a psychological system that provides men, from cradle to grave, with a form of “obedience training” that short circuits questioning about the cave that they live in and its intellectual foundations. It is crucial to emphasize this point to avoid the illusion that the

## ITS SAVOR

better armed with rational arguments the liberators might be, the greater their chance of besting the influence of the representatives of the *Zeitgeist*. There is absolutely no question but that such rational arguments are necessary and of immense value in and of themselves. Nevertheless, strategically at least, they are not as important for the *initial* awakening of *most* captive men to the importance of opening their minds, hearts, and souls to the message of the captive Word. What ails the bulk of mankind has to be dealt with first by removing the psychological obstacles to confronting the search for the truth. And this is a much more holistic activity than that involved in ratiocination.

No Catholic freedom fighters should be surprised by this greater environmental significance. If they themselves have been awakened to the full message of the Incarnation, they already must know that dependent, created beings in a dependent, created nature—rational beings though they may be—require all the assistance that God has given them in order to understand the meaning of their existence and to dance the dance of life well. They must realize that it is through the exceedingly variegated and powerful “teachings” of literally absolutely everything in their daily environment that men build their will and courage; the will and the courage that they need not only to open their eyes to examine and digest the message of the Word that lies readily available before them but also to *believe* what their minds tell them that they must take seriously so as to follow their Faith and their Reason through to their logical practical conclusions. We have seen that it was this kind of environment that men of mind and soul sought to create, and that they were at least

partially successfully in building, since the days of Socrates – though much more effectively from the time of Christ.

Our modern environment, far from aiding the ever new ascent of Mount Tabor that such a labor entails, closes and confirms nature in its fallen state, building its political and social systems on the basis of a willful sinfulness that must never be examined lest its errors be unveiled. Modernity has thus created a world whose supposed natural laws are actually savage “calls of the wild”. Through their assistance, the already powerful mystery of iniquity works its curious charms much more effectively than in a society where its insidious effects are battled. These laws, and the institutions they inform, train men to view the truly rational and the solidly good to be pointless and insipid, while ignorance, lies, and downright filth are welcomed as something wise, beautiful, and almost irresistibly attractive. A serious invitation to investigate the foundations of the naturalist vision is, in contrast, dismissed as being nothing other than obvious, self-serving, propaganda of precisely the sort that the modern *Zeitgeist* itself both peddles and forces its customers to purchase. Bewitched and obedient populations therefore automatically reject the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo’s responsibility for evils that can easily be attributed to it. Indeed, the more patent and blameworthy the disasters that they perpetrate and their role in fomenting them actually become, the greater their vehemence in rejecting the GCSQ’s involvement in their genesis. Whole nations thereby open themselves happily to new and still more dubious explanations for why human woes are caused not by the true villains standing behind them but, rather, by the real friends of mankind – with the Word, His message, His Church, Catholics, and all those allied with them in



## ITS SAVOR

opposing the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is” at the top of the list. The naturalist vision thus profitably continues to offer “cures” which merely deepen the illness it has spread ever more widely across the globe.

Attempting to incite anyone to escape the influence of any *Zeitgeist*, along with the institutions and mentality it shapes, is an immensely complicated affair. We have repeatedly noted that it is easy to arouse people to outrage over the failure of their fellow men who did not reject the *Zeitgeist* of another era in the past that they themselves do not have to live in and confront on a daily basis. In contrast, it is extraordinarily more difficult to get them to step back and maintain a critical distance from their own time and place. Each and every *Zeitgeist*, good and bad, commandeers the whole of the ballroom in which the pilgrim dance of life unfolds and the new steps necessary to performing it well are learned. But the personalist and pluralist inspired *Zeitgeist* of this last stage of modern naturalism buries men and women in a life guided by *unnatural* structures of dependence that have been proven to provide the most effective form of anti-Word obedience training in the history of the world. This *Zeitgeist* transforms the dance of life into that especially bizarre and exhausting *danse macabre* that everyone must join in executing throughout the course of each and every day. And the debilitating work of that *danse macabre* prevents its participants from opening their eyes to seeing, learning, and doing anything that might pull them away from its inhuman and self-destructive twirl.

*I. Freedom Fighting: The Black Legends  
and the Alternative Liberal Catholic Good Story*

Let us begin our examination of the many obstacles that freedom fighters face due to the power of the *Zeitgeist* by noting what happens if they seek to respond to the specific lies of the various members of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo as embodied in the endless variety of anti-Catholic black legends and alternative good stories. Attempts to respond to these, one by one, are terribly tedious and time-consuming. After all, the opponents of correction and transformation in Christ have, by now, defined the very words forming the vocabulary of ordinary discourse. It is these subverted building blocks of the language that then are battered into the particular myths that teach the wisdom and goodness of the GCSQ and the madness and evil of the whole Catholic enterprise. The contemporary public's mind already has been molded according to the anti-Word spirit, and thus takes the existing, anti-Catholic meaning of words like "freedom", "dignity", "love", and "order" for granted. Hence, Catholics entering the fray today, long after the damage has been done, find that they need to convince the population to reexamine what it takes to be obvious "givens" in order to uncover the game that the GCSQ is playing. The editors of *La Civiltà Cattolica* had noted the difficulty of such a campaign in 1850, when they thought the frenzy had already reached its height. Imagine how burdensome they would have seen their labor to be if they could have glanced nearly two centuries into the future! And who can foretell just how much worse the situation might yet become?

Moreover, the myths that have been fabricated, along with the popular tools that have been used to drive them home, all have an accordion-like flexibility. They can readily be changed, based upon what temporarily seems to work

## ITS SAVOR

most effectively against the hated Catholic enemy. Each time any given line of argument loses its clout, a handy “new deal” can be called out of the treasury of two millennia of black legends to describe a different Christian error and the wonders emerging from opposition to it. Each of these new naturalist black legends is ultimately really based upon the same, unchanging, underlying appeal to individual and social passion and the fear of losing out in life by not satisfying it. But each is always presented in conjunction with a “discovery” that is said to be excitingly new and critical in importance.

In any case, by the time believers finally realize how historically and intellectually false one particular assault upon them is; at the moment they understand the exact way in which Catholics are stereotyped through cleverly disseminated caricatures; just when they discover a workable means of popularly and successfully answering their opponents themselves, the seized image and the Mission Statement its stereotypes embody are changed: sometimes slightly, sometimes drastically. Catholics are then left to direct their artillery against a fortress that their enemies have completely dismantled and abandoned.

Thus, to take but one recent example, by the time the faithful, armed with painstakingly accumulated historical, philosophical, and theological proofs, all finely packaged in an effective rhetorical envelope, advance to fight the repeated charge that they are enemies of technology, they find that a good number of the myth makers have radically altered their tune. Many now dedicate themselves to demonstrating that Catholics are actually the main cheerleaders for applied science’s ruthless, technologically advanced rape of the

natural environment. In other words, as Catholics lag behind clumsily to lay siege to the empty enemy citadel of technological progress, the artisans of the black legends have calmly constructed a new environmentalist one on different terrain. In fact, these word merchants currently deny all memory of ever having defended technology at all. They sadly shake their heads and chastise their obscurantist foes for yet another manifestation of that psychological immaturity which continually prevents them from dealing with “fresh, contemporary problems”.

Problems of response to black legends vary with the change in tactics as well. If one argues that any given “seized image” is founded upon historical inaccuracies, its artisans claim that it is not the literal meaning of a specific event which ultimately counts but the absolutely valid Mission Statement which the rhetorically-reconstructed historical pictures that they have painted generally embody. Only pedantic obscurantists would adore all the particulars of a dead past. If the Catholic apologist refuses to surrender and boldly attacks the central truth of that Mission Statement, its “real” historical foundation will be resurrected, reasserted, and re-ennobled. Rational refutation of the veracity of both the Mission Statement as well as its historical reference points will once again be buried under heaps of familiar, dubious, exaggerated, stereotypical illustrations of Catholic stupidity and brutality of long proven popular appeal. Even men and women without firm views on the issues in question will be entertained by the dramatic historical wrapping in which the black legends are presented, and will generally pass by their scholarly denial with a long and profound yawn. The average observer will instinctively draw from the deep and wide legendary well whenever called upon to make some

## ITS SAVOR

immediate superficial comment on historic or contemporary Catholic thought and activity.

We have seen that black legends derive from many different sources with appeal to different personalities. This, too, gives them a capacity seriously to confuse anyone honestly seeking to counter their assaults. Just when a more logical mind might think that he were debating successfully on a relatively sophisticated historical plane, the mythmakers can level an argument drawn from and appealing to their more vulgar supporters. This change of tactics requires a corresponding alteration of defensive strategy from the Christian, a lowering to the demagogic level. That modification of approach will, in turn, be condemned by insisting that dialogue only take place on the rigorous philosophical or aesthetic plane favored by other, more refined supporters of the black legends.

If the befuddled Christian, always responding to attack and never taking the initiative in this cat and mouse game, should then seek to discuss the absurdity of constantly changing the basic character of the argumentation, his opponents will emit an audible sigh of frustration. Valuable time necessary for the satisfaction of the "obvious", "business as usual" exigencies of "natural" individual and social life was being lost to satisfy the unrewarding, abstract speculations of these ultimately impotent "enemies of mankind". With this judgment, they will declare the debate to be finished, and they will find the population happily accepting their fiat. In the Kingdom of the Illogical it is the wily one who generally calls the shots. And in doing so, he drives the sane man stark-raving mad.

A final word has to be said regarding one specific black legend that leads us also into the realm of the substance-killing alternative good story: that perpetrated by the liberal Catholic fellow travelers of the GCSQ. According to this instructive mythical amalgam, the *true* historical foundations and *real* pilgrim spirit of Catholicism were badly obscured by the victory of the intransigent Ninth Crusaders in the age of Blessed Pius IX. Only liberal Catholics continued to nurture the desire to discover the real Apostolic Tradition, along with the Original Intent of the Founders of the Faith. It was fear and hatred of this truly pious yearning that caused narrow-minded intransigents to suppress liberal Catholicism anew during the reign of St. Pius X, delaying rediscovery of the Church's root beliefs for another fifty years. Thankfully, however, Second Vatican Council finally admitted the intrinsic merit of liberal Catholic spiritual and intellectual labors, opening up the riches of the apostolic past for the emulation of the pilgrim present.

We have already admitted that there is no denying that many intransigents did, in fact, become obstacles to continued scholarly Catholic labor by the twentieth century. Moreover, it is undeniable that the standard bearers for ecclesiastical historical research since the mid-nineteenth century have generally marched to liberal Catholic tunes. And these historians have indeed achieved a great deal on the *micro* level to clarify numerous aspects of past ecclesiastical life. That much is true. But, after all, it would be hard to build a black legend and an alternative good story without at least a modicum of veracity.

The problem is that liberal Catholic scholars have embedded their admirable appreciation for a rigorous historical methodology in an overall *Mennaisien* and

## ITS SAVOR

modernist-influenced faith in an emerging, evolving, palingenesist Christianity taught by the People's prophets. Hence, whatever they may have accomplished in their private research, they have rendered meaningless through their exaltation of the principles of will and action in their practical conclusions, dissolving the value of every solid bit of the intellectual evidence they provide into an all too murky goo of directionless, prophetic passion.

Often praiseworthy as historians on the micro-level, liberal Catholics have encouraged a macro-ideology that ultimately justifies a complete disdain for the "dead past". They have fed a vision that gives believers all the necessary reasons for not bothering to treat seriously that historical activity that they, as private scholars, have undertaken. For their history, like the speculative thinker's metaphysics, is a block to a completely liberated, vital, action-centered life. It provides too many lessons, too many models to follow, all of which hamper a needed guidance from one's own creative will. In the last analysis, therefore, the anti-intransigent liberal Catholic historians, like their brothers engaged in scriptural research, sit believers before a mountain of data, much of it crucial and immensely useful. Alas, they then tell the faithful to make their judgments as to what this data all means on the basis of what they "feel" and "will" – or, rather, what they tell believers that they *must* feel and *must* will.

More importantly with respect to our current concerns, this also often has a nefarious effect on the fullness of the material that the liberal Catholic historian chooses to present on the micro-level for the enlightenment of the public at large. For the foot soldier of modernity emerging from the liberal Catholic outlook, history is really only valid in so far

as it can help to guide men to a confidence in will, action, and democratic faith. Historical research into an understanding of the growth of this confidence is undertaken and praised, but investigation of the arguments of thinkers critical of these cherished goods is excoriated or ignored. And since the rich, positive work of the nineteenth century intransigent school of thought stands in the way of acceptance of the liberal Catholic faith, study of its theological, philosophical, political, sociological, and psychological stance is generally rejected as a useless waste of vital human time and energy.

Creative writing has, therefore, also been an integral part of the liberal Catholic historian's methodology, and knowledge of what it was that the intransigents had to say has been its first major victim. Their history was liquidated. To hate the intransigents was to know them; to know them in their fullness was beside the point. One all too famous history of the reign of Pope Pius IX, that of Roger Aubert, devotes pages to a description of the "vital" and "forward-looking" journal *l'Ere nouvelle*, which lasted but briefly in 1848, while it pays scant attention to *La Civiltà Cattolica*, founded in 1850, and still published today. Yes, it identifies Taparelli d'Azeglio as one of the greatest Catholic thinkers of the nineteenth century—although that is basically the last one hears of him. This is because *La Civiltà Cattolica* and Taparelli d'Azeglio testify to the positive character of the anti-modern intransigent school of Ninth Crusaders and therefore cannot serve the liberal palingenesisist cause.

I, personally, had discussions at Oxford with a liberal Catholic don who criticized as an obvious "given" the "obscurantist" character of the Roman Jesuit journal. While he was magisterally laying that obscurantist beast to rest, I was enjoying the privilege of cutting open large numbers of



## ITS SAVOR

the thousand pages of its volumes for the fifteen year period from 1850-1865, thus, presumably, becoming the first man actually to read them in the university library. I would not be surprised if the same were true for students in other libraries elsewhere. Committed opponents of the intransigents, today as yesterday, simply have no interest in their history as such, and therefore no willingness even to begin to grasp their explanation of how the full message of the Word has been smothered under the "business as usual" concerns of modern supporters of "nature as is". A scholar making a painstaking case for intransigent achievements according to the best rules of the modern historiography to which liberal Catholics themselves subscribe is therefore lost in space. And a public formed in the spirit of willful, democratic, prophetic action has no time for his findings anyway. It has more vital, energetic things to do than finding out the simple, boring truth.

Hence, the good story told by a liberal Catholic don allows nothing to be taught of the intransigent discovery of the first period of captivity of the Word brought about by the influence of the naturalism of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. It permits nothing to be known of the liberating intransigent struggle for resurrection of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and of individual divinization. It effectively prohibits investigation of the movement's sustained fight for Catholic universalism against arrogant, condescending, secularist, modernist imperialists. The record of intransigent battle versus nationalist parochialism, and against rabid, chauvinist, progressive pronouncements that would make most twenty-first century liberal Catholics shudder, lies buried in the archives and in

## 1122 BLACK LEGENDS

scattered and little read texts. Believers are left ignorant of the real mistakes of the intransigents, but, much more tragically, of the central nature of the struggle of the intransigents against modernity---a fight for human freedom and dignity against the fraudulent gods of democracy and arbitrary willfulness; a combat waged in a nuanced fashion, taking gambles when gambles were deemed necessary on the basis of the thesis-hypothesis distinction; a struggle for the *Logos* alongside every enemy of sophism from Plato's day onwards.

### *J. Freedom Fighting: The Pluralist Alternative Good Story*

If freedom fighters could stir a potential convert to examine the faith-filled demands of the pluralist system along with the rational contradictions that they ensure, the death camp that this "prison of the peoples" represents could swiftly be revealed. The potential convert might cease to perform his part in its *danse macabre* and run from its twirl in revulsion. But, alas, the power of the *Zeitgeist* is nowhere as evident as in the iron curtain that pluralism constructs between a man and his mind. It has built this iron curtain with the aid of the most effective alternative good story deconstructing Christianity that has ever been invented. And it has therefore provided the most powerful psychological weapon that sophists have ever had at their disposal to blind men to the truth that the immediately perceived "facts" of life are often not those of nature as such but of erroneous and fallen aspects of it: selfish, materialist "facts" that lead us to take advantage of the sins of the world to ride roughshod over everything else that our "better selves" warn us to

## ITS SAVOR

avoid; cheap, parochial “facts” that end by teaching us only that might makes right.

Any believer who has fastened the pluralist blindfold over his eyes will automatically reject the slightest criticism of its precepts as the work of the devil. For what could possibly go wrong in the pluralist system, the best system, the only just system, the Most Christian System? What could possibly go wrong when the Church herself has blessed its God-given methodology for defending the peace and freedom of mature, sophisticated, rational modern peoples? Why even bother to ask whether one might find criticisms and warnings against pluralism in past Christian teaching when one knows, by definition, that pluralism is both healthy and practical? It is because pluralist fideism has been so effective in stopping up the ears of its cult followers that each new assault, each new “sack of Rome” which ought to have been the final eye-opening disaster, seems to have done little to awaken Catholics to the major cause of their impotent and even non-existent defense of their own heritage.

If a Catholic freedom fighter wishes to employ all of the various tools western man has developed over the course of the ages for discussing the theoretical validity of pluralism’s definition of peace, freedom, and the ultimate meaning of individual and social life, all of these tools, one by one, including theology, philosophy, history, psychology and sociology, will be dismissed as both impractical and intrinsically dangerous. A desire to use them will be said to illustrate nothing other than a lack of “obvious common sense” on the part of the foolish, impractical, “loser” critic. Do such tools help one to maintain public order? Do they assist in making a killing on the market? On the contrary, all they

do is bring up disruptive fantasies encouraging divisiveness and disturbing profits in the process. And like a father prohibited from objecting to his daughter's betrothal to a scoundrel until he could produce someone perfectly suitable to make her a counter-proposal, the critic will be pressed to offer solutions to every single problem of contemporary society before the slightest theoretical questioning of pluralism as such would be permitted.

If, on the other hand, a freedom fighter seeks to demonstrate the long-term *practical* dangers of the pluralist mystique, and especially its degeneration into a reign of "might makes right" disguised as the victory of freedom, its totally unquestionable "godliness" will once again be called up by incredulous believers to smother the dialogue. The critic will be accused of lacking faith in the obvious Christian nature, language and mandate of the system...as revealed through the infallible will of its God-loving Founders and their latest batch of effective interpreters. Here, the Catholic liberator will be condemned for his cynical rejection of the God-given "last and best hope" for securing individual freedom and social peace---whose nature, once again, he cannot discuss---and his consequent lack of charity for suffering humanity.

Should he take up the challenge and return to the realm of theory, demonstrating that it is an acceptance of pluralism as an irrational, fideist Faith that prevents a practical sociological analysis of the purely materialist conception of life and the victory of a willful oligarchy it ensures, he will be dragged back down to the "true grit" pragmatic level once again. With complete disregard for the change in tactic and argument, he will be assaulted for his childish naiveté; his hopeless idealism in the midst of a jungle universe whose

## ITS SAVOR

history is that of a war of all against all. Surely only a Catholic "loser" envious of the success of his betters would think that life was susceptible to guidance by his utopian spiritual babble. Isocrates would not have been able to express himself better.

But what if our freedom fighter persists in his position and emphasizes the fact that he has been the subject of an absurdly irrational attack, accused simultaneously of being a faithless cynic on the one hand and both impractically naïve and viciously envious on the other? First, he will be mollified, told that everyone appreciates the fight for the indefensible cause that he has made, and warned that he must now be a nice boy and go out and make some money. If this last "good willed" strategy does not do the job of silencing the troublemaker, why, then, he will be condemned as the kind of "public nuisance" promoting unpleasant, logical consequences of first principles whom Marsilius' Defender of the Peace would have been forced to silence, whom David Hume would have sent to play billiards or take a warm shower to render tranquil, and whom Ralph Waldo Emerson would have chastised for cultivating the "hobgoblins" of a "petty mind". Contemporary rhetoricians benefitting from the system will be summoned to find as many "appropriate words" as possible to brutalize him as an Enemy of the People. Truth will not matter in their campaign against him. He will perhaps be dismissed as an obvious lunatic. More effectively still, since pluralism fought the good war against the fascists, he will also be denounced as a Nazi; as an anti-Semite; as a paladin of genocide. Terrorism having finally begun to supplant Nazism as pluralism's current manifestation of pure evil, the critic will also most likely be

painted as a spiritual ally of "Islamofascism". With this, his expulsion from polite society will be complete.

Few Catholic freedom fighters will have the stamina to reach this final stage of unsuccessful dialogue. Should a hardy few maintain the passion to fight the good fight still longer, they, too, will eventually be forced to abandon the struggle due to the demands of the materialist environment created by the system in which they, after all, still have to function. That environment mandates work and ever more work in order merely to survive. Even the strongest opponent, over time, will simply be too exhausted to indulge the luxury of criticizing pluralism in the few hours of repose left to him by its free economic order at the end of the day.

Hence, pluralism, the Defender of the Peace, mankind's "last, best hope", retains its undeserved image and can continue to wreak its all too predictable havoc again and again and again, in country after hapless country, throughout the Empire of the World. Its *danse macabre* continues to move men relentlessly along, killing their will and their courage to consult even the most clear and open text revealing the message of Christ placed directly under their eyes. Everything in its Mad Hatter's Ball pushes them away from reading the book of Faith and Reason. The directors of this debilitating game complete their work of diversion from the Word Incarnate by battering into the Catholic mind the conviction that the music of the *danse macabre*, which relentlessly transmits the message of "nature as is", actually provides the best tune for the true dance of life to sway to in its pilgrim march to God. *This is the Catholic music*, they insist. *This is the Catholic message*. You have been privileged to live in *the Catholic Moment*. Under these circumstances, the slightest glance away from the back wall of the ballroom for further

## ITS SAVOR

light from outside its precincts becomes a sin against human reason *and* the Holy Ghost at one and the same time. All this is accomplished with an effectiveness that surpasses anything that the supporters of the Sacred Empire or the medieval Rut Triumphant or the Most Christian Kings ever even distantly approximated. So the participants in the *danse macabre* twirl on and on, and its impresarios pursue their willful goals as their victims exhaust their bodies and deaden their minds, hearts, and souls.

*K. American Freedom Fighting: Conservatives,  
Neo-Conservatives, Libertarians, and Traditionalists*

Before ending this chapter, let us emphasize the specific obstacles placed in the freedom fighters' path by *enthusiastic* American Catholic fellow travelers of the GCSQ, many of whom do not seem to be aware of the damage to the Faith that they are doing. Such men and women are of major importance in allowing the pluralist *Zeitgeist* to continue to carry out its non-rational work effectively, happily blocking use of all of the tools one must employ to expose the flaws of the dominant system. These stimulators of the *danse macabre* include American Catholic conservatives, neoconservatives, libertarians, and, tragically, many traditionalist Catholics as well.

Conservative American Catholics think of themselves as being free from liberal mythmaking and open to the fullness of the Tradition, but they are merely another example of what conservatives throughout the West have always been: liberals who were "mugged"; proponents of a variant of the program of the nineteenth century Party of Order. Admittedly

offended by one or the other modern beliefs and practices that have touched too closely those aspects of the Catholic vision that they most cherished and “chose” to maintain, they have nevertheless steadfastly refused to fit their reaction together logically with other “choices” that reflect their unwillingness to correct and transform all of nature in Christ. Hence, their desire to place the “will of the Founders” of the United States, American foreign policy, and American capitalism in a special category, Catholic by definition, with the one unthinkable thought being that they, too, might be in need of serious alteration if they are to fit properly into the plan of God. Illustrating this blindness, one major Catholic home schooling advocate has publically stated that believers should toss any book critical of the American Founding from their children’s curriculum as self-evidently erroneous. Isocrates could not have made the anti-historical, irrational, and sophistic mythmaking point any more clearly.

In other words, conservative American Catholics are men and women who love the Church’s teachings but do little or nothing to criticize, check, and ultimately abandon aspects of their country’s reigning ethos that militate against them, even when the overwhelming evidence of their destructiveness lies before their eyes. They do so because the “traditions” and “customs” of their country support the pluralist deconstruction of the Catholic vision. Like lovers of “traditions” and “customs” in other eras of Catholic History, their modern-day conservative American Catholic heirs find it almost impossible to separate the cause of the Church from that of the government of their land and their national “way of life”. Unfortunately, as we have all too amply seen, the American government and way of life are guided by presumptions about the relationship of the individual to



## ITS SAVOR

society and the role of theology and metaphysical thought in practical life that are inimical to Catholic Truth; presumptions that, due to the peculiar history of the United States, have given birth to the doctrines of American pluralism that are now the doctrinal foundations of the Empire of the World. Following their guidelines directs Catholics to deal with their problems by seeking redemptive wisdom from Founders who were either consciously or unconsciously committed to the acceptance of "nature as is" and the triumph of the will that such a preferential option for the status quo ensures. Consulting Founder wisdom enables them to know a great deal about the breaking down of Catholic civilization by Protestant and Deist concepts of politics and society for the benefit of the strongest factions and individuals around us. It tells them nothing about the substance of their own Tradition and how to defend it.

Founder wisdom, developed into American pluralism, directs the faithful to assert and accept as pragmatic guidelines for Catholic self-defense and "renewal" strategies that are disastrous to the Faith. Even if the people who use these guidelines desperately want to be a "friendly" force, their anti-Catholic definition of what is and is not "practical" condemns as a horrendous waste of time precisely those pathways to Christian goals that the fullness of the message of the Word prescribes. Nothing within them soars above their immediate material surroundings in order to understand the meaning of the universe from the perspective of the eternal Creator and Redeemer God. And this inevitably subjects the corrective and transforming mission of the Word to manipulation by the petty, parochial, pragmatic interests of the supporters of business as usual, and, ultimately, the

pragmatic libertines and criminals guiding the Empire of the World. Still, so long as the Founders can be cited for permitting such an outcome, conservative American believers must find a way to justify it as something eminently admirable, successful, and, above all, Catholic.

The mind boggles when one considers what would have happened had the pragmatism of the American system replaced a Word-dictated pragmatism in past Catholic History. Pragmatic guidelines of this type would have forced acceptance of the Sacred Imperial State, the Crescentii and Tusculani, the Reason of State of the *bons français*, the Founder Worship of the *Giovani*, and every other force chaining men and institutions to the spirit of their immediate time and place. Those same pragmatic guidelines would have reacted strongly against the “non-traditional”, truly pilgrim-spirited Catholic policies of a St. Maximus the Confessor, a St. Odilo of Cluny, a Pope Innocent III, the *dévo*t party in France, and the editors of *La Civiltà Cattolica* of the nineteenth century.

Perhaps most interesting in this regard is a meditation on the problems of the era of the late medieval Rut Triumphant and the way that “low” and “high” road reformers approached their resolution compared with those of the contemporary pluralist Church and the strategies American pragmatism suggests to deal with them. Anyone examining both situations will notice little difference between the earlier flight from discipline—the mass desertion of religious, the desire for an easier moral code, the disappearance of the concept of mortal sin, the innumerable excuses for inability to fulfill sacred vows—and that of the 1960’s and the decades to follow. Indeed, one can discern little distinction between the sixteenth-century Church’s initial “intellectual” and

## ITS SAVOR

“moderate” efforts to deal with critical abuses and those developed in the post-conciliar era. The same approach yielded the same disastrous results: ineffective decrees and reform constitutions on the one hand and endless workshops and programs discussing the nature of renewal on the other; “where licit” clauses that once favored an abandonment of residence in parish and diocese and today transform abusive “signs of the times”---such as permitting extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and reception of communion in the hand---into accepted norms and even ironclad ecclesiastical mandates; a kindness to heretics and to the rebellious, both then and now, that makes loyal Catholics think that the rogues who prey upon them do so either with the approval of or because of the criminal laxity of the Holy See.

The proponents of false traditions in the first half of the sixteenth century did not see that their standard operating procedures were helpless to deal with the disasters following Luther’s rebellion of 1517 or the Sack of Rome of 1527. Similarly, American Catholic conservatives who have accepted the false traditions of America cannot understand that the standard operating procedures of this heritage render them helpless in fending off a further collapse of their Faith. It was with the aid of the pluralist doctrines these enshrine that the Faith came crashing down in the 1960’s in the first place. Anyone relying on the false traditions of the American Framers and the “infallible” labyrinth of check-and-balance standard operating procedures which are molded by the Protestant-Enlightenment environment around them can do as little to avoid the Church’s destruction today as legalist administrators operating purely on existing curial and

canonical grounds were able to do during the age of the Rut Triumphant.

In believing that prudent defense of their Faith demands the embrace of constitutional “business as usual”, conservatives embrace the highly impractical routine of the American political arena. Through this routine, whole lives are wasted trying to overturn one or another wrong at the price of praising the principles and methods that brought these very injustices into being in the first place. In fearing that they might be considered nostalgic for bygone social institutions should they criticize the structures central to American life, conservatives ignore the fact that they incense an irrational political rhetoric praising the “will” of long-dead Founders who are divinized, *mutatis mutandis*, as much as any ancient God-Kings. The Church might just as well have seized the Catholic Moment at the time of the Reformation by abetting the growth of Protestantism; the Romans called to defend their city from the Sack of 1527 might courageously have embraced the Roman Moment by joining the mutinous soldiers in breaching the Aurelian Walls; and sixteenth-century English believers would have proved their recognition of the Patriotic Moment by espousing a religious revolution promoted by a small clique of foreign-influenced fanatics and imposed by a tyrannical and heritage-hating queen.

Very little has to be added in speaking of the particular obstacles placed in the path of those fighting to liberate the captive Word by the neoconservative American Catholic camp. Just like conservatives, neoconservatives exclude America from the need for any correction and transformation whatsoever, whether from Reason or from Faith. As far as Catholics militating in neoconservative ranks are concerned,

## ITS SAVOR

any necessary social influence of a Christian character would emerge from the American experience in and of itself anyway. Nothing could be more Christ-like in character, because the American Way, by definition, was already spiritually high-minded and morally good---even in fighting the kind of international conflict which, if conducted by foreigners, would be condemned as a manifestly unjust war.

What *is* distinctive about the neoconservative challenge to liberation of the captive Word is the fact that the strongmen behind this movement interpreting what "nature as is" according to "the will of the Founders" are primarily interested in the fate of the State of Israel. The corrective and transforming message of the Word in history therefore becomes whatever aids the cause of this extremely anti-Christian, nationalist, and ultimately quite racist entity. But any opposition to the neoconservative position on the part of fellow Catholics would immediately---and effectively---be dismissed as proof positive of the anti-Semitic, genocidal, Nazi sympathies of the unpatriotic villains and *mauvais Americains* daring to profer it. So many potentially critical souls censure their doubts as they might censure any other evil thoughts and images.

Contemporary freedom fighters will find that American supporters of libertarianism allied with the Austrian School of economics are among the most powerful of the contemporary captors of the message of the correcting and transforming Word. Pose, though these libertarians may do, as scientific minded students of natural phenomena that must be accepted by a Faith respectful of Reason, they fit both Plato and Aristotle's description of fraudulent surgeons. They readily qualify as "quacks" for the simple reason that they

obstinately refuse to operate with all of the knowledge that they need in order to be able to speak rationally about their chief concerns. Worse still, they hold up their determined commitment to yet another form of tunnel vision as though it were an intellectual badge of honor. Like their ancient sophist forbears, they seize hold of the language that substantive men hunting for the truth have developed and ennobled, stripping it of its full and proper meaning, and turning it to the service of their own program of uncritical acceptance of the data of *fallen* nature.

Their “rational” response to criticism presents an all too familiar admixture of sophistic silence, deconstruction, and mockery of serious intellectual opposition. Spokesmen for their cause frequently try to avoid entirely any mention of Catholic social thinkers and the arguments that they make---just as the pagan rhetorician, Symmachus, sought to avoid acknowledging the existence of the Church Fathers in the fourth century in his defense of Roman Tradition. When forced, unwillingly, to deal with criticisms, they readily betray their modernist as well as their sophist spirit, condescendingly treating believing Catholics who refuse to accept their reductionist theories as though they were sick patients requiring a revolutionary economic consciousness-raising. Distortion triumphs as they answer specific complaints about Austrian financial and industrial theories with jests ridiculing the lunatic foibles of obscurantists entertaining fantasies exalting an idyllic rural life. Last, but definitely not least, they play the familiar sophist card by dismissing their enemies as nothing other than envious “losers” who do not know how to “make it” in a “free” society, rather than what are really are: namely, men who have a completely different definition of nature, liberty, and

## ITS SAVOR

success; men who detest the rewards that libertarians consider enviable as nothing other than the shadows of a one-dimensional, unnatural, cave-like zoo.

Such captors of the Word can write as many books as they wish to produce on every economic topic imaginable, from the role of the Federal Reserve to the cultural value of Walmart, and even make some solid points along the way. But there is no reason for a thinking Catholic to take any of their specific insights seriously until they abandon their conscious, determined, and irrational embrace of a back-of-the-cave ignorance. Until they do so, they will always be like Bitzer in Charles Dicken's *Hard Times*: sucked dry of everything fruitful they might otherwise have to say. No Catholic should lose a night's sleep hunting for a rational answer to the data that they marshal under their self-destructive ideological sloganeering. He should worry, instead, about how to overcome irrational fears that prevent him either from openly condemning this pseudo wisdom as the parochial nonsense that it is, or working militantly to counteract the damage it causes to the souls of its victims. Believing Catholics really have nothing to fear in confronting these captives of the Word but fear itself.

Sad to say, however, Catholics *are* shocked and awed into taking libertarian knowledge of the shadows of the back of the cave as though it were wisdom coming down from the Father of Lights. Breaking through the hold that such Catholic fellow travelers of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo have over their co-religionists would be easier if their sophistry were the sole tool that they had at their disposal. Alas, once again, the exhausting demands on personal time placed upon everyone by that all too unbound rhinoceros

called the existing American free market system are perhaps the greatest obstacle preventing even the slightest “lifting of the veil” to see beyond the libertarian lie to the full truth of Christ. People are simply too busy working to stay alive not to want to believe what they are told to believe, both by supporters of this camp as well as by those of every other naturalist force seeking an influence among the faithful and appearing to “make it big” while doing so.

In any case, the fact that *Catholics* who listen to them separate daily individual choices regarding economic matters from their impact upon our eternal destiny; that *Catholics* reduce market issues to the realm of the morally indifferent, judging right and wrong on the basis of success in manipulating fallen nature alone; that *Catholics* read history through the lens of a Liberation Theology of the Market that sees “the correction and transformation of all things in capitalism” as being infinitely more important, in practice, than correction and transformation in Christ, is terribly frightening. It is frightening not only because it is naturalism pure and simple but also because it is naturalism in a realm where everyone has his daily temptations and potential price. Allowing such a vision to triumph in Catholic circles means that worries about the morality of everything from *Machtpolitik* to sexual libertinism must logically disappear from the camp of the saints as well. Christian behavior in general must eventually mean absolutely nothing. Eternal salvation must be viewed as a reward for a lifetime of recitation of a purely intellectual and inconsequential--though orthodox--Creed after a lifetime cavorting in a morally indifferent playground has ended.

We have repeatedly mentioned that many of the early supporters of erroneous ideas did not desire the



## ITS SAVOR

consequences that flowed from them. Martin Luther did not want the principles of Protestantism to aid radical enthusiasts. America's Founders did not plan for the influence of Karl Rove. Cavour and Bismarck might have laughed away the prospect of a Hitler, and early sexual libertines did not necessarily foresee the spread of gross pornography from out of red light districts into their own neighborhoods and living rooms. Liberal bourgeois capitalists of the mid-nineteenth century would, perhaps, have run headlong from massive shopping malls destructive to more traditional centers of city economic life. And, certainly, most recent Catholic defenders of the unrestrained market whom I know do not wish to destroy what remains of Christian morality and Christendom.

The fact that so many heretical and ideological thinkers did not wish bad things to happen is a proof of the continued hold of traditional beliefs and presuppositions regarding personal behavior upon them. But it is also a demonstration of the failure of their logic. Regardless of the will or the choice of the Founders of any erroneous school of thought, the ideas that they espoused were what they were and spread their inevitable subversive poison. Some men, like the Anabaptists and Unitarians of Luther and Calvin's days, accepted that logic straightaway. Nevertheless, the bulk of humanity requires time to do so---time, the slow dissolution of the beliefs and behavior which block extensive change, and the construction of a society which fully shapes people not on the basis of its Founders' irrational conservative scruples, but their corrosive rational principles.

Enlightenment freedom and naturalism lead, logically, to the creation of radical, passionate men who care nothing for

long-standing traditions and objective morality. The logic of Enlightenment capitalism, as men like Michael Novak exult, is to create a new kind of man who thinks and acts differently than citizens of traditional western Christendom. These new men ensure that the pattern of capitalist industrial development in twenty-first century Africa and Latin America is different than that guided by more traditionally minded individuals still shaped by the Christian remnants of eighteenth-century Britain. These new men do not define or practice a "charity" that can help to correct social imbalances in the same way that older Catholic believers could. These new men *adore* the anti-social, anti-historical, materialist way of life. If they nevertheless insist on claiming the "Catholic" label for themselves, all they do is to make of the Catholic Faith an after-hours parlor sport for those engaged in what really counts in a democratic, capitalist universe: earning vast incomes and spending them on an ever-expanding number of useless or destructive toys.

One of the sad realities of life today is that this new capitalist man, divinized in one way or another by conservatives and libertarians alike, already dominates the Empire of the World as a result of a global industrial and technological revolution that cannot be altered without untold dislocation and suffering. Dislocation of the economic order of the Empire is, of course, always possible, and not necessarily from the outside, but from the implosion of the system itself. It is understandable that many may find this notion difficult to accept, both because the system, by its very nature, discourages intellectual investigation of its problems and because a mere two hundred years of Enlightenment capitalist history may not yet have been enough time for its

## ITS SAVOR

full disruptive potential to display itself. But both Reason and Faith indicate that its judgment day must come.

In the meantime, freedom fighters can at least put those men and women they are seeking to liberate on warning against praising a force that barter away their true freedom, their true knowledge, the true, redeemed order of nature, and the moral concerns of their true Faith for a tradition, mind, and soul-destroying "prosperity". Christ came to save men from the consequences of their own evil; not to preach encouragement of Original Sin as the only sound basis for personal liberation and economic security. In short, freedom fighters dealing with Austrian libertarianism must keep in mind two Latin words popularized by Cato the Elder when treating of Rome's relations with Carthage: *delenda est*---it must be destroyed.

This brings us, finally, to the Traditionalist Movement. Obstacles placed by traditionalists in the path of Catholic freedom fighters are of particular concern to me, since I myself have been involved in the work of this movement since 1970. Moreover, I am personally aware of the spiritual, intellectual, and even physical suffering that many and perhaps most traditionalists have had to endure in their defense of the Catholic Faith. Allow me to ease the pain of dealing with this subject by prefacing my comments regarding specific problems in traditionalist ranks with reference to one tragic note regarding reception of the message of the Word in history in general.

Despite the glorious work that has been done throughout the centuries to make Catholics more aware than ever before of the jewel box their Sacred Tradition places before them, most believers stubbornly persist in making the stingiest

possible use of it. Some make appeal to the desires of the reigning pope but not to those of past pontiffs; some to Scripture but not to the living authority of the Bride of Christ; some to St. Thomas but to none of the Church Fathers; some to St. Augustine while reviling St. Thomas and the Scholastics; some to dogmatic purity but not to the social doctrine that teaches us how to practice our Faith in daily political and economic life; some to theology but not to history; some to the Holy Spirit in history, but not to fixed and unchangeable Truth. Every one of these truncated approaches to Christ tempts us to put on blinders and eventually return to that "low road" that a full knowledge of Catholic History would teach us to abhor.

Alas, the behavior of many of the traditionalist Catholics who are indeed aware of the extent of the crisis facing the Church indicates that they also do not always confront this terrible situation with the jewel box opened wide before them. Sad to say, there are all too many men and women calling themselves traditionalists who are guilty of almost every error that has afflicted the Church throughout the ages. Some are millenarians, using an approaching apocalyptic change as an excuse for doing nothing to correct and transform the world around them in Christ today. Some place the teachings of personal revelations and apparitions above the pronouncements of the Magisterium. Others are Protestant and Jansenist in their hatred for the world and its beauty. Still others are Enlightenment-minded Americanists, "conservative liberals who have been mugged", neoconservatives, and libertarians, contemptuous of social institutions and authorities, from the State down through to the local community board, and hostile to their absolutely essential importance to individual life. Some are painfully

## ITS SAVOR

timebound, treating everything from the clothing styles to the entertainments of a particular era—especially that of the America of the 1950's—as normative and sacred. In other words, many traditionalists, in varied ways, are actually defenders of the “business as usual” demands of “nature as is”; unwitting fellow travelers of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo.

How can they be so? They accomplish this illogical turnabout by denying that they could possibly espouse anything anti-Catholic because they are, after all, what they call themselves: namely, traditionalists. What else could a traditionalist be, in practice, but “traditional”? Clearly, repetition of the word “traditionalist”, like repetition of the words “Sacred Empire”, “plenitude of papal power”, “Most Christian King”, “legitimize”, “counterrevolutionary”, “intransigent”, “friend of the Holy Spirit”, and “People of God” make many men and women feel as though they are thereby freed of the need to correct their own intellectual and moral errors and transform themselves in Christ. They are not. And the result is the same as with conservative, neoconservative, and libertarian Catholics. If traditional Catholicism is what they represent it to be, then the traditional Faith and the traditional liturgy are nothing other than the same after-hours parlor sport for those engaged in what really counts in a democratic, capitalist universe as the game indulged in by the other groups discussed above.

There is also another sin to which many traditionalist Catholics fall prey: a manifest lack of charity in dealing with their internal squabbles and external enemies. This is disastrous for the work of the Word in history. Yes, they must never slacken in their public identification of scandalous

heretical ideas and pastoral methods designed to spread them through the Catholic population. Still, they must constantly remind themselves repeatedly of the need to conduct their quarrels with the maximum of self-awareness and charitable restraint. Apostolic activity can never be based on the desire purely for winning points for one's own camp, however admirable this camp may be. The eighteenth-century European reaction to the China dispute shows that the population-at-large will recognize and be repelled by the vicious backbiting predominating in a good battle fought in the wrong spirit. That kind of battle always ends tragically, with its warring participants eventually ignoring the serious issues at stake therein, and with them all falling prey to the machinations of enemies wishing to use their flaws to forward their own openly anti-Catholic agenda.

### *L. Smiling as We Die*

Personalist encouragement of "diving into" the mystique of Marxism was a terrible thing. Nevertheless, that mystique was so patently fraudulent that it possessed a built-in self-destructive element. If one compares it to a drink, it offered a beverage that contained a poison one could taste and reject before it reached the point of annihilating absolutely everyone who sipped it. Personalist encouragement of a dive into the Americanist pluralist mystique is not quite the same phenomenon. It suggests the analogy of taking a poisoned cocktail that does still have something of a familiar, pleasant taste to it and seems, for a while, to provide what it promises: tranquility and the satisfaction of personal desire. One does not realize, until the very moment that he reaches the bottom of the glass, that there is really nothing good therein and that

## ITS SAVOR

the poison has nevertheless done its job. The individual members of all of the “free”, dessicated, meaningless “clubs” who drink the American pluralist poison smile and toast their murderer as they die.

What happens to the members of the American Catholic Pluralist “Club”, the European Catholic Pluralist “Club”, and the Third World Catholic Pluralist “Club” once they dive into this mystique, witness to it, and then bring it to perfection? None of them have any hope of survival as distinct cultural forces. They are all obliged to destroy whatever distinguishes them as Catholics in order to practice a “non-divisive, integrating, materialist freedom”. They are all obliged to dismantle what is most essential to their character, especially what has been corrected and transformed through the message of the Incarnation, in order to “fit into” a jungle society which they must praise repeatedly as the most beautifully ordered in history. They must reduce the Church to the sociological significance of a cheerleading squad for a technologically advanced but barbarian civilization, whose warehouses are filled with intellectual and material goods which lead men away from the light and back into the darkest recesses of Plato’s cave; back to “nature as is”, with no Faith, no Reason, and no Seeds of the Logos whatsoever to guide them in the hunt for greater light. They are condemned to see their children treat this dismantling and emasculation as the obvious fulfillment of the *real* Catholic enterprise. They are condemned to hear their offspring repeat black legends that denigrate truly Catholic heroes as villains, while they relate fraudulent, alternative good stories regarding the faith-filled labors of anti-Catholic opponents of the Word in history. They are obliged to accept the fact that this

dismantling and emasculation of true human achievement will change along with whoever is the strongest ideologue, libertine, or criminal of the moment and whatever it is that he wishes Catholics to support. And what that means in the terrorist-obsessed Empire of the World today is that while they are all obliged to repeat, as a dogmatic certainty, the belief that men and women have never experienced so great a liberty and so exalted a sense of human dignity, they must mock real Catholic concerns over just and unjust international conflicts or humane treatment of prisoners of war. Moral outrage must be saved for two evils alone. It must be saved to excoriate whoever fails to recognize "American exceptionalism" and whoever suggests the possible need to restrain illicit global profit making.

Let us remember Salvian (400-470), in his main work *De Gubernatione Dei*, who criticized a Gallo-Roman world that was apparently unconscious of its own cultural decay, injustice, and smugness. Like St. Augustine half a century earlier, he marveled at the hunt for pleasure-as-usual amidst barbarian threats menacing the foundations of Christian, Mediterranean civilization. "It dies," he exclaimed, dumbfounded by the almost supernatural blindness of his fellow citizens; "it dies, and nonetheless, it laughs."<sup>27</sup> "It is already dead," one would be tempted to say looking at modern Catholicism as it tightens its pluralist blindfold and exhausts itself in yet another round of that impotent *danse macabre* welcoming yet more diverse ideas and lifestyles destructive to everything it stands for; "it is already dead, and yet it laughs as though it were in the midst of an indescribably successful renewal."

---

<sup>27</sup> Hadas, *Latin Literature*, p. 455.



# Epilogue:

## My End is My Beginning

### A. An “End Time” is Always a New Beginning

Giles of Viterbo (1469-1532), Augustinian cardinal and humanist scriptural scholar, is most known in history for his discourse at the opening of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) in Rome. In this powerful address, he not only outlined the evils of the era in which he lived and labored but also enunciated the principle that every friend of the work of the Word in history must unceasingly repeat: that it is necessary to reform *homines per sacra, non sacra per homines*; that it is men who are to be corrected and transformed by Christ—not the teaching of the supernatural Savior through the words of His temporal students and His nature-bound patients.<sup>1</sup>

Many of Giles’ contemporaries were so horrified by the corruption of Christendom that they feared they might be living in the “end times”. So often were apocalyptic themes preached and discussed in the decades preceding Lateran

---

<sup>1</sup> Mayeur, VII, 335; also, 211-466.

Council that the Fathers of the Holy Synod felt constrained to warn against their further dissemination. How could they not be concerned about their impact? On the one hand, their fearful message of imminent approaching doom could be totally paralyzing to any effective struggle for future, serious Christian reform. On the other, their teaching, if not marred in its essential understanding of Christianity itself, was often coupled with dreams of swift, utopian, millenarian change that were equally detrimental to the solid work of correction and transformation in Christ. Sad to say, the council's chief aid in blocking apocalyptic visions of both exaggeratedly hopeless and hopeful varieties was the general inertia of the leaders and the led---trapped as they were by the customary routine of the *Rut Triumphant* in just as flawed an appreciation of the full meaning of the Incarnation for individual human lives and the societies shaping them.

It was the influence of all of these factors together that molded the troubled mind, soul, and body of a Christian world badly in need of reform at a moment that proved not to be *the End Time*, but, rather, one of many temporal "end times". It was this that allowed for what were ultimately anti-Christian mixtures of supernatural, natural, and magical ideas to flourish, whether in the high-brow Neo-Platonic speculations that a man like Giles of Viterbo himself indulged in, together with Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Johannes Reuchlin, or in the popular obsession with the nefarious efficacy of witchcraft shared by peasants, preachers, and apparently certain prelates and popes alike. It was this that permitted men enriched through the enslavement of native populations in the new worlds uncovered by fifteenth and sixteenth century Portuguese and Spanish explorations to justify their oppression as the

## EPILOGUE

“obvious” means of dealing with pagan or Moslem enemies and thereby completing global evangelization. It was this that led even some well-intentioned early modern Christian economic thinkers to combine their religion with aspects of a soulless “business as usual” mentality blind to issues of commercial justice. And it was all this that contemporary pontiffs, bishops, and theologians had to sort through thoroughly, separating the chaff from the wheat, once again criticizing and correcting any of their predecessors who, as Tertullian and Pope St. Gregory VII lamented, mistook what were merely the customary dictates of the Rut Triumphant for the Truth that sets men free. Some did this work well. Some did it embarrassingly poorly.

Nevertheless, we saw when discussing that tragic era that reform of *homines per sacra, non sacra per homines* was coming even in the worst days of the “end time” through which Giles of Viterbo was living. It was coming through that spirit of an internal break with “the system” promoted by the vision of St. Catherine of Genoa, the Oratories of Divine Love, and the Theatines. It was coming through the revival of a speculative theology that, at the hands of men like Cardinal Cajetan, was reasserting the proper non-magical understanding of nature and its relationship to the supernatural. It was coming through the truly evangelical spirit of *some* of the explorers, conquistadors, and missionaries—and the courageous Dominican and Franciscan condemnation of the horrible injustices accompanying the opening of new worlds to which a real love of the Word Incarnate inexorably led them. It was this solid Catholic sense that brought about that magnificent examination of conscience undertaken by the Kingdom of Spain regarding the initial treatment of the Indians in the

Americas and the admirable royal attempt to apply practical measures overturning “appropriate colonial justifications for oppression”.<sup>2</sup>

Reform of *homines per sacra, non sacra per homines* nevertheless proved to be a shock to many sixteenth century Catholics, and for two particular reasons. To begin with, as in all such cases, it demonstrated that the “end time” in which they lived was not *the* apocalypse but simply the conclusion of one era in the history of Christianity and the onset of yet another. Secondly, it showed that some phenomena that a number of believers considered to be eminently acceptable—such as magic and economic exploitation of their fellow men in the name of religion—were acceptable only to a fallen nature that had yet to be corrected and transformed in Christ. Would that that reform and the shock that it brought to the system had been completed! It was not. The new, Tridentine, Baroque Civilization it created also ran its course. It, too, came to its “end time”—the “end time” whose problems we ourselves are forced to endure and address.

### *B. The Present “End Time” and the Future Advance of the Word*

Friends of the full correcting and transforming message of the Word may never have faced a situation more painful than the one confronting them today. Everything that that message proclaims is, for all intents and purposes, globally ignored

---

<sup>2</sup> For the numerous spiritual and intellectual problems of the Age of Discovery, the confusions and seeming contradictions of popes and theologians, and the impact of the revival of speculative thought, see Mayeur, VII, 521-616.

## EPILOGUE

and derided. Hopes for making the Word the king of the universe appear to be so utopian that many American conservatives, neoconservatives, and libertarians use faith in that goal as a means of illustrating the mindless, ideological limitations of Catholics entertaining them. Once again, Chateaubriand's comment holds true: there are indeed moments in history when possessing a higher vision is treated by the enemies of the spirit as though it actually reveals a dullness of soul.

Sophistic words, in contrast, prosper as never before. The tellers of fine tall tales that guarantee the opposite of what they promise control all of the guiding myths of the pluralist Empire of the World. Believers themselves have generally been seduced into either directly abandoning their Faith or dialoguing with the mythmakers on their own terms, thus providing what amounts to a "Catholic" defense of "nature as is" rather than support for the correction and transformation of nature in Christ. Under such circumstances, there is no wonder that many traditionalists are seduced into dangerous millenarian delusions and long to hide in the underbrush of our rhetoric-drunk imperial society in order to await divine deliverance.

Still, let us consider what would happen to a man who actually was awakened by Catholic freedom fighters to the possibility of exchanging the modern *danse macabre* for the pilgrim dance of life in this present time of troubles. My contention is that he would find himself as changed an individual as that first brave soul who tore himself away from his fixation on the back wall of the cave in the magnificent allegory in Plato's *Republic*. Like his platonic prototype, he, too, would realize that he had to do absolutely

everything in his power to complete his journey to the light, and then to act in accordance with the insights gained through his enlightenment.

Our modern pilgrim's first and most liberating step towards enlightenment would entail a complete, *internal* break with the false goals, priorities, and laws of the Rut Triumphant of the Empire of the World. This would mean a refusal to accept a "make believe" life of living death in which belief, knowledge, and action were completely separated from one another; namely, the life of living death—the euthanasia—required by the ruling imperial ethos. Such a refusal would bring with it an internal rejection of that schizophrenic Catholic club mentality that renders him impotent as a Christian while exposing him to the constant danger of conversion to the libertine or criminal outlook central to shaping his daily environment. As "passive" as such an internal break with "the system" might seem to be, it is, as St. Catherine of Genoa, the Oratories of Divine Love, and the Theatines realized in the age of the late medieval Rut Triumphant, actually the most decisive and contentious step a man can take. Moreover, it is instantly perceived as such by the defenders of the existing Establishment. They cannot help but recognize a dangerous threat to the dominance of the present *disorder*—as the personalists liked to call the reigning ethos and its political and social structures—posed by the emergence of even one single individual who will not publicly praise the *danse macabre* destroying man's body and soul as though it were the height and culmination of the march of human history.

But the newly awakened and committed Catholic rebel would be pleased to learn of their irritation. He would not want to keep his decision purely internal. Rather, he would

## EPILOGUE

long to become a militant advocate on behalf of the full corrective and transforming message of the Word in the public sphere. Like both Plato's escaped cave dweller, as well as the reformer monks of Cluny and their colleagues through the ages, he would be eager to take the offensive and illuminate the world around him, realizing that any long-term personal success must eventually involve determined social action as well. He, like his forbears, would know that he could enjoy no secure possession of the light unless he also somehow enlisted the communities in which he grew and perfected himself in his hunt for the victory of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, altering their unnatural "structures of sin" to work for the common good of all. For he, too, would see that it was only in this way that he could escape the danger of himself being dragged back into the vast and soul-killing darkness of Plato's cave.

Obviously, the Catholic militant, newly enlightened at the hands of his true Tradition, would be deeply concerned above all else about awakening his fellow believers and the co-opted ecclesiastical communities that sedate and misshape them according to the wishes of revolutionary prophets—a project in which the restoration of the traditional daily liturgical life of the Church would play a central role. But he would also recognize that he had to work with the secular communities that he inhabited as well, stirring them up to find ways of enchaining those strong men dominating communal life for the satisfaction of their own, narrow, "business as usual" desires. In short, he would know that he had to find some contemporary means of "binding the rhinoceros".

## 1152 BLACK LEGENDS

In approaching this sacred and secular task, he would be wise to imitate the reformers of Cluny still further, identifying the proponents of "nature as is" who posed the greatest danger to his social labors, directing his primary public activity to *converting* rather than *praising* and *witnessing* to their sagacity. Marauding *malitia* of the tenth and eleventh centuries were the most significant threat to a just social order in the days of the new medieval ascent of Mount Tabor. They were the ones who brought forth the strongest efforts from contemporary reformers to tame. Today, both the pluralist ideologues and word merchants who stimulate and justify the *danse macabre*, along with those libertines and criminals who use the tellers of a good tall tale to serve their own agenda, must be the chief targets for contemporary evangelization on the part of Catholics. They are the "rhinoceros" who must be bound---for our sake, for the sake of the common good, and for their own sakes as well.

It would be cowardly to leave off discussing this theme without making one last reference to word merchant exploitation of the war of the Incarnate Word with His Jewish opponents to aid the GCSQ's defense of fallen nature. For modern authors of black legends and alternative good stories take it for granted that all they have to do to drive the proponents of the cause of Christ the King from the field of combat is to make mention of Christianity's wicked treatment of the Jews. But insofar as they do think this to be the case, they prove themselves deluded by their own sophist arguments.

That *sinful Catholics*, both now and in the past, must do penance for crimes against Jews is scarcely to be denied. They must also do similar penance for crimes against Moslems, pagans, emperors, kings, popes, prelates, priests, and



## EPILOGUE

ordinary men and women, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. If such *Catholics* committed their crimes in the name of *Catholicism* they must do penance for their hypocrisy or their ignorance as well. But the line to the confessional box and intense penitential expiation must be led by contemporary believers who have accepted the arguments of pluralist word merchants and joined in the demand that the Church *qua* Church—as the Mystical Body of Christ— apologize for *her* supposed crimes

This is a totally absurd demand. For the Church has made eminently clear what it is that forms part of her teaching and what it is that does not. She herself has entered into battle with Church Fathers, popes, bishops, emperors, kings, saints both cleric and lay, and ordinary believers who have taught doctrines that she cannot accept. And she has never accepted teachings and actions regarding forced conversions, racial theories, and genocides that modern word merchants and popular opinion ascribe to her. Teachings and actions of this sort—such as the struggles against the *conversos* in fifteenth century Spain—have regularly been the product of popular outbursts of anger over a complex mesh of social issues and political power struggles. Insofar as they have indeed compromised religion, this has been due to the work of individual preachers. But these errors and pogroms as such have regularly and courageously been fought by pontiffs and prelates who have emphasized the dignity of all men in and through the influence of the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Everything that brought about the twentieth century genocide against the Jews was the work of the Grand

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Mayeur, VII, 377-404.

Coalition of the Status Quo: that formidable alliance's insistence upon destroying the influence of the Church over the State; its reduction of knowledge to a natural "wisdom" that some powerful men wished to be understood on biological and racial grounds alone; its construction of a New Order founded upon the Triumph of the Will. Meanwhile, everything that could effectively have prevented that genocide was rejected as either the message of an unscientific and ignorant Dark Age or an imposition of religious "values" offensive to the dignity of man and State and their freedom of choice.

Sad to say, the State of Israel, which treats any criticism of its actions as a sign of latent "fascism", is the chief contemporary teacher and practitioner of the theories and actions behind the sole genocide it permits mankind to lament: that which took place during the Second World War. Israel exercises an enormous influence over the Empire of the World, and it does so backed by American military strength. It, too, is a "rhinoceros" that must be bound by those wishing to fight for the Empire of the *Word*. But given the current political impotence of Catholics concerned to bring about such a binding, it seems that that labor is one that primarily calls for a regimen of fasting and prayer.

What kind of society might be produced through a successful attack on the pluralist Empire of the World and those who triumph—or believe that they triumph, to the actual detriment of their own souls and bodies—by means of its ethos? This is impossible to say. St. Peter and St. Paul could not have foreseen the character of a proper Christian imperial order. Neither St. Augustine, nor St. Boniface, nor Charles the Great could have predicted the development of the High Middle Ages with its new and comprehensive effort

## EPILOGUE

to ascend Mount Tabor. Reformers like the author of the *Formicarius* in the depths of the age of the late medieval Rut Triumphant could not have imagined Baroque Christendom. Jesuits driven from their missions and chained in Portuguese prisons in the decades before the Revolution would probably have treated prophetic announcement of a nineteenth century Catholic revival as the dream of madmen.

Nevertheless, we can certainly hope that it would be a world that would provide a still deeper understanding of the full message of the Word for man in nature than that which has been handed down to us today. We can hope so because we ourselves are now aware of similar developments having taken place in the Christian past. What a splendid contrast, to take but one major example, was the situation of early twentieth century Catholics in relation to that of their fourteenth century brethren. How much more obvious to them were the answers to questions regarding the relationship of written and oral Tradition, the Deposit and the unfolding of the Faith, the infallibility of the Roman pontiffs when speaking publically as the voice of Christ rather than addressing issues as private persons, and, finally, the very nature of Christendom as a whole. And all this, due to the work accomplished by the Tridentine Reformers and the intransigent Ninth Crusaders!

If we were to be successful in affecting a similar revival of the influence of the Word, our descendants might one day be able to enjoy the same splendid contrast in knowledge with respect to issues that confuse and weaken us profoundly today. Most importantly, *our* contemporary labors might well ensure that *future* Catholics would be infinitely more adept at uncovering and dismissing the fraudulence of the word

merchandizing central to the work of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo: both that which taxes Christianity with crimes that actually run totally counter to its teaching, as well as that which twists the meaning and significance of the Faith to serve some “nice” purpose threatening none of the “business as usual” projects of the defenders of a fallen nature.

One thing is absolutely – and perhaps painfully – certain in this cloud of unknowing regarding the future effects of such an auspicious revival: the fact that it would cut the ground from underneath many “customs” that have taken hold in the contemporary Catholic world to the detriment of the tasks truly assigned to us by Christ. For believers would inevitably discover that numerous ideas and practices that they today take for granted not only as perfectly compatible with Church teaching but even essential to its victory are terribly flawed “tall tales” invented by word merchants of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo; by men who are, in fact, mortal enemies of the Word in history. These “Catholic” errors, in our own land, include the special, godly “exceptionalism” of the American system, the supposedly iron laws of a capitalist system run amock, and, sad to say, even certain traditionalist perceptions of the existence of some pre-conciliar Golden Age.

Were a revival to take hold, future generations of fellow believers, brought up on a more profound understanding of their authentic heritage, would incredulously question ecclesiastical historians as to how any American Catholic could ever have convinced himself that a system rooted in the twin errors of Protestantism and the Enlightenment might have produced anything other than a thoroughgoing “Sack of Rome”. Perhaps these historians would be merciful and

## EPILOGUE

inform the incredulous that it took the Catholic world seven hundred years to come to terms with the barbarian invasions, escape the influence of the evil beliefs and behavior of the German tribes, and jell any of their native achievements together with the Seeds of the Logos of Greco-Roman civilization. Perhaps they would therefore underline the fact that it was no shock that it had taken so long to deal with political and social confusions posed by a Grand Coalition of the Status Quo that was still more powerful than the barbarians—and lacked their redeeming qualities.

Let us dream that by having come to terms with the problems of the American pluralist regime, future Catholics will learn, once and for all, that it will never be possible for the Church to discover an infallible system for dealing with the political and social realm; that she will never find a system that obviates the permanent need for the support of solid doctrine, intense personal and communal labor, a pilgrim spirit, and an openness to new steps in the dramatic and ever-changing dance of life. A major flaw of all modernity has been its effort to identify just such a foolproof mechanism through which the difficulty of determining and doing the right thing in each and every new situation might be avoided; its attempt to dispense men, in effect, from the task of Christian living. It could not succeed in this enterprise. No constitution and no political system can ever be fully free from manipulation by the noonday devils. No individual can ever be liberated from the hard work required in order to escape from their seductive, demonic appeal. Prudent experimentation, guided by the unchangeable moral teaching of the Church, seems as though it must always be the order of the day in times of crisis and change. It was perhaps—just

*perhaps*—a good thing for nineteenth century Catholics to have undertaken that experiment with liberal and democratic governments that they did. But it would be infinitely more judicious for us to learn from their mistakes in doing so, and to admit, once again, that if any form of government open to correction and transformation in Christ is valid, all, without exception, are also capable of corruption and destruction.

If contemporary believers would understand and accept this fact, they would be in a much more suitable position for aiding in the construction of a better and more Catholic future. They would recognize that flexibility regarding systems dictates that if they do participate directly in politics, that they always do so as free men liberated by the Word. Free Christian men would take it for granted that the systems within which they work are just that—systems, and not their Savior; that there will forever be aspects of them that will tempt people to abandon those teachings of the Word which inevitably assault venal self-interests; and, unfortunately, that there will repeatedly be Catholics who will worship at their political shrines, will twist their Faith to serve their substitute secular gods, will thereby create the fuel for seemingly legitimate black legends regarding the Church and her collusion with the powerful, and will need to be as vigorously combated as outright enemies of Christ.

If continuing to participate in a system that has gone so far astray that the anti-Catholic “teaching” that one imparts through collaborating with it outweighs the hypothetical benefits that might come from attempting to use it for decent purposes, then free Christian men must realize that they have to abstain from “regime politics”. But abstention, for social beings, does not mean passivity. Even under such unfortunate circumstances, believers are obliged to organize

## EPILOGUE

their abstention in a positive way. Like the members of the late nineteenth century Italian Catholic Action movement, they, too, must “abstain” from a politics designed to ensure their defeat for the purpose of actively preparing themselves, intellectually, spiritually, and practically, for handling national and international affairs responsibly in the future under better and more fruitful conditions. What does this mean in precise, practical terms? That is not a question for theoreticians to answer. That is for gifted activists true to the Faith and skilled in the pilgrim dance of life to specify.

All these lessons are especially important for Catholics in America, who, even when they are ready to admit the problems that afflict their land, ascribe them to evil “outside influences”, or to a “young country’s foibles”, and not to their substantial underlying cause: the same, unchanging hunt for a system built on “nature as is”, justified by means of an alternative good story and rooted in a heroic Foundation Myth, as preached by Isocrates in the pre-Christian era. American Catholics would do more good for the cause of Christ than anyone else at this juncture in history if they would admit that the United States is as vulnerable a nation, subject to the vagaries of human action and human history, as any other polity in the long record of the human race. It is no more divine than any other national entity or any other political system. It has had an historical beginning and it will also have an historical end. Far from being young, it is a very old nation in its repetition and perfection of errors rooted in the dawn of parochial hostility to the hunt for the Logos and its corrective and transforming message. No more powerful blow could be dealt to the Empire of the World than if American Catholics, more loudly than all others, insisted that

no nation and no system can be our Mother; that only the Church is our Mother; and that only a Catholic Truth demonstrably respectful of everything truly natural can guide us to safe political action in the flux of changing historical conditions.

No one should be surprised that an awakening from the contemporary nightmare might involve just as many frustrating complexities as those experienced by our forbears of the era of the Great Western Schism. Would it really be any wonder that substantive improvement might require much criticism of clergy and laity from scandalized believers? Could anyone honestly be stunned that horrified men and women might reject the advice of “moderates” who wish to make a hopelessly illogical distinction between an “acceptable” criticism of a few abuses and their perpetrators on the one hand and an “unacceptable” critique of the essence and entirety of the scandal, as far up the sacred and secular totem pole as it extends, on the other? Might it not also be the case that laity similar to the “interfering” Emperor Sigismund and prelates like that “schismatic” Cardinal Colonna who eventually became Pope Martin V could end up, in the long run, on the Church’s list of historic heroes? And, this notwithstanding, that they would find themselves honored alongside equally serious “moderate” figures who worked for a return to the high road back to the corrective and transforming influence of the Word in history more quietly, “by the existing rule book”? Complexity might make many seemingly contradictory bedfellows indeed. But God’s Providence would ensure that all played their proper role in the dawning revival. In short, the Holy Spirit—the true Holy Spirit, not the Holy Spirit of Teilhardian convergence—could ensure that both Archbishop Marcelle Lefebvre and



## EPILOGUE

hardworking mainstream prelates might one day be seen to have been solid allies in the cause of a future Catholic recovery.

In any case, perhaps the future fruits of a renewed ascent of Mount Tabor would involve an unexpected correction and transformation of the single most dangerous aspect of modern naturalism in and of itself: willfulness. For this is what the modern naturalist vision ultimately is: a willful one; a recipe for the Triumph of the Will; an institutionalization of an Original Sin based upon that Triumph of the Will. Modern man does what he does because he chooses to do so, calling his choice “natural” and, in Catholic circles, a choice that is dictated by a hyperactive Holy Spirit as well. Perhaps God wishes us to redeem the willfulness so essential to modernity by an honest act of Catholic will: the will to pick up and read the whole book of Tradition; the will to appreciate all the spiritual and natural wisdom to be found working together in its various chapters; the will to open up the jewel box of Tradition and use each and every one of the gems that shine so brilliantly therein without exception; the will to greet life as it must be greeted: as an ever continuing, magnificent drama, involving the need for all of the patience, the flexibility, the pilgrim spirit, and the good humor and patience with comic human failure that one can muster. If now is not the time to make such an act of will when would it be likely to arrive?

*C. The Faithful, Outsiders, and the Seeds of the Logos*

Will a sufficient number of Catholics be awakened to the full message of the Word, take up the corrective and

transforming work of Christ, and abandon any false traditions and customs that they have acquired in the decades of confusion behind them? I certainly hope so. But I personally think that the task of stepping back and reassessing the proper path to building Christendom was easier for tenth and eleventh century men of faith living in a similar age of iron. While the citizens of the Empire of the World are shaped by the cheap slogans of a rhetoric-drunk civilization that cannot look further into the future than the next meaningless election and fad-friendly advertising campaign, the hearts and spirits of the subjects of the Emperor Otto III were still being taught a much higher and exalted vision, flawed though it certainly was. The mentality of even the best members of the Catholic Club of the present imperial regime cannot be contrasted with that of the entourage of the Holy Roman Emperor without intense Christian embarrassment. But, then again, our ancestors, whatever the depravity of their historical environment, benefited from the nourishment provided by a liturgical rite that raised them continuously to contemplation of the highest heavens as the surest guide for their temporal activity.

Much of what I have said here may sound terribly "pessimistic." This fact alone of course condemns it in the eyes of the true pluralist believer. His alternative good story demands a blind, irrational, "optimistic" faith in the fruits of the system, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. But "pessimism" and "optimism" are sophist and not Word-friendly categories. Catholicism deals in "hope" and battles against "despair." The precondition of Christian hope is an accurate appreciation of the *reality* of the situation in which men find themselves. Christianity can tolerate no blindfolds

## EPILOGUE

in its work of encouragement of hope, even if this forces it to speak of things that seem pessimistic to the world at large.

My sincere wish is that any pessimism in this book may lead my audience to remove that blindfold woven out of black legends and alternative good stories justifying abandonment to “nature as is” – the chief obstacle to a truly Christian hope and a really sound Christian victory. All of us must maintain hope in the only serious manner that a Christian can do so: by going in search of Christ and the full meaning of Christ’s Incarnation. With our eyes fixed on Christ we gain the aid of both Faith and Reason, along with all of the complex and eminently useful tools the two, together, provide for us for learning about the True, the Good, and the Beautiful and implementing their teaching. Acting in this way, we have concrete reason for a rock-solid hope.

Christmastide, 800, the time of Charlemagne’s coronation as Western Roman Emperor, was another in the many crisis-charged moments in the history of the Drama of Truth. The lesson that the events of that season taught us was to rush in where “wise men” less sage than the eastern kings who came to Bethlehem feared to tread. The work of our noble and courageous ancestors reminds us that the Christ child is still there, and that with a sound Faith and a little backbone there is nothing in this entire universe that we need fear. Yes, a future victory on one front may be followed by defeats on many others, just as Christmastide, 800, was followed by the evils of the late ninth and tenth centuries. Intelligent and well-intentioned believers of our own day may see their plans thwarted by ideologues and their fellow travelers. Christendom may seem to be a chimera. This should not

daunt us. It should simply lead us to realize, once again, that there is no guarantee of an absolutely certain, stable, Catholic triumph until the end of time.

And earthly success is not our primary concern as active believing individuals anyway. Our primary concern is to know, to love, and to serve God through obedience to the fullness of the message of the Word Incarnate; to accept the conditions under which we labor joyfully, with good humor, even if these dictate living in a kind of internal exile, fighting a guerrilla warfare for the Word, waiting for the right opportunity to emerge into open battle when our pilgrim spirit allows us to see that that moment has finally *truly* arrived. Let us therefore concentrate on these real “first things”, and leave God’s Providence to grant our labors their just rewards in His own due time. We have no other choice. For, as Louis Veillot indicates, our history proves that hopes based upon doing what God wishes us to do are our best—our only chance—for survival:<sup>4</sup>

The right tactic for us is to be visibly and always what we are, nothing more, nothing less. We defend a citadel that cannot be taken except when the garrison itself brings in the enemy. Combating with our own arms, we only receive minor wounds. All borrowed armor troubles us and often chokes us.

Yes, the times, on one level, do not seem to be propitious to Catholics, but God—nature’s true, supernatural God—sees and guides developments in ways that we generally only begin to perceive long after the event. Our perceptions are

---

<sup>4</sup> L. Veillot, V, 276.

## EPILOGUE

limited and all too frequently flawed. As St. Bede the Venerable, that magnificent early medieval raconteur of a “good story about a true story”, tells us in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in describing Britain: “And forasmuch as...it hath light nights in the summer, ...at midnight many times men looking doubteth whether it be yet of the evening past or break of the day following”.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever might happen in the immediate future—whether the naturalist inspired Empire of the World has enough tricks under its belt to survive for a time, or whether it disintegrates through its own unnatural excesses, the internal battling of the various, hostile units of the Grand Coalition of the Status Quo, or the push given to it by an anti-pluralist Moslem revival—even if only a small Church and a handful of Catholics remain to give true witness to Christ, all would not be lost. Even if this remnant had to confront an overwhelming mass of non-believers throughout the globe who were to persist in mocking the corrective and transforming mission of the Word in a socio-political desert, it would still find grounds for hope. For not all modern men are unreceptive to the Christian message. And a natural world that is a product of God’s love and grace and therefore cannot unceasingly be mocked would be firmly in its camp. In short, that Catholic remnant would see that our present modern “end” will be our new “beginning”.

Ernst Jünger, in his powerful work of 1939 *On the Marble Cliffs*, drives home my point much more effectively than I can. His protagonists are two brothers horrified by the triumph of the barbaric will of a tyrant identified as the

---

<sup>5</sup> Bede, I, 15.

*Oberförster* over the civilized order of a place called the Marina. The first step of these heroes is to make an “inner break” with the degenerating ethos of the Marina itself; that inner break that seems so defeatist to the mindless activist but actually is the spiritual mainstay of anyone oppressed by the brute force of overwhelming might. In their “retirement”, the brothers return *ad fontes*, to the sources, and dedicate themselves to the study of nature. They know that they will some day have to fight the *Oberförster*, and with an odd conglomerate of seemingly dubious and compromised allies. They are ready to accept this perilous coalition because their peculiar future comrades all still have a clear, underlying sense of the tyrant’s evil, and because the heroes know that they themselves were once “part of the problem” that these forces represent. They, like Jünger in his real life involvement with parochial-minded nationalist organizations, had once “ridden with the Mauritians” – one of the groups that may, unwittingly, have aided the *Oberförster*’s rise. But they, like their future front-line friends, had proven to be open to change, and they know, as brother Otho says, that an error only becomes disastrous if men stubbornly persist in refusing to correct it. When they ride off again, it is with this band of brothers in a battle against demonic willfulness. And, despite the odds, they ride off in a spirit of *Heiterkeit*; a spirit of cheerful serenity; a Catholic Christian spirit.

Jünger’s vision was still flawed when he wrote *Auf den Marmorklippen*, because he had not yet come to that Catholic Faith which he finally did accept in the last years of his very long life. But believers should certainly take heed of the message of the very modern “Seed of the Logos” that his novel offers them. Men like Jünger’s heroes and their allies are lost and wandering in our age as perhaps never before.

## EPILOGUE

Migrants are to be found everywhere, both physically as well as intellectually and spiritually. It has almost become possible to see “migrants” longing for a true, natural community as members of a new corporate entity requiring a scholastic openness and analysis to understand and address properly. Some of these migrants wandering through the desert we call modernity will strive to understand the Logos of things. New Socrates will emerge to guide them on a rational journey toward the light; towards ultimate supernatural correction and transformation in Christ. Believers in the Word Incarnate who nurture the true Catholic pilgrim spirit will recognize them as allies and will welcome them in their midst. They will join in the fight against the *Oberförster*.

Nature herself will strike against her false naturalist friends, whose deceptive and misleading words demanded from her what she was not created to give. For the natural world, created through the grace of God, although fallen and marred in its beauty, cannot help but tell of His glory to those who have eyes to see and punish those who do not. And He is always there to polish, refine, and encourage this instrument of His superabundant love. “The supernatural is finished”, Cardinal Pie, speaking at the grotto at Lourdes, quoted nineteenth century man as gloating. “Well, look here, then! The supernatural pours out, overflows, sweats from the sand and from the rock, spurts out from the source, and rolls along on the long folds of the living waves of a river of prayers, of chants and of light”.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Mayeur, XI, 350.





# Bibliography

## Three Main Guides

Hughes, P., *A History of the Church* (Sheed & Ward, Three Volumes, 1949). Despite its age, still a fine source down to the beginning of the Reformation.

Jedin, H., and Dolan, J. *History of the Church* (Crossroad, Ten Volumes, 1981). An excellent guide for all eras, but difficult to find and purchase.

Mayeur, J.M., ed., *Histoire du Christianisme* (Desclée, Thirteen Volumes, 1990-2002). A crucial resource, although not yet available in English.

## General Works

Carrol, W, *A History of Christendom* (Christendom, Five Volumes, 2010).

Copleston, F., *A History of Philosophy* (St. Mut, Nine Volumes, 1994).

Daniel, N., *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (U. of Edinburgh, 1960).

1170 BLACK LEGENDS

- Daniel-Rops, H., *A History of the Church* (J, M. Dent & Sons, Ten Volumes, 1959-1967).
- Denzinger, H., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (Herder, 1957).
- Dolan, J.P., *The American Catholic Experience. A History From Colonial Times to the Present* (Notre Dame, 1985).
- Dvornik, F., *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* (New York, 1966).
- Ellis, J.T., *A Guide to American Catholic History* (Oxford, 1982).
- Fliche, A., and Martin, eds., *Histoire de l'Eglise* (Bloud et Gay, Fifteen Volumes, 1950).
- Folz, R., *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Centuries* (Macmillan, 1992).
- Genakopolos, D.J. ed., *Byzantium* (Chicago, 1984).
- Hussey, J.M., *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1990).
- Jones, E. Michael, *The Revolutionary Jewish Spirit* (Fidelity, 2008).
- Jungmann, J.A., *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (New York, 1950).
- Krautheimer, R., *Rome: Profile of a City* (Princeton, 1980).
- Lapidus, I.M., *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, 1988).
- Lynch, J.H., *The Medieval Church: A Brief History* (Longman, 1992).
- Mack Smith, D., *A History of Sicily* (Chatto & Windus, 1968).
- Maguire, H., ed., *Byzantine Court Culture* (Harvard, 2004).
- Marty, M., *Pilgrims in their Own Land* (Penguin, 1984).
- Noble, T.F.X., *The Republic of St. Peter* (Philadelphia, 1984).
- Norwich, J.J., *A History of Venice* (Knopf, 1982).
- Ostrogosky, G., *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford, Two Volumes, 1980).
- Partner, P., *The Lands of St. Peter* (U. of California, 1972).

- Pastor, L. von., *The History of the Popes* (K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, Forty Volumes, 1906-1913).
- Pelikan, J., *The Christian Tradition* (Chicago, 1974).
- Pourrat, P., *Christian Spirituality* (Burns, Oates, & Washbourne, Four Volumes, 1922-1927).
- Quasten, J. *Patrology* (Christian Classics, Four Volumes, 1992).
- Rapp, F., *Le Saint Empire Romain Germanique* (Tallandier, 2000).
- Ullman, W., *The Growth of Papal Government in The Middle Ages* (London, 1970)
- Ullman, W., *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (Methuen, 1972).
- Vasiliev, A.A., *History of the Byzantine Empire* (U. of Wisconsin, Two Volumes, 1952).
- Ware, T., *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin, 1963).

### **Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages**

- Barnes, T., *A History of the Ostrogoths* (Bloomington, 1984)
- Brown, P., *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago, 1981).
- Barnstone, W., ed., *The Other Bible* (Harper Collins, 1984).
- Barnwell, P.S., *Emperor, Prefects, and Kings. The Roman West, 395-565* (North Carolina, 1993).
- Barrois, G.A., *Jesus Christ and the Temple* (St. Vladimirs, 1960).
- Beard, M. et al, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge, Two Volumes, 1998).
- Bede, *Historical Works* (Harvard, 1930).
- Bernhardt, J., *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c. 936-1075* (Cambridge, 1993).
- Bloomer, W.M., *Latinity and Literary Society at Rome* (Pennsylvania, 1997).

1172 BLACK LEGENDS

- Bradshaw, P., *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (Oxford, 1993).
- Brown, P., *The World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1971).
- Brown, P., "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", *Journal of Roman Studies*, LXI (1971-1972).
- Burkert, W., *Greek Religion* (Harvard, 1985).
- Burton-Christie, W., *The Word in the Desert* (Oxford, 1993).
- Chadwick, H., *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1966).
- Chadwick, H., *Boethius, the Consolation of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 1981).
- Chisolm, K., and Ferguson, J., *Rome: The Augustan Age* (Oxford, 1981).
- Chitty, D.J., *The Desert a City* (New York, 1987).
- Clarke, H.B., and Brennan, M., eds., *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism* (Oxford, 1981).
- Collins, R., *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000* (London, 1983).
- Coogan, M., *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Oxford, 1998).
- Corcoran, S., *The Empire of the Tetrarchs* (Oxford, 1996).
- Cotter, W., *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Routledge, 1999).
- Croke, B., and Harries, J., *Religious Conflicts in Fourth Century Rome: A Documentary Study* (Sydney, 1982).
- Curran, J., *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000).
- Dawson, C., *The Making of Europe* (World Publishing, 1970).
- Dench, E., *From Barbarians to New Men* (Oxford, 1995).
- Dilhe, A., *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Routledge, 1994).

- Donfried, K.P., and Richardson, P., ed., *Judaism and Christianity in First Century Rome* (Eerdmanns, 1998).
- Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne* (Ann Arbor, 1969).
- Elliott, J.K., ed., *The Apocryphal Jesus. Legends of the Early Church* (Oxford, 1996).
- Elm, S., "Virgins of God". *The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994).
- Emerton, E., *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York, 1940).
- Ferguson, J., *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Cornell, 1970).
- Fichtenau, H., *Living in the Tenth Century* (Chicago, 1991).
- Fichtenau, H., *The Carolingian Empire* (Oxford, 1968).
- Fine, S., ed., *Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue* (Routledge, 1998).
- Fletcher, R., *The Barbarian Conversion* (California, 1999).
- Folz, R., *The Coronation of Charlemagne* (London, 1974).
- Fox, R.L., *Pagans and Christians* (Knopf, 1987).
- Frend, W.H., *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972).
- Frend, W.H., *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries* (London, 1980).
- Galinsky, K., *Augustan Culture* (Princeton, 1996).
- Gero, S., *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III, with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources* (Louvain, 1973).
- Godman, P., *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985).
- Goodman, M., *Mission and Conversion. Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1994).
- Goodman, M., ed., *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, 1999).
- Gradel, I., *Heavenly Honours. Roman Emperor Worship, Caesar to Constantine* (Oxford, 1999).

1174 BLACK LEGENDS

- Green, P., *Alexander to Actium. The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (California, 1993).
- Gregory, T.E., *Vox Populi: Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century A.D.* (Columbus, Ohio, 1970).
- Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* (Washington, D.C., 1959).
- Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* (New York, 1974).
- Hadas, M., *A History of Greek Literature* (Columbia, 1950).
- Hadas, M., *A History of Latin Literature* (Columbia, 1952).
- Haldon, J.F., *Byzantine Praetorians* (Bonn, 1984).
- Hallenbeck, J.T., *Pavia and Rome: The Lombard Monarchy and the Papacy in the Eighth Century* (Philadelphia, 1982).
- Harting, H.M., *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1972).
- Herrin, J., *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987).
- Hillgarth, J.N., *Visigothic Spain, Byzantium, and the Irish* (London, 1985).
- Jaeger, W., *Paideia* (Oxford, Three Volumes, 1986).
- Jaeger, W., *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Harvard, 1961).
- James, E., *The Franks* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988).
- Jonas, H., *The Gnostic Religion* (Beacon, 1963).
- Jones, A.H.M., *The Later Roman Empire. 284-602* (Johns Hopkins, Two Volumes, 1964).
- Kelly, J.N.D., *Early Christian Creeds* (London, 1972).
- Kennedy, G.A., *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (North Carolina, 2000).
- King, P.D., *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1972).
- Laistner, M.L.W., *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (Cornell, 1978).

- Lieu, S., and Montserrat, D., eds., *Constantine* (Routledge, 1998).
- Lossy, V., *The Meaning of Icons* (New York, 1982).
- Louth, A., *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford, 1983).
- McCann, J., *Saint Benedict* (London, 1979).
- MacCormock, S., *Art and Ceremonial in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981).
- MacDonald, D.R., *Christianizing Homer. The Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew* (Oxford, 1994).
- MacDonald, D.R., *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (Yale, 2000).
- McKitterick, R., *The Frankish Kingdom Under the Carolingians: 751-987* (London, 1983).
- MacMullen, R., *Pagans and Christians: Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (Yale, 1999).
- MacMullen, R., *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (Yale, 1981).
- MacMullen, R., *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (Yale, 1984).
- Martin, L., *Hellenistic Religions* (Oxford, 1978).
- Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings* (Newman, 1985).
- Meredith, A., *Gregory of Nyssa* (Routledge, 1999).
- Merdinger, J.E., *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (Yale, 1997).
- Mersch, E., *The Whole Christ* (Dennis Dobson, 1936).
- Meyendorff, J., *Imperial Unity and Christian Division* (Crestwood, NY, 1989).
- Moxnes, H., ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families* (Routledge, 1997).
- Pelikan, J., *Christianity and Classical Culture* (Yale, 1993).
- Pelikan, J., *Imago Dei* (Chicago, 1990).
- Peters, E., ed., *Monks, Bishops, and Pagans: Christian Culture in Gaul and Italy, 500-700* (Philadelphia, 1981).

1176 BLACK LEGENDS

- Peters, J.M., *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great in Their Late Antique Cultural Background* (Toronto, 1984).
- Richards, J., *Consul of God: The Life and Times of Gregory the Great* (London, 1980).
- Richards, J., *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages: 476-752* (London, 1979).
- Riché, P., *The Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 1993).
- Riché, P., *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne* (Philadelphia, 1978).
- Riché, P., *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West* (Columbia, SC, 1976).
- Sawyer, P.H., and Woods, I.N., eds., *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977).
- Sordi, M., *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (Routledge, 1999).
- Southern, P., and Dixon, K.R., *The Late Roman Empire* (Yale, 1996).
- Stephens, C., *Medieval Feudalism* (Ithaca, 1942).
- Stewart, C., *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford, 1998).
- Trigg, J.W., *Origen* (Routledge, 1998).
- Turcan, R., *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (Blackwell, 1992).
- Van Dam, R., *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (California, 1985).
- Voobus, A., *A History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* (Louvain, 1958-1960).
- Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., *The Barbarian West* (New York, 1962).
- Ward-Perkins, B., *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1984).
- Weill, S., *Intimations of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks* (Routledge, 1998).
- Wickham, C., *Early Medieval Italy* (London, 1981).



- Wilken, R.L., *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (Yale, 1995).
- Wilson, N.G., *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983).
- Wolfram, H., *A History of the Goths* (Berkeley, 1979).

### Later Middle Ages (1000-1500)

- Abulafia, D., *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Allen Lane, 1987).
- Abulafia, D., *Italy in the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2004).
- Allmand, C., *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War* (Cambridge, 1988).
- Angold, M., *Church & Society in Byzantium: 1081-1261* (Cambridge, 1995).
- Angold, M., *The Byzantine Empire. 1025-1054: A Political History* (Longman, 1984).
- Arnold, B., *German Knighthood. 1050-1300* (Clarendon, 1985).
- Atiya, A.S., *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London, 1968).
- Baldwin, J., *The Scholastic Culture of the Middle Ages. 1000-1300* (D.D. Heath, 1971).
- Barber, M., *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe, 1050-1320* (Routledge, 1992).
- Barber, M., *The New Knighthood* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Barber, M., *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge, 1978).
- Baron, H., *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1966).
- Bartos, F.M., *The Hussite Revolution* (Eastern European Quarterly, 1986).
- Bentley, J.H., *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, 1987).
- Berschin, W., *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages* (Catholic U., 1988).

1178 BLACK LEGENDS

- Black, A., *Political Thought in Europe: 1250-1450* (Cambridge, 1992).
- Bouchard, C.B., *Noble Chivalry & Society in Medieval France* (Cornell, 1998).
- Bradbury, J., *Medieval Warfare* (Routledge, 2004)
- Brentano, R., *Rome Before Avignon* (U. of California, 1990).
- Brown, D.C., *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Brucker, G.A., *Renaissance Florence* (U. of California, 1988).
- Brundage, J.A., *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (U. of Wisconsin, 1985).
- Burns, J.H., ed., *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought: 350-1450* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Burr, D., *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty* (Pennsylvania, 1989).
- Campbell, K.J., ed., *German Mystical Writing* (Continuum, 1991).
- Cardini, F., *Il Barbarossa* (Mondadori, 1985).
- Chesterton, G.K., *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Doubleday, 1974).
- Christiansen, E., *The Northern Crusades* (Penguin, 1997).
- Clanchy, M.T., *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Blackwell, 1999).
- Cohn, N., *Pursuit of the Millennium* (Oxford, 1979).
- Coplestone, F., S.J., *Medieval Philosophy* (Doubleday, 1962).
- Cowdrey, H.E.J., *The Clunaics and Gregorian Reform* (Clarendon, 1970)
- Crouch, D., *The Birth of Nobility* (Pearson, 2005).
- Curtius, E.R., *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Harper & Row, 1953).
- Dawson, C., *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (Image, 1991).
- Duby, G., *France in the Middle Ages: 987-1460* (Blackwell, 1991).
- Duby, G., *The Three Orders* (U. of Chicago, 1980).

- Duby, G., *The Chivalrous Society* (U. of California, 1980).
- Duby, G., *The Age of Cathedrals* (Chicago, 1981).
- Duby, G., *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest* (Pantheon, 1983).
- Eisenbichler, K., and Pugliese, O., eds., *Ficino and Renaissance Neo-Platonism* (Dovehouse CN, MRTS, 1985).
- Emmerson, R.K., and McGinn, B., eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cornell, 1992).
- Forey, A.J., *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries* (Macmillan, 1992).
- Fuhrmann, H., *Germany in the High Middle Ages. 1050-1200* (Cambridge, 1986).
- Fuller, R., *The Brotherhood of the Common Life and its Influence* (SUNY, 1994).
- Geary, P., *Furta Sacra* (Princeton, 1978).
- Gill, J., *Byzantium and the Papacy: 1198-1400* (Rutgers, 1979).
- Gill, J., *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959).
- Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (Notre Dame Reprint, 1965).
- Gilson, E., *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Random House, 1955).
- Gilson, E., *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (Scribner, 1939).
- Gottfried, R.S., *The Black Death* (Free Press, 1985).
- Grunebaum, G. von, *Medieval Islam* (Chicago, 1946).
- Guicciardini, L., *The Sack of Rome* (Italica, 1995).
- Gurevich, A., *Medieval Popular Culture* (Cambridge, 1988).
- Hale, J.R., *Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (Touchstone, 1995).
- Hallam, E. & Everard, J., *Capetian France* (Pearson, 2001).
- Harris, J., *Byzantium and the Crusades* (Hambledon, 2003).
- Haskins, C.H., *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Meridian, 1970).

1180 BLACK LEGENDS

- Haverkamp, A. *Medieval Germany* (Oxford, 1992).
- Henderson, J., *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Oxford, 1994).
- Hinnebusch, A., *A History of the Dominican Order* (Alba House, 1966).
- Horrox, R., ed., *The Black Death* (Manchester, 1994).
- Huizinga, J., *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (E. Arnold, 1937).
- Jayne, S.R., *John Colet and Marsilio Ficino* (Greenwood, 1980).
- Kantorowicz, E., *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1966).
- Kazhdan, A.P. & Epstein, A.W., *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (U. of California, 1985).
- Kearns, C., ed., *Life of Catherine of Siena* (Glazier, 1980).
- Kempf, F., *The Church in the Age of Feudalism* (Burns & Oates, 1980).
- Kenny, A., ed., *Wycliff in His Times* (Oxford, 1986).
- Kieckhefer, R., *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989).
- Kieckhefer, R., *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Souls and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, 1984).
- Knowles, D., *The English Mystical Tradition* (Harper, 1961).
- Lagarde, G. de, *La naissance de l'esprit laïque au déclin du moyen âge* (Nauwelaerts, Five Volumes, 1958).
- Lambert, M., *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements From the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Blackwell, 1992).
- Lambert, M., *Franciscan Poverty* (SPCK, 1961).
- Lambert, M., *The Cathars* (Blackwell, 1998).
- Lambert, M.D., *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Blackwell, 1990).
- Lane, F.C., *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Johns Hopkins, 1991).
- Lerner, R.E., *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 1991).
- Le Goff, J., *Medieval Civilization* (Blackwell, 1990).

- LeGoff, J., *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1980).
- LeGoff, J., *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago, 1988).
- LeGoff, J., *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages* (Blackwell, 1993).
- Lekai, L.K., *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* (Kent State, 1977).
- Lerner, R. & Muskin, M., *Medieval Political Philosophy* (Cornell, 1972).
- Leuschner, J., *Germany in the Late Middle Ages* (Elsevier, 1980).
- Lomax, D., *The Reconquest of Spain* (Longman, 1978).
- Lopez, R.S., *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages. 950-1350* (Prentice-Hall, 1971).
- McGinn, B., ed., *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (Columbia, 1979).
- Male, E., *The Gothic Image* (Harper & Row, 1972).
- Matthew, D., *The Norman Conquest* (Batsford, 1966).
- Matthew, D., *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992).
- Mollat, M., *The Popes at Avignon* (Nelson, 1963).
- Moorman, J., *The Franciscan Order From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Franciscan Herald, 1988).
- Morrall, J.B., *Political Thought in Medieval Times* (Toronto, 1980).
- Morris, C., *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church, 1050-1200* (Clarendon, 1988).
- Myers, H.A., *Medieval Kingship* (Nelson-Hall, 1982).
- Nicol, D., *The Last Centuries of Byzantium. 1261-1453* (Cornell, 1985).
- Norwich, J.J., *The Normans in Sicily* (Penguin, 1967).
- Oakley, F., *The Western Church in the Late Middle Ages* (Cornell, 1985).
- O'Callaghan, J.F., *A History of Medieval Spain* (Cornell, 1975).
- Partner, P., *Renaissance Rome* (California, 1972).

## 1182 BLACK LEGENDS

- Peters, E., *Inquisition* (California, 1989).
- Pirenne, H., *Medieval Cities* (Princeton, 1969).
- Plumb, J.H., *The Italian Renaissance* (American Heritage Library, 1986).
- Plumb, J.H., ed., *Renaissance Profiles* (Harper, 1961).
- Powell, J.M., ed., *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World* (CUA, 1994).
- Prawer, J., *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972).
- Raby, F.J.E., *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, Two Volumes, 1957).
- Reeves, M., *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Claredon, 1969).
- Reilly, B.F., *The Medieval Spains* (Cambridge, 1993).
- Reynolds, S., *Fiefs & Society* (Oxford, 2001).
- Reynolds, S., *Kingdoms & Communities in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1997).
- Richard, J., *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (North Holland, 1979).
- Riley-Smith, J., *The Crusades: A Short History* (Athone, 1987).
- Riley-Smith, J., *A History of the Crusades* (Oxford, 2000).
- Riley-Smith, J., *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Pennsylvania, 1986).
- Roach, A.P., *The Devil's World: Heresy & Society, 1100-1300* (Pearson, 2005)
- Robinson, I.S., *The Papacy. 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Roesener, W., *Peasants in the Middle Ages* (U. of Illinois, 1992).
- Rosenwein, B.H., *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* (Pennsylvania, 1982).
- Runciman, S., *The Sicilian Vespers* (Cambridge, 1992).

- Russell, F.H., *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1975).
- Ryder, A., *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous* (Clarendon, 1976).
- Sawyer, B. and Sawyer, P., *Medieval Scandinavia* (U. of Minnesota, 1993).
- Shirley, J., *The Song of the Cathar War. A History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Ashgate, 1996).
- Smail, R.C., *The Crusades* (Thames and Hudson, 1973).
- Smalley, B. *Historians of the Middle Ages* (Thames and Hudson, 1974).
- Smalley, B., *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952).
- Southern, R.W., *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Viking Penguin, 1970).
- Spencer, H.L., *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1994).
- Spinka, M., *John Hus: A Biography* (Greenwood, 1978).
- Spitz, L.W., ed., *The Northern Renaissance* (Prentice Hall, 1972).
- Stoyanov, Y., *The Hidden Tradition in Europe* (Penguin, 1994).
- Stump, P.H., *The Reforms of the Council of Constance* (Brill, 1993).
- Swanson, R.N., *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Blackwell, 1989).
- Swanson, R. N., *Religion and Devotion in Europe, 1215-1515* (Cambridge, 1995).
- Tabacco, G., *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Tellenbach, G., *The Church in Western Europe From the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1993).
- Terpestra, N., *Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge, 1995).

## 1184 BLACK LEGENDS

- Trayer, J., *The Albigenian Crusade* (Michigan, 1971).
- Ullman, W., *The Origins of the Great Schism* (Archon, 1967).
- Waddell, H., *The Wandering Scholars* (U. of Michigan, 1989).
- Wagner, D.L., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Indiana, 1986).
- Waley, Daniel, *The Italian City-Republics* (London & New York: Longman, 1988).
- Ward, B., *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event: 1000-1215* (Scolar, 1982).
- Waugh, S.L., and Diehl, P., eds., *Christendom and its Discontents: 1000-1500* (Cambridge, 1995).
- Wessley, S.E., *Joachim of Fiore and Monastic Reform* (P. Lang, 1990).
- Wind, E., *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Norton, 1958).
- Wood, C.T., *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII* (Krieger, 1976).

## **Protestant and Catholic Reformation Era (1500-1648)**

- Abray, L.J., *The People's Reformation* (Oxford, 1985).
- Andreu, F., ed., *Le lettere di San Gaetano da Thiene* (Città del Vaticano, 1954).
- Atkinson, J., *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism* (Penguin, 1968).
- Bangert, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù* (Marietti, 1990).
- Baumgartner, F.J., *France in the Sixteenth Century* (St. Martins, 1994).
- Bergin, J., *Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld* (Yale, 1987).
- Bergin, J., *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (Yale, 1985).
- Bergin, J., and Brockliss, L., eds., *Richelieu and His Age* (Oxford, 1992).



- Bianconi, A., *L'opera delle compagnie del 'divino amore' nella riforma cattolica* (Città di Castello, 1914).
- Bordet, L., *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of His Times* (Sheed and Ward, 1932).
- Bouwsma, W.J., *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty. Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter-Reformation* (California, 1968).
- Bouwsma, W.J., *John Calvin* (Oxford, 1988).
- Broderick, J., *The History of the Society of Jesus* (Loyola, 1998).
- Cameron, E., *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 1991).
- Châtellier, L., *The Europe of the Devout: The Catholic Reformation and the Formation of a New Society* (Cambridge, 1989).
- D'Oliver, L.N., *Fray Bernardino de Sahagun* (Utah, 1987).
- Duffy, E., *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale, 1992).
- Edwards, M.V. *Luther's Last Battles* (Leiden, 1983).
- Evennett, H.D., *The Spirit of the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge, 1968).
- Fenlon, D., *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy* (Cambridge, 1972).
- Friessen, A., *Thomas Müntzer. A Destroyer of the Godless* (California, 1990).
- Gabrieli, G. "Memorie spirituali trasteverine", *Roma*, XI (November, 1934).
- Greengrass, M., *The French Reformation* (Oxford, 1987).
- Grendler, P.F., *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (Johns Hopkins, 1989).
- Halkin, L.E., *Erasmus* (Blackwell, 1987).
- Holt, G., *The French Wars of Religion: 1562-1629* (Cambridge, 1995).
- Hughes, P., *Reformation in England* (Ashgate, Three Volumes, 1993).
- Israel, J., *The Dutch Republic* (Oxford, 1995).

1186 BLACK LEGENDS

- Jedin, H., *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient* (Herder, Four Volumes, 1949-1970).
- Jones, M.D., *The Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge, 1995).
- Jouhandeau, M., *St. Philippe Neri* (Plan, 1957).
- Kunkel, P., *The Theatines in the History of Catholic Reform Before the Establishment of Lutheranism* (Washington, D.C., 1941).
- Lettere inedite di San Gaetano Thiene, *Regnum Dei* (October-December, 1946).
- Lindberg, C., *The European Reformations* (Blackwells, 1996).
- Lortz, J., *The Reformation in Germany* (Herder, Two Volumes, 1968).
- Lucatello, E. *San Gaetano Thiene e gli inizi della riforma cattolica* (Milan, 1941).
- Manschreck, C.L., *Melanchthon. The Quiet Reformer* (Greenwood, 1975).
- Martin, A.L., *The Jesuit Mind* (Cornell, 1988).
- Monti, G.M., ed., *Ricerche su Papa Paolo IV Carafa* (Benevento, 1923).
- Moote, A.L., *Louis XIII. The Just* (California, 1989).
- Mousnier, R., *The Assassination of Henry IV* (London, 1970).
- Muchenbled, R., *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France. 1400-1700* (Baton Rouge, 1988).
- Neale, J.E., *The Age of Catherine de Medici* (Harper & Row, 1962).
- Nugent, D., *Ecumenism in the Age of Reformation. The Colloquy of Poissy* (Harvard, 1974).
- Olin, J.C., Smart, D.S., and McNally, R.E., eds., *Luther, Erasmus, and the Reformation* (Greenwood, 1982).
- Parker, G., *Philip II* (Open Court, 1995).
- Parker, G., ed., *The Thirty Years War* (Routledge, 1984).
- Parker, T.H.L., *Calvin* (Westminster John Knox, 1995).

- Paschini, P., *San Gaetano Thiene, Gian Pietro Carafa, e le origini dei chierici regolari teatini* (Rome, 1926).
- Peters, E., *Inquisition* (California, 1989).
- Philips, H., *Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1997).
- Po-Chia, H.R., *The World of Catholic Renewal* (Cambridge, 1998).
- Ridley, F.A., *The Jesuits: A Study in Counter-Reformation* (AMS, 1996).
- Robb, A., *William of Orange* (London, 1962).
- Spitz, L., *Luther and German Humanism* (Ashgate, 1996).
- Strauss, G., ed., *Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation* (Bloomington, 1972).
- Strauss, G., *Luther's House of Learning. Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Books Demand, 1978)
- Tellechea, I., *Ignatius of Loyola. The Pilgrim Saint* (Loyola, 1994).
- Wallace, R.S., *Calvin, Geneva, and the Reformation* (Baker, 1991).
- Walton, R.C., *Zwingli's Theocracy* (Toronto, 1967).
- Wedgwood, C.V., *The Thirty Years War* (Yale, 1938).
- Williams, G.H., *The Radical Reformation (Sixteenth Century, 1992).*

### **Enlightenment Era (1648-1799)**

- Antoine, M., *Louis XV* (Fayard, 1989).
- Aston, N., *The End of an Elite: The French Bishops and the Coming of the Revolution* (Oxford, 1992).
- Bangert, W.V., *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù* (Marietti, 1990).
- Becker, C., *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (Harvard, 1932).
- Bernard, P., *Jesuits and Jacobins* (Illinois, 1971).

1188 BLACK LEGENDS

Blanning, T.C.W., *Joseph II* (Longman, 1994).

Blum, Carol, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue* (Cornell, 1986).

Boller, P.F., *George Washington and Religion* (Dallas, 1962).

Callaghan, W.J., and Higgs, D., eds., *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979).

Carpanetto, D., & Ricuperati, G., *Italy in the Age of Reason* (London, 1987).

Connor, P.W., *Poor Richard's Politics: Benjamin Franklin and His New American Order* (Oxford, 1965).

Cracraft, J., *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (Stanford, 1971).

Cronin, V., *Louis XIV* (Harville, 1996).

Darnton, R., *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Harvard, 1982).

Darnton, R., and Roche, D., eds., *Revolution in Print. The Press in France, 1775-1800* (California, 1989).

Davies, M., *For Altar and Throne: The Rising in the Vendée* (Remnant, 1997).

Dawson, C., *The Dividing of Christendom* (Sheed & Ward, 1965).

Gawthrop, R., *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth Century Prussia* (Cambridge, 1993).

Gay, P., *The Enlightenment* (Norton, Two Volumes, 1996).

Goodman, D., *The Republic of Letters* (Cornell, 1994).

Hazard, P., *La crise de la conscience européenne 1680-1715* (Paris, Three Volumes, 1936).

Hildesheimer, F., *Il giansenismo* (San Paolo, 1994).

Hill, C., *The World Turned Upside Down. Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (Viking, 1972).

Im Hof, V., *The Enlightenment* (Blackwell, 1994).

- Israel, J., *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2002).
- Israel, J., *Enlightenment Contested* (Oxford, 2009).
- Israel, J., *Democratic Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2011).
- Jacob, M.C., and J.R., *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (Humanities, 1984).
- Jacob, M., *The Radical Enlightenment* (Cornerstone, 2006).
- Jordan, D.A., *The Revolutionary Career of Maximilian Robespierre* (Free Press, 1985).
- Ketcham, R., *James Madison: A Biography* (Macmillan, 1971).
- Kreiser, B.R., *Miracles, Convulsions, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Early Eighteenth Century Paris* (Princeton, 1978).
- McManners, J., *Jansenism and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1975).
- May, H.F., *The Enlightenment in America* (Oxford, 1976).
- Merrick, J.W., *The Desacralization of the French Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century* (Louisiana State, 1990).
- Minamiki, G., *The Chinese Rites Controversy* (Loyola, 1985).
- Palmer, R.R., *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France* (Princeton, 1939).
- Palmer, R.R., *The Improvement of Humanity. Education and the French Revolution* (Princeton, 1985).
- Plumb, J.H., *England in the Eighteenth Century* (Penguin, 1950).
- Schama, S., *Citizens* (Knopf, 1989).
- Scott, H.M., ed., 1990, *Enlightened Absolutism* (U. of Michigan, 1990).
- Tilly, C., *The Vendée* (Harvard, 1964).
- Van Kley, D., *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution* (Yale, 1996).
- Venturi, F., *Italy and the Enlightenment* (NYU, 1972).
- Venturi, F., *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768-1776. The First Crisis* (Paris, 1976).
- Viglione, M., *La 'Vandea Italiana'*, (Effedieffe, 1995).

## Nineteenth Century

- Billington, J. H., *Fire in the Minds of Men* (Basic Books, 1980).
- Bowman, F.P., *Le Christ des barricades* (Cerf, 1987).
- Brown, M.L., *Louis Veuillot, French Ultramontane Catholic Journalist and Layman. 1818-1883* (Durham, 1977).
- Butler, C., *The Vatican Council* (Newman, 1962).
- Butterfield, H., *The Whig Interpretation of History* (Norton, 1965).
- Chadwick, O., *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1975).
- Chadwick, O., *The Pope and the European Revolution* (Oxford, 1981).
- Il Cimento* (Torino, 1852-1855).
- La Civiltà Cattolica* (Rome, 1850-1870).
- Confessore, O., *L'americanismo cattolico in Italia* (Rome, 1984).
- Cranston, M., *The Romantic Movement* (Blackwells, 1994).
- Elbow, M., *French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948* (New York, 1948).
- Eley, G., ed., *Society, Culture, and State in Germany. 1870-1930* (Michigan, 1996).
- Fitzer, J., ed., *Romance and the Rock. Nineteenth-Century Catholics on Faith and Reason* (Fortress, 1989).
- Gough, A., *French Legitimism and Catholics From the Coup d'Etat of 1851 Until 1865* (Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1967).
- Gough, A., *Paris and Rome. The Gallican Church and the Ultramontane Campaign* (Oxford, 1986).
- Goyau, G., *L'Allemagne religieuse. Le catholicisme* (Paris, Four Volumes, 1905).

- Griffiths, B., *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature, 1870-1914* (London, 1966).
- Guenel, J., *La dernière guerre du pape* (PUR, 1998).
- Hansen, E.C., *European Catholicism, 1800-1900. A Bibliography of Secondary Works in English* (Garland, 1989).
- Hoeffner, J., *Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler und die Katholische Sozialbewegung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1962).
- Jacquín, R., *Un frère de Massimo d'Azeglio: le P. Taparelli d'Azeglio 1793-1862* (Paris, 1943).
- Jemolo, A.C., *Chiesa e stato in Italia dalla unificazione agli anni settanta* (Einaudi, 1970).
- Jones, H.M., *Revolution and Romanticism* (Bellknap, 1974).
- Kalyvas, S. N., *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Cornell, 1996).
- Krueger, G., "Der Mainzer Kreis und die Katholische Bewegung", *Preussische Jahrbücher*, cxlviii, iii (June, 1912).
- Lebrun, R.A., *Throne and Altar. The Political Thought of Joseph de Maistre* (Ottawa, 1965).
- Lebrun, R.A., *Joseph de Maistre: An Intellectual Militant* (Toronto, 1988).
- McAvoy, T.T., *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History: 1850-1900* (Notre Dame, 1957).
- Mack Smith, D., *Modern Italy* (University of Michigan, 1997).
- Mazzini, G., *Address to Pope Pius IX on His Encyclical Letter* (London, 1865).
- Minghetti, M., *Miei ricordi* (Turin, Three Volumes, 1888-1892).
- Misner, P., *Social Catholicism in Europe from the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York, 1991).
- Palazzini, P., et. al, *Pio IX e gli inizi della Gioventù Cattolica* (Circolo San Pietro, 1979).
- Pellicciari, A., *L'Altro Risorgimento* (Piemme, 2000).
- Pellicciari, A., *Risorgimento da Rescrivere* (Ares, 1998).

1192 BLACK LEGENDS

- Pereiro, J., Cardinal Manning. *An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford, 1998).
- Pirri, P., S.J., ed., *Carteggi* (Biblioteca di storia italiana recente 1800-1870, xiv, 1932).
- Rao, J.C., *Removing the Blindfold* (Remnant Press, 1999).
- Rao, J.C., *For the Whole Christ* ([jcrao.freeshell.org](http://jcrao.freeshell.org)).
- Ross, R.J., *The Failure of Bismarck's Kulturkampf* (CUA, 1998)
- Scoppola, P., *Dal neoguefismo alla democrazia cristiana* (Rome, 1961).
- Scoppola, P., *Crisi modernista e rinnovamento cattolico in Italia* (Bologna, 1961).
- Sedgwick, A., *The Ralliement in French Politics, 1890-1898* (Cambridge, 1965).
- Simon, A., *L'hypothèse libérale en Belgique* (Wetteren, 1956).
- Smith, H.W., *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton, 1995).
- Spadolini, G., *L'opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98* (Florence, 1961).
- Spadolini, G. "L'intransigentismo cattolico: dalla Civiltà Cattolica al Sillabo", *Rassegna storica toscana*, iv, iii-iv (July-December, 1958).
- Sperber, J., *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Tulard, J., *La contre-révolution. Origines, histoire, postérité* (Perrin, 1990).
- Veillot, L., *Mélanges* (Oeuvres complete, iii series, Paris, 1933).
- Veillot, F., *Louis Veillot* (Paris, 1913).
- Wolf, W., *Lincoln's Religion* (Pilgrim, 1959)
- Zeldin, T., *France, 1848-1945* (Oxford, Four Volumes, 1979-1981).



## Twentieth Century

- Agócs, Sándor, *The Troubled Origins of the Italian Catholic Labour Movement* (Wayne State, 1988).
- Alcobaca, V. de *What Portugal Owes to Dr. Salazar: A Debt of Gratitude* (Editorial Imperio, 1935).
- Allitt, P., *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Cornell, 1995).
- Amerio, R., *Iota Unum* (Sarto, 1997).
- Anderson, R., *Between Two Wars. The Study of Pope Pius XI* (Franciscan Publications, 1978).
- Arbuthnott, A., *Joseph Cardijn* (London, 1966).
- Arnal, O.L., *Ambivalent Alliance: The Catholic Church and the Action Française, 1899-1939* (Books Demand, 1985).
- Atkin, N., *Church and State in Vichy France, 1940-1944* (Cambridge, 1991).
- Black, G.D., *Catholic Crusade Against the Movies, 1940-1975* (Cambridge, 1998).
- Blet, P., *Pius XII and the Second World War* (Paulist, 1999).
- Blom, P., *The Vertigo Years: Europe, 1900-1914* (Basic Books, 2008).
- Boyer, J., *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna. Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago, 1995).
- Bruneau, T.C., *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church* (Cambridge, 1974).
- Bulletin* (Lisbon: Informacio Nacional).
- Carron, J., *Le Sillon et la démocratie chrétienne, 1894-1910* (Plon, 1967).
- Chelini, J., *L'église sous Pie XII* (Fayard, Two Volumes, 1983, 1989).
- Chiron, Y., *La vie de Maurras* (Goderoy de Bouillon, 1999).
- Chiron, Y., *Paul VI. Le pape écartelé* (Perrin, 1993).

1194 BLACK LEGENDS

- Cholvý, G., *Jeunesses chrétiennes au xxe siècle* (Ouvrières, 1991).
- La Civiltà Cattolica* (Rome, 1918-1939).
- Cointet, M., *L'église sous Vichy, 1940-1945* (Perrin, 1998).
- Conway, J., *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches* (Regent, 1997).
- Conwary, M., *Catholic Politics in Europe: 1918-1945* (Routledge, 1997).
- Cotta, F., *Economic Planning in Corporative Portugal* (P.S. King & Son, Ltd., 1937).
- Cross, L.D., *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in the United States* (Books Demands, 1958).
- Davies, M., *The Liturgical Revolution* (Angelus Press, Three Volumes, 1980).
- Dawson, A., *The Birth and Impact of the Base Ecclesial Community and Liberative Theological Discourse in Brazil* (International Scholars, 1998).
- De Francis, M.E., *Italy and the Vatican: The 1984 Concordat Between Church and State* (P. Lang, 1989).
- Dominguez, J., *The Roman Catholic Church in Latin America* (Garland, 1994).
- Dubarle, D., ed., *Le Modernisme* (Beauchesne, 1980).
- Dupuis, J., *Vers une nouvelle théologie chrétienne du pluralisme religieux* (Cerf, 1997).
- École Française de Rome, ed., *Achille Ratti. Pape Pie XI* (École Française, 1996).
- Fattorini, E., *I cattolici tedeschi dall'intransigenza alla modernità, 1870-1953* (Morcelliana, 1997).
- Ferm, D.W., ed., *Third World Liberation Theologies: A Reader* (Orbis, 1988).
- Ferrari, S., *Vaticano e Israele dal secondo conflitto mondiale alla guerra del golfo* (Bologna, 1991).

- Ferro, A. *Salazar: Portugal and Her Leader* (Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1939).
- Fisher, J.T., *Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962* (Books Demand, 1999).
- Gamber, K., *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* (Una Voce, 1993).
- Gariboldi, G.A., *Pio XII, Hitler e Mussolini. Il Vaticano fra le dittature* (Mursia, 1988).
- Garnier, C., *Salazar: An Intimate Portrait* (Farrar, Strauss & Young, 1954).
- Gilson, E., *The Philosopher and Theology* (Random House, 1962).
- Goodrich-Clarke, N., *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (NYU, 1985).
- Gregory, J.D., *Dollfuss and His Times* (Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1935).
- Guasco, M., *Romolo Murri e il modernismo* (Rome, 1968).
- Gutiérrez, G., *Théologie de la libération* (Lumen Vitae, 1974).
- Hamer, J., *Karl Barth* (Westminster, 1962).
- Hellman, J., *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left* (McGill-Queens, 1997).
- Hellman, J., *The Knight Monks of Vichy. Uriage, 1940-1945* (McGill-Queens, 1997).
- Hildebrand, D. von, *Liturgy and Personality* (Longmans, 1943).
- Hunsiger, G., ed., *Karl Barth and Radical Politics* (Philadelphia, 1976).
- Invernizzi, Marco, *Il movimento cattolico in Italia* (Mimep-Docete, 1995).
- Invernizzi, Marco, *L'Unione elettorale cattolica italiana* (Cristianità, 1993).
- Kay, H., *Salazar and Modern Portugal* (Hawthorn, 1969).
- Kenny, A.J., *Catholics, Jews, and the State of Israel* (Greenwood, 1979).

1196 BLACK LEGENDS

- Klemperer, K. von, *Ignaz Seipel. Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, 1972).
- Knight, A., *The Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge, Two Volumes, 1986).
- Launay, M., *Le syndicalisme chrétien en France de 1885 à nos jours* (Desclée, 1984).
- Launey, Marcel, *La papauté à l'aube du xx siècle* (Cerf, 1997).
- Lemberts, E., *La démocratie chrétienne dans l'Union européenne* (Louvain, 1996).
- Letamendia, P., *Eduardo Frei* (Beauchesne, 1989).
- Lijphart, A., *The Politics of Accommodation. Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley, 1975).
- London Times*, (2 August, 1934).
- Lynch, E., *Religion and Politics in Latin America. Liberation Theology and Christian Democracy* (Praeger, 1991).
- McLeod, H., *Religion and the People of Western Europe, 1789-1989* (Oxford, 1998).
- Mary, V., *Catholics in the Second Spanish Republic*, (Oxford, 1996).
- Meinvieille, J., 1949. *De Lamennais a Maritain* (La Cité Catholique, 1956).
- Messner, J., *Dollfuss: An Austrian Patriot* (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 1935).
- Moody, J.N., ed., *Church and Society. Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements, 1789-1950* (New York, 1953).
- The New Austria*, (Bundeskommissariat für Heimatdienst, 1937).
- Nitti, F.S., *Catholic Socialism* (Gordon, 1976).
- Partin, M.O., *Waldeck-Rousseau, Combes, and the Church: The Politics of Anti-Clericalism, 1899-1905* (Duke, 1969).
- Paul, H.W., *The Second Ralliement* (Washington, 1965).

- Peters, W.H., *The Life of Benedict XV* (Bruce Publishing Co., 1959).
- Petit, H., *L'Eglise, le Sillon et l'Action Française* (Nouvelles éditions latines, 1998).
- Portugal: The New State in Theory and in Practice* (SPN, 1938).
- Poulat, E., *Intégrisme et catholicisme integral* (Paris, 1969).
- Poulat, E., *Catholicisme, démocratie et socialisme. Le mouvement catholique et Mgr. Benigni de la naissance du socialisme à la victoire du fascisme* (Casterman, 1977).
- Poulat, E., *Histoire, dogme, et critique dans la crise moderniste* (Albin Michel, 1996).
- Poulat, E., *Les prêtres-ouvriers* (Cerf, 1999).
- Power, M., *Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). Christian Democracy and the Quest for a New Commonwealth* (America, 1997).
- Rhodes, A., *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators. 1922-1945* (London, 1973).
- Riccardi, A., *Il Vaticano e Mosca* (Laterza, 1993).
- Romanto, G., *Pio X* (Rusconi, 1992).
- Rossi, J.S., *American Catholics and the Formation of the United Nations* (University Press, 1993).
- Rumi, G., ed., *Benedetto XV e la pace* (Morcelliana, 1990).
- Salazar, A., *Doctrine and Action*, (Faber & Faber, 1940).
- Salazar, A., *The Principles and Work of the Revolution* (Segretariado da Propaganda Nacional, 1943).
- Salazar, A., *The Road for the Future* (SIN, 1962).
- Sarasella, D., *Modernismo*, (Editrice bibliografica, 1995).
- Scaglia, G.B., *La stagione montaliana* (Studium, 1993).
- Schultenover, D.G., *A View From Rome. On the Eve of the Modernist Crisis* (Fordham, 1993).
- Schuschnigg, K. von, *My Austria* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1938).
- Scoppola, P., *La chiesa e il fascismo. Documenti e interpretazioni* (Bari, 1967).

1198 BLACK LEGENDS

Shepard, G.B., *Dollfuss* (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1961).

Sunkler, B., *Nathan Söderblom. His Life and Work* (Uppsala, 1968).

Teixeira, L., *Profile of Salazar* (SPN, 1938).

Thayer, John A., *Italy and the Great War* (U. of Wisconsin, 1964).

Tresmontant, C., *La crise moderniste* (Paris, 1979).

Weber, E., *Action Française* (Stanford U., 1962).

Wenger, A., *Rome et Moscou, 1900-1950* (Paris, 1987).

Wiltgen, R.M., *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* (Tan, 1991).

Wolff, R.J., and Hoensch, J.K., *Catholics, the State, and the European Radical Right* (Atlantic Research, 1987).

Zeldin, T., *France, 1848-1945* (Oxford, Four Volumes, 1979-1981)

