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VOICE

INTEGRITY
FREEDOM
RESPONSIBILITY

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thing at a time."

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And So, Back To Reality Error in Two Camps

"My master is the nature of things" said Napoleon, and, "there are two things that always seem to me to go remarkably together: supercelestial opinions and subterranean morals," wrote Montaigne. Modern tyrants quite clearly do not adhere to Napoleon's limitation: modern tyranny is above all things based on de-naturing men, de-naturing the necessities of life and de-naturing the laws of Society. The invitation to transcend nature, implied in the Christian message, is not an invitation to be unnatural or to deny nature. We are never more natural than as children, and "Except ye be as little children . . ." is the *necessary* starting point from which to approach the Kingdom which is not of this world.

Christianity and Freedom: Are they Inseparable? Here is the title and the question which is asked on the cover of a book, translated from the French and published by Hollis and Carter. The book has eleven contributors, in separate essays, including a summing up by Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris. The same publishers have also brought out *Back to Reality*, by Gustave Thibon, a book which also was published originally in France. These books represent a rebirth of Christian thought in France, the importance of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Gustave Thibon is perhaps unexcelled in the presentation of this thought, which we do not doubt is the necessary precursor and certain progenitor of action to beget freedom.

Constantly as we revert to the point, it never ceases to be astonishing that two thousand years after the event when Christ asserted that He came in the cause of freedom the question is being asked in His Church: are Christianity and freedom inseparable? Christianity *incarnate* is the basis of freedom; and Christianity cannot be *incarnate* without freedom. In our present state Christianity has practically ceased to be incarnate, and freedom has nearly vanished. As one of the French essayists says: "Freedom is everywhere in full retreat . . . The very ideal of freedom, built up by centuries of advancing civilisation, is today belittled, per-

verted or even repudiated . . . it is only by rediscovering the Christian message in all its purity that Westerners will find the necessary strength for a new and creative advance."

The assumption that freedom can be won by the mere recruitment of political power is as facile and erroneous as the assumption that freedom can be won by a form of 'Christianity' which does not result in a purification of people's political thought, motives and actions. As Cardinal Feltin says: "There is a solidarity among freedoms: the neglect of some causes the perishing of others, till the whole edifice crumbles." And, "To the immediate duty of inward purification, a duty imposed on the tyrannical spirit that lives in each of us, there should be added also an effort of the imagination, to guide social, economic and political technique in the direction of a way of life that will respect the transcendent uniqueness of the individual soul."

If the origins of human freedom are not with Christ, it certainly had its greatest gift from Him: the gift of Authority incarnate. And in regard to this there are three points to make: the *power* to beget freedom of the individual person derived from the binding of men's minds to a belief in an Authority transcending all temporal 'authorities,' the *means* to achieve it came with recognition that transcendent Authority was also immanent in the natural order and needed only to be sought, and the *preservation* of it depended on human choice and aims being bound by a belief in Transcendent values. As one writer has put it: ". . . the freedom of indifference, that unlimited choice without purpose or aim, which certainly leaves man free and in a sense 'delivered,' but only as a freely falling body's 'delivered' to its own gravity. Ultimately freedom should be seen as that necessary condition in which man can respond fully to the love of God." And, to quote Gustave Thibon, "Authority, as I understand it, has no other mission but to save freedom from itself."

If these points are valid then it is unquestionable both that freedom can only be regained by a *full acceptance and practise* of Christian beliefs, and that the retreat from freedom is the direct result of the failure of the Churches to practise *full* Christianity.

"The age of organisers and technocrats has begun," says Gustave Thibon. "The human person, deprived of every living attachment, is no longer a member of an organism but a cog in a machine, a figure in a particular set of statistics. He has become an isolated slave amid a multitude of slaves."

"But the worst danger of all is that in losing his external freedoms man is losing the sense of freedom and even the taste for it. Slavery, it has been rightly said, is so degrading to men that it even brings them to like it. . . ."

Our position thus described shows both the gravity of our state and the measure of the failure of the Churches.

Wherein is that failure? To quote Thibon again, "What the Church cultivates in the first place is interior freedom. In the Church's view all exterior freedoms flow naturally from this liberation of soul; this liberation they must follow, not anticipate. The Church's primary mission is not to break social chains but to give mankind those spiritual riches, those moral *reserves*, reserves of love, which make possible and fruitful the outward exercises of freedom. In other words, instead of attacking directly the power of Caesar, it first develops God's cause in ourselves." We have heard all this before, time and time again, from the apologists for the Church of England. But, as we have repeatedly pointed out, in the practical world in the matter of political or economic policies one cannot distinguish the adherence of churchmen to alternative policies from non-churchmen. 'Christian' and 'Pagan' are equally confused and equally divided.

Now what we welcome particularly in this rebirth of genuine Christian thought in France, of which Gustave Thibon is the most vigorous and able exponent, is something of which this paper has made an outstanding and lone stand from its inception and which we are certain is the key, and the only key, to the door which leads out of the present madhouse. It is an emphasis on the overriding need for *integrity*. "Instead of trying to baptise the unbaptisable, it would perhaps be better for us Christians to try to realise fully the logical consequences of our baptism and our Christianity. It is not our task to attract impurities but to make ourselves pure. The thing that is important is not to dally with caricatures but to show to the world the true image of Christ; not to compromise with false ideals but always more and more to *distinguish* our own from them. 'Let your light so shine before men. . . .' Only then will falsehoods fade in this light and all that is pure in the outside world will come to meet us of its own accord and find, with us, its one true home."

Instead of this we have had compromise, which is inevitably a descent from the pure, *i.e.*, corruption. "This corruption of the religious sense," says Thibon, "is the only explanation of institutions so absurd as universal suffrage, *in its present abstract and inorganic form*. We have grown so used to the thing that we find it hard to measure its extravagance. . . ." Thibon thinks that this absurdity continues because it is "the inevitable result of the religious sentiment degenerating into politics." But we think that it is mainly attributable to religion (which is a binding back to Truth) degenerating into a sloppy sentiment. The law of love—the love of God and the love of neighbour—is only served if a high form of emotion binds the intelligence to seek and the will to obey the immutable laws to which all social actions, social structures and social 'laws' should conform. We cannot emphasise too strongly that individual conscience, to which leaders of the Churches are frequently appealing, cannot operate truthfully without knowledge of the Truth to which it should conscientiously adhere. The electorates of the world are ignorant electorates and are continually invited to decide matters beyond their competence and outside their natural responsibilities. They do not know the Truth; and until they do an appeal to conscience is futile.

In these matters of Authority the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ (who, as He said, "came in the cause of Truth"—"and the Truth shall make you free"), should be tutor and guide of the electorate. Has the Church any-

where at any time defined immutable law as it determines what forms or constitutions social institutions should take to conform with the purpose and orientation given in the words, "And he that is greatest among you, let him be your servant"? On the contrary in our own day the masterly examination of this question by the late C. H. Douglas in, *e.g.*, *The Nature of Democracy*, *The Tragedy of Human Effort*, *The Realistic Position of The Church of England and Realistic Constitutionalism*, has been ignored. Furthermore the whole subject is a book which they have left closed. But it is fundamentally their responsibility. We commend the work of Douglas to the attention of His Eminence Cardinal Felin, whose words we quote above, and to others.

The positive, constructive principles on which a Christian social order can be built are known: they are in the printed work of Douglas. They are clearly not matters within either the competence or responsibility of an electorate to discuss. But, meanwhile an anonymous, irresponsible electorate is the perverted sanction by which Anti-Christ is enabled to lead Society along the road to chaos and destruction. On all sides, everywhere, the Church and individual churchmen are compromised in the situation, are committed, and are indistinguishable from the irresponsible mob; they are involved in the Gaderene rush.

We have said that the key to the door which will lead us out of this madhouse is INTEGRITY. The role of the Church and Christians everywhere is clearly to determine those social objectives which "respect the transcendent uniqueness of the individual soul," to quote Cardinal Felin, and to call on the electorate to withdraw from the political scene, to withhold their power until they can obtain from the politicians a legally enforceable contract binding them to be responsible to legislate, or de-legislate, for the achievement of these objectives. We have discussed these objectives at length many times (particularly we refer readers to Vol. 1, Nos. 2 and 13). It is certain that among the most important of them is the protection of minorities by the establishment of unpenalised legal rights to contract out, the protection of private property from the legalised robbery of taxation, and the subordination and limitation of Industrialisation and Technology to the service of individual (not collective) men and women by the radical alteration of financial policy to enable a Leisure policy to take the place of 'Full Employment.' Only thus can small organic communities be reformed.

Light at Midnight

If you come out of Darkness into light
 You blink or may fall giddy with bruise or scar,
 And like the life-long prisoner shoot back the bar
 Against the Sun, or be nursed to find delight.
 In radiant colours or holiness and fight
 To win new desire though distant as a star;
 Desponds, despairs, and sins your journey mar
 Till lightened and forgiven, forgotten is the night.
 To attain at once to serene and perfect sight
 Or don the robe and bliss of saintliness
 Is the claim of Man's dark paranoid conceit.
 "Walk humbly with your God" seems foolishness
 To scientific civilised new right.
 Gold falsities the head, clay lies its feet.

The Ready and the Exact Man

It is observed by Bacon, that "reading makes a full man, conversation a ready man, and writing an exact man."

As Bacon attained to degrees of knowledge scarcely ever attained by any other man, the directions which he gives for study have certainly a just claim to our regard; for who can teach an art with so great authority, as he that has practiced it with undisputed success?

Under the protection of so great a name, I shall, therefore, venture to inculcate to my ingenious contemporaries, the necessity of reading, the fitness of consulting other understandings than their own, and of considering the sentiments and opinions of those who, however neglected in the present age, had in their own times, and many of them a long time afterwards, such reputation for knowledge and acuteness as will scarcely ever be attained by those that despise them.

An opinion has of late been, I know not how, propagated amongst us, that libraries are filled only with useless lumber; that men of parts stand in need of no assistance; and that to spend a life in poring upon books is only to imbibe prejudices, to obstruct and embarrass the powers of nature, to cultivate memory at the expense of judgment, and to bury reason under a chaos of undigested learning.

Such is the talk of many who think themselves wise, and of some who are thought wise by others; . . . It will I believe, be found invariably true that learning was never decried by any learned man; and what credit can be given to those who venture to condemn that which they do not know?

If reason has the power ascribed to it by its advocates, if so much is to be discovered by attention and meditation, it is hard to believe that so many millions, equally participating of the bounties of nature with ourselves, have been for ages meditating in vain: if the wits of the present time expect the regard of posterity, which will then inherit the reason which is now thought superior to instruction, surely they may allow themselves to be instructed by the reason of former generations. When, therefore, an author declares that he has been able to learn nothing from the writings of his predecessors, and such a declaration has been lately made, nothing but a degree of arrogance, unpardonable in the greatest human understanding, can hinder him from perceiving that he is raising prejudices against his performance; for with what hopes of success can he attempt that in which greater abilities have hitherto miscarried? or with what peculiar force does he suppose himself invigorated, that difficulties hitherto invincible should give way before him?

Of those whom Providence has qualified to make any additions to human knowledge, the number is extremely small; and what can be added by each single mind, even of this superior class, is very little; the greatest part of mankind must owe all their knowledge, and all must owe far the larger part of it, to the information of others. To understand the works of celebrated authors, to comprehend their systems, and to retain their reasonings, is a task more than equal to common intellects; and he is by no means to be accounted useless or idle, who has stored his mind with acquired knowledge, and can detail it occasionally to others who have less leisure or weaker abilities.

Perseus has justly observed that knowledge is nothing

to him who is not known by others to possess it: to the scholar himself it is nothing with respect either to honour or advantage, for the world cannot reward those qualities which are concealed from it; with respect to others it is nothing, because it affords no help to ignorance or error.

It is with justice, therefore, that in an accomplished character, Horace unites just sentiments with the power of expressing them; and he that has once accumulated learning is next to consider how he shall most widely diffuse and most agreeably impart it.

A ready man is made by conversation. He that buries himself among his manuscripts "besprent," as Pope expresses it, "with learned duat," and wears out his days and nights in perpetual research and solitary meditation, is too apt to lose in his elocution what he adds to his wisdom; and when he comes into the world, to appear overloaded with his own notions, like a man armed with weapons he cannot wield. He has no facility of inculcating his speculations, of adapting himself to the various degrees of intellect which the accidents of conversation will present, but will talk to most unintelligibly, and to all unpleasantly.

I was once present at the lectures of a profound philosopher, a man really skilled in the science which he professed, who having occasion to explain the terms *opacum* and *pellucidum*, told us, after some hesitation, that *opacum* was, as one might say, *opaque*, and that *pellucidum* signified *pellucid*. Such was the dexterity with which this learned reader facilitated to his auditors the intricacies of science; and so true is it that a man may know what he cannot teach.

Boerhaave complains that the writers who have treated of chemistry before him are useless to the greater part of students, because they presuppose their readers to have such degrees of skill as are not often to be found. Into the same error are all men apt to fall, who have familiarised any subject to themselves in solitude: they discourse as if they thought every other man had been employed in the same inquiries; and expect that short hints and obscure allusions will produce in others the same train of ideas which they excite in themselves.

Nor is this the only inconvenience which the man of study suffers from a recluse life. When he meets with an opinion that pleases him, he catches it up with eagerness; looks only after such arguments as tend to his confirmation; or spares himself the trouble of discussion, and adopts it with very little proof; indulges it long without suspicion, and in time unites it to the general body of his knowledge, and treasures it up among incontestable truths: but when he comes into the world among men, who, arguing upon dissimilar principles, have been led to different conclusions, and being placed in various situations view the same object on many sides; he finds his darling position attacked, and himself in no condition to defend it: having thought always in one train, he is in the state of a man who having fenced with the same master, is perplexed and amazed by a new posture of his antagonist; he is entangled in unexpected difficulties, he is harassed by sudden objections, he is unprovided with solutions or replies; his surprise impedes his natural powers of reasoning, his thoughts are scattered and confounded, and he gratifies the pride of airy petulance with an easy victory.

It is difficult to imagine with what obstinacy truths which

one mind perceives almost by intuition will be rejected by another; and how many artifices must be practiced to procure admission for the most evident propositions into understandings frightened by their novelty, or hardened against them by accidental prejudice; it can scarcely be conceived how frequently, in these extemporaneous controversies, the dull will be subtle, and the acute absurd; how often stupidity will elude the force of argument, by involving itself with its own gloom; and mistaken ingenuity will weave artful fallacies, which reason can scarce find means to disentangle.

In these encounters the learning of the recluse usually fails him; nothing but long habit and frequent experiments can confer the power of changing a position into various forms, presenting it in different points of view, connecting it with known and granted truths, fortifying it with intelligible arguments, and illustrating it by apt similitudes; and he, therefore, that has collected his knowledge in solitude, must learn its application by mixing with mankind.

But while the various opportunities of conversation invite us to try every mode of argument, and every art of recommending our sentiments, we are frequently betrayed to the use of such as are not in themselves strictly defensible: a man heated in talk, and eager of victory, takes advantage of the mistakes or ignorance of his adversary, lays hold of concessions to which he knows he has no right, and urges proofs likely to prevail in his opponent, though he knows himself that they have no force: thus the severity of reason is relaxed, any topics are accumulated, but without just arrangement or distinction; we learn to satisfy ourselves with such ratiocination as silences others; and seldom recall to a close examination that discourse which has gratified our vanity with victory and applause.

Some caution, therefore, must be used lest copiousness and facility be made less valuable by inaccuracy and confusion. To fix the thoughts by writing, and subject them to frequent examinations and review, is the best method of enabling the mind to detect its own sophisms, and keep it on guard against the fallacies which it practices on others: in conversation we naturally diffuse our thoughts, and in writing we contract them; method is the excellence of writing, and unconstraint the grace of conversation.

To read, write, and converse in due proportions is, therefore, the business of a man of letters. For all these there is not often equal opportunity; excellence, therefore, is not often attainable; and most men fail in one or other of the ends proposed, and are full without readiness, or ready without exactness. Some deficiency must be forgiven all, because all are men; and more must be allowed to pass uncensured in the greater part of the world, because none can confer upon himself abilities, and few have the choice of situations proper for the improvement of those which nature has bestowed: it is, however, reasonable to have *perfection* in our eye, that we may always advance towards it, though we know it never can be reached.—(From *The Adventurer*. Essay by Dr. Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784).

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Lunacy

The project to establish 'earth satellites' with the eventual intention of reaching the moon is reported to have been received with great rejoicing among American economists who have taken a gloomy view of present plans for disarmament because the resulting economy in expenditure would result in economy of employment.

We sought enlightenment from Wyld's Universal Dictionary concerning the meaning of the word 'economist,' and discovered that the compiler had omitted it, evidently considering the meaning unprintable. But we noted the following:

'*Economical*': reverse of extravagant, also economical of one's time, not wasting it; b. extended to material appliances, tending to save material resources.

Lunacy: an intermittent form of insanity supposed to vary in intensity with the phases of the moon . . . b. great foolishness.

Lunatic: affected by the moon . . . adj. a. Moonstruck; b. mad, insane. . . .

Freedom

"Whatever the regime we achieve at last, another effort will be necessary, on a different plane, not one of creative thought but of inward meditation and conscience. It is here we must grasp more completely what we really mean by Christian freedom. If freedom is now withering and threatened with extinction, we know the reason. It is because it is impossible for it to live in a materialistic climate where there are no moral principles. Freedom for us Christians, is not a dignity which a man possesses passively and without effort, in selfishness and complacency. It is a creative power, potential energy, the opportunity to *live*. By giving him to others, it raises each individual above himself. It respects those principles from which it draws its higher potentiality. It is a conquest: not of others, not even of the forces of nature, but rather of the self. . . .

"Ultimately it is in such an effort, to *feel* this veritable freedom within us and shed its influence abroad, that all our aims should culminate. There must be no acceptance of that truncated freedom, to which all too many are resigned; no submission to the compromises of the world about us, to its suggestions and demands. . . ."—Daniel-Rops, *Towards a Truly Christian Society*.

The Heresy of Efficiency

"Modern anti-personalism instrumentalizes man and measures the importance and value of the individual person by his usefulness for some impersonal goods. It manifests itself not only in the idolatry of the state, the nation, the race, the class, but also in the over-estimation of professional work and all kinds of efficiency. In our present epoch we are confronted with a 'heresy of efficiency' which contradicts man's vocation and destiny and corrodes even the natural plenitude of a thoroughly human life." (Dietrich von Hildebrand: *The New Tower of Babel*.)

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