

The Church Learned And The Revolt Of The Scholars

by Philip Trower

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This booklet was published originally by: THE WANDERER, 201 Ohio Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55107, USA; The Wanderer Press, 1979.

I am grateful to *The Wanderer Press* for permission to reproduce this book (Mark Alder).

This new edition (2022) is based on Mark Alder's 2019 edition.

This is a very important book! The ideas which Philip developed in the later book *Turmoil and Truth* were first formulated and crystalised in this book. I feel this book could be vitally important in helping to disseminate Philip's ideas both in the secular world as well as to the many people who have dissented from orthodox Catholic teaching (Mark Alder).

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Introduction. The intellectual causes of the current crisis in the Catholic Church

I am pleased to present this new edition of a book by the notable English Catholic writer Philip Trower (1923-2019). Trower, converted to Catholicism in 1953, is the author of at least two other books of extraordinary value: *Turmoil and Truth* (1998), and *The Catholic Church and the Counterfaith* (2006). The first one studies the historical roots of the modern crisis in the Catholic Church and the second one studies the roots of modern secularism, relativism and de-Christianisation. *The Church Learned and the Revolt of the Scholars* is like an embryonic version of the ideas later developed by Trower in *Turmoil and Truth*.

The Church Learned... has five chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter 1 is a history of the origin of the modernist heresy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Chapter 2 analyzes five intellectual factors that contributed to the creation of modernism: Darwinism, biblical criticism, philosophical pragmatism, historical criticism and comparative religion.

Chapter 3 explains how modernism survived as an "underground plague" after the attack against it deployed by Pope Saint Pius X from 1907 and how the thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "progress religion" and the "cult of liberty" contributed to engender a new version of modernism (neo-modernism), which manifested itself with great force especially after the Second Vatican Council.

Chapter 4 analyzes the influence on neo-modernism of existentialist philosophers (especially Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre), the main currents of modern psychology (behaviorism and psychoanalysis), and the work of the theologian Karl Rahner.

Chapter 5 analyzes other factors that influence neo-modernism: sociology, anthropology, linguistic analysis, democratic and socialist social theories, and Protestant theology. It also analyzes the modernist offensive against true religion and the weakness of the response of orthodox Catholics, and calls for prayer and hope to withstand the deluge of modernist heresy without losing the gift of supernatural faith.

In the Conclusion the author synthesizes the characteristics of the new neo-modernist religion that is being formed and casts a hopeful look towards the future.

This book by Trower, like the other two cited above, marvels for the very clear, solid and lively way in which he presents very complex subjects. It certainly reveals not only a robust Catholic faith, but a great deal of knowledge of philosophy and theology, common sense, pedagogical mastery, and good humor.

You don't have to agree on everything with Trower to appreciate the value and brilliance of his work. For example, some readers may think that Trower has an exaggerated notion of the extent of the modernist heresy. I invite those readers to overcome their possible visceral rejection of some controversial judgments. Ultimately, only God knows with absolute certainty the degree of guilt of each faithful Catholic (cleric or lay person) in the current ecclesial crisis. In my opinion, this is not a matter of judging anyone in particular, but rather of drawing attention to a danger to the Catholic faith that is undoubtedly very serious and very real. And I am inclined to think that today it is more serious and real than ever.

I highly recommend you to read this book, and I ask your help to spread the word about it as widely as possible.

Daniel Iglesias Grèzes

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Chapter 1. The First Modernism

Many Catholics, one finds, react to the events in the Church over the last 15 years as though a rock had dropped out of the sky with nowhere for it to have fallen from — not even a passing jumbo jet.

What could possibly have caused such an explosion of anger, rebellion, heresy, apostasy and hatred of all things Catholic? It is as though the order of nature had been turned upside down: effects without causes; explosions without explosives or anyone to ignite them.

Underlying these feelings there is usually the belief that Catholic life before the Council was — leaving aside the usual short-comings — "in a pretty good state." Any defects there may have been were certainly not serious enough to account for subsequent calamities and disorders.

This belief is, I am sure, mistaken and only increases unhappiness and bewilderment. Turning back to the time before the Council, I think we can now see more clearly than was possible earlier the two principal evils. An understanding of them will possibly help to make clearer why an apostasy is taking place simultaneously with an attempted movement of reform.

These two evils, I would say, were a tremendous decline in spiritual vitality among the faithful of all ranks, clerical and lay (i.e. ourselves), masked by a grand-looking facade of religious practice — I do not see how the present rebellion could have happened were this not so —, and the spread of heresy, or of ideas tending toward heresy among a much wider section of the higher clergy than anyone had realized.

By higher clergy I do not mean cardinals and bishops, but theologians, scholars, thinkers, and teachers at Catholic universities and institutes of higher studies: the Catholic intelligentsia, in fact, at its top level. It is this second factor I want to talk about here.

What had been going on in this world of the higher clergy for the last 100 years? Why did most of this rampart of Jerusalem so tragically collapse in heaps of rubble when the modern world marched around it and blew its trumpets?

However, first of all a few words of a general kind about the place of learning and scholarship in the Church.

TREADING A NARROW PATH

Any Catholic who devotes his talents to expounding the Faith, or engages in study which will result in making the Church and its teachings better understood, is plainly doing a noble work. One has only to recall the immense good achieved by faithful Catholic scholars and theologians to feel grateful to God for their gifts which made their books possible and to the men themselves for having used those gifts so well.

While the chief work of Catholic scholars of this kind is to explain and defend Revelation and any truths that bear on it, they have a subordinate but connected work which is also very important: to investigate the new ideas which men are always propounding, inside and outside the Church, in order to separate what is true from what is false, and to see how exactly the elements of truth harmonize with Revelation.

This is probably the most difficult part of their work. The world of speculative ideas and massive accumulations of fact is the place where it is easiest to take a wrong path and fall into a pit, and they are frequently investigating new territory.

First among the pitfalls, I think, is the inclination of experts to fall in love with their subjects. For the Catholic student of Buddhism, Buddhism and Buddhists start to rank highest in his heart; the same will be true of the student of the Stone Age or Marxism. (The archeologist Sir Leonard Cottrell, commenting on this weakness, remarks good-humoredly that he had known Assyriologists who found even the ancient Assyrians, as depicted on their bas-reliefs, handsome.) When this happens, "my subject" becomes the interest which gives zest to life, and the Faith is seen as a boring extra. The consequences are especially damaging if the scholar is a priest. There will also be an urge to make "my subject" and the Faith look as much alike as possible.

Equally, learning itself or the intellectual life can become the great love — a kind of alternative and higher religion — and so the fellow intellectual, even if atheist, seems spiritually closer than the main body of the faithful.

It is strange, when one considers it, that Catholics are not taught to think more about what might be called the Church Learned, and that there are not special orders of contemplatives to pray and do penance for its welfare, since its work is so necessary and its members occupy what, in regard to faith, is one of the most exposed positions in the Church. They are like men in an observation post continually under heavy shellfire. As they study new books and learned publications they live under a barrage of temptations of a kind most of the faithful never experience.

"Oh! What a brilliant idea! But what happens to the doctrine of grace? Perhaps I should pray before reading any more. No. I haven't time. It's more important to get on with my work. *Laborare est orare*. The Church could be wrong; it's never been defined. How could a stupid bishop understand such complicated ideas?"

The chief danger is not so much that they will take a wrong path — anyone can make mistakes — but that having taken it they will insist in pressing ahead along it in spite of warnings.

HUMILITY OF SUBMISSION

For Catholic scholars, their unfailing protection, as we know, is obedience to the Church's teaching authority and readiness to submit their conclusions to its judgment. Provided they are willing to do this, and recognize that in spite of their intelligence and learning they are not the final authorities in matters of belief, or in deciding how far and in what way any particular branch of research that touches on faith and morals is to be carried out, they are safe.

Part of the mystery of the Church is that God, in designing it and arranging how His truth is to be handed on, made Greek philosophers, or anyone resembling them, subordinate to Galilean fishermen. The three Wise Men bowing before Divine Wisdom made visible as a baby provided a prototype. A Pope or a bishop may be personally learned, but his learning does not add anything to his authority. His authority to pass judgment on the ideas of even the most brilliant thinker comes solely from the fact that he is a successor of one of Our Lord's working class and little-educated apostles. (St. Paul, the "university graduate", was brought in later, but only after a big dose of humiliation.)

The purpose behind this plan is not difficult to see. Everything in God's designs is directed towards keeping us small in our own esteem, since this is the only way into the Kingdom of Heaven, and no one needs help in this matter more than men and women with intellectual gifts. (Over the entrance of every Catholic university could well be carved the words of St. Therese of Lisieux: "God has no need of any human instrument, least of all me.") But it is an arrangement which the clever do not naturally find easy to accept. With faith they do: but as faith declines, it begins to stick in the throat. Then instead of seeing themselves as servants of Christ and His Mystical Body, without realizing it they become servants of this-worldly powers — as Occam did when he fled from Avignon to the court of Louis of Bavaria — or of their own careers.

One of the most unattractive aspects of the theologians who have made names for themselves since the Council is, I think, their callous vanity and selfishness. Their infidelity is, of course, worse, but it is not so instantly repulsive. The confusion and bewilderment into which they have plunged the lowly and simple, the vast numbers they have caused to abandon belief altogether, plainly leave them cold: as long as they can write what they please and make reputations for themselves, nothing apparently troubles them. If doctors had behaved like this, leaving behind a trail of corpses and invalids, they would have earned not reputations but infamy.

But then the revolutionary theologians do not accept God's plan for the Church. The world having entered the age of the expert, they believe the scholar or theologian must occupy in the Church the same place the scientist expects eventually to occupy in secular society — running it. This is the great dream and delusion of the revolutionary theologians: also, incidentally, of scientists and secular intellectuals. Real intellectuals almost never rule — except briefly in periods of disaster and chaos. The very nature of their gifts incapacitates them for it. Thinkers who are also natural

rulers, like Calvin and Lenin, are rarities (thanks be to God) and the world usually sighs with relief when they are taken away.

THE TRUTHS MUST REMAIN INTACT

A second fact which the learned in the Church are tempted to lose sight of is that Revelation is unlike other kinds of knowledge; that being a body of truth coming directly from God, complete and absolutely certain, it has to be kept intact. It is not a naturally acquired pile of information, continually being added to and repeatedly having to be picked over so that any errors which have crept in can be thrown out. (The meaning of the development of doctrine and periodical renewals of theology — those much abused subjects — cannot be discussed here, but they do not alter what I have just said.) This is why Catholic theologians and scholars cannot enjoy the academic freedom claimed by scholars who deal in purely natural things, however much they may long for it.

On this point the Catholic scholar is exposed to another temptation; not pride or selfishness this time but fear of his non-Catholic colleagues: of the raised eyebrow, the amused little laugh at the learned meeting or in the university common room. "Oh! I apologize, Father, I was forgetting you have to ask the Pope's permission before you agree to that..." Father, instead of answering that he is happy to submit his ideas on any subject touching faith and morals to the Pope, since if God has made a revelation it obviously has to be protected from the vagaries of human opinion, wilts interiorly. Why should he have to take into account a lot of Italians in Rome who know nothing about science? What a burden it is having to cart the Faith around with one in these civilized academic surroundings, like a shabby old trunk filled with worn-out clothes.

If Catholic scholars are to remain faithful today they are going to need an extra strong formation in detachment from human respect.

Revelation differs from other kinds of knowledge in a further fashion. In secular studies, intelligence and hard work are mostly sufficient. Defects of characters and lack of belief are certainly not without consequences. Freud's atheism and imperiousness, for instance, evidently blinded him to much that would have seemed obvious to a different kind of man. Nevertheless, natural gifts and qualities alone can achieve striking results. But for the study and proper understanding of Catholic theology, Holy Scripture, and Church history other things are necessary.

FAITH IS NEEDED

First, to understand one must believe. Unbelieving historians who study the Church know far more about its theology and life than most Catholics do, but in a deep sense they do not understand what they know. The same begins to be true of Catholic scholars when doubts set in.

However, belief alone is not enough: with faith and learning there must be goodness. A Catholic scholar who allows himself to become dried up, ambitious, cynical, or selfish, something which very easily happens to scholars, will only have a shallow understanding of his subject. When Catholic theologians and scholars go a stage further and think that mastery of their subject depends on their intellectual skill rather than on grace, they will start to become blind. An exceedingly lofty opinion of himself as a scholar seems to have been what carried Dollinger out of the Church and made Lord Acton a very restive member within it. Historically, the learned and clever have generally been the first to be taken in by new errors. At the beginning of this century, when a well-known priest, who later left the Church, started to preach heresy at a famous church in London, the first person to notice was a lay brother — one of those who did the housework. The learned fathers who spent all day reading books were slower to understand.

These remarks about the temptations and natural difficulties which beset Catholic scholars are made so as to set what I am about to say about a particular group of them in the proper context. No doubt most of the remarks are fairly obvious, but without them in mind it will be much less easy to understand why this century has seen a great rebellion of scholars and theologians. In these disasters, the causes are always moral and spiritual before they are intellectual.

THE GERM OF MODERNISM

Catholics, as we know, are always being influenced by ideas coming from outside the Church, a proportion of which are harmful. When spiritual health is strong, the Catholic Body throws them off; when a bit run down, will be invaded by them; when weak, will succumb in its faith to a whole range of infections.

Something like this began to happen in the middle of the last century — a process now reaching its climax.

Around 1860, the Catholic learned world began to feel fully for the first time the impact of that extensive thing, modern thought. Dazzled by the prestige of 19th century science and scholarship (which were indeed formidable) and the technical marvels (gas lighting and steam engines) that went with them, they began accepting a whole range of speculative ideas and ideologies as established truths and altering Catholic belief to fit them.

Their original intention was apostolic: to detach all that was acceptable in modern thought and show how it could be harmonized with Catholic belief so that no unnecessary obstacles would prevent the men of their age from seeing Christ in the Catholic Church and the faithful themselves would not uselessly oppose what was naturally good. The wheat in modern thought had to be separated from the chaff — a praiseworthy intention. This is the idea behind all true concepts of what Pope John meant by *aggiornamento*.

But one can already see the seeds of trouble in the way they mostly spoke about the work to be done.

The Church, it was said, must be reconciled with "modern times" or "the spirit of the age", Gioberti (d. 1852) being one of the earliest to make the demand. But what is the spirit of the age? How much can we make friends with it? Insofar as its ideas are wrong, can it be persuaded to give them up, and if it won't, how far can we safely collaborate with it? These, of course, are the questions Jacques Maritain spent much of his life wrestling with, and that underlay some of the struggles at the Council over the drafting of its documents.

If the age is thought of as being run by a variety of spirits, an anarchical oligarchy so to speak, the problem is less intractable. Catholics can make friends with the good ones and shun or shut the door on the bad. In this sense, the Church is always reconciling herself with modern times — there are no times that are not modern — which often means tolerating what she does not approve of, but cannot remedy: the best she may be able to do is mitigate the most serious evils. In this she will often be hampered by the fact that a proportion of her children will be conducting a false *aggiornamento* with the times, a kind of impassioned love affair — the Renaissance and feudal periods providing us with some striking examples — the consequences of which will later cost holy churchmen much time and effort to undo. (Those of the 21st century are plainly going to have a big job of this sort.)

To some extent the disputes over this matter have to do with differences of taste and emphasis: "Do modern times have more of good than bad in them, or bad than good?" But one already sees in men like Gioberti an inclination, which will become more pronounced in succeeding generations of Catholics, to regard "modern times" or the "spirit of the age" as an indivisible whole, good in itself, which can only be either accepted or rejected. This is much too simple an approach for a Catholic. Modern times — if by that we mean the ideas and forces let loose by the 18th-century enlightenment and the industrial revolution — are characterized by remarkable technical and material achievements, some reasonable and even noble aspirations, but also, obviously by profound philosophical and spiritual errors — the unwillingness of men to see themselves as creatures being the most notable.

BECOMING ENLIGHTENED

Another way of considering the work to be done was to talk about bringing together faith and science, or faith and reason. This way of speaking too was not without the seeds of misunderstanding. One knows what it meant. A naturally established fact, if it really is a fact, remains a fact. Our religion does not require us to deny it. But it may be a long time before the

import of a particular fact is understood, and the mysteries God has revealed to us often seem to be contradicted by natural facts and appearances. When we speak about bringing together faith with reason or science, what is in our minds? Is our object in reality to make the mysteries revealed by God appear what is considered to be "reasonable" by the average man or scientist without belief?

There would, I think, have been much less misunderstanding on this subject if instead of talking about faith and reason, Catholics had always talked about supernatural and natural knowledge. What was at stake would then have been seen more clearly: two sources of information and two bodies of knowledge, the first being the more precious and allowing the mind to penetrate deeper into reality. The objection to talking about faith and reason, or faith and science, is that it immediately puts faith at a disadvantage. Faith is widely regarded as a matter of hazy feelings and vague wishes, while reason and science are considered clear and precise and to deal only with facts. The advantage thus goes to "reason" and "science" — whether thought of as representing the claims of natural knowledge or the unbelieving point of view — before any discussion of the problems arising from trying to harmonize the two kinds of knowledge has so much as started.

By the 1870s, the learned Catholics I am talking about had begun trying to make faith, or supernatural knowledge, look "reasonable" to their unbelieving contemporaries in just the way I have been describing; a certain sign that it had begun to look "unreasonable", that is to say, unbelievable, to themselves. Under the influence of their studies, or rather of the temptations that went along with them, faith collapsed. The voice of secular learning, even in religion, came to seem a higher authority than the voice of the Church, and they took it as a principle that in any conflict of ideas (real or apparent) the Church must give way and adjust her thinking. Instead of separating wheat from chaff, having acquired a preference for chaff, they started trying to smuggle wheat and chaff into the granaries of the Church.

This was the origin of Modernism, and the intellectual subordination of the Church to secular learning its foundation stone. At the end of this process — which is now being reached — all of Revelation has been cast aside as a fairy story which men invented to explain things before they could think, and "science" and "modern thought", accepted in their totality as the only source of knowledge, are woven into a religion. We are watching a bit of genuine evolution — the transformation of one kind of creature into another. When complete, the Christian steps forth, a Christian no longer, but a full-fledged man of the enlightenment.

THE HUB OF THE MODERNIST WHEEL

Modernism in its first phase ran from about 1875 to 1910, when, as will be recalled, it was stopped, or was thought to have been, by St. Pius X. It then went underground for 50 years and resurfaced with the death of Pius XII. In this first period the movement was confined to the well-educated: the mass of the faithful were little affected.

What came about was one of those intellectual brotherhoods of like-minded men which seem to arise spontaneously; men who are reading the same books and therefore thinking the same thoughts and who either know each other personally or by correspondence.

Between 1888 and 1900, a proportion of them gathered in a series of "international scientific congresses" of Catholics (they were principally gatherings of historians, Scripture scholars and philosophers) arranged by Msgr. d'Hulst, rector of the *Institut Catholique* in Paris, an institute of Catholic higher studies recently founded to provide scholars who could answer the attacks being made in the name of learning and science on the grounds for belief.

The most active figure was Baron von Hügel, a naturalized Englishman, Austrian by birth, who lived most of his later life at Cambridge in England. He was a kind of religious busybody, highly cultivated and widely read, who devoted himself to putting priests and laymen with doubtful ideas in touch with each other, encouraging them to persist in their work when they showed signs of flagging, and generally trying to keep them together as a group. He lived until 1925 and has had a great reputation among English Catholics, those in the know having minimized his Modernism and the rest being unaware of it. It is difficult to know what at various times he believed, but by 1900, it does not seem to have been the Catholic Faith. Fr. Tyrrell, himself a Modernist, after listening to

von Hügel talking about religion one evening, summed up von Hügel's opinions thus: "Nothing is true, but the sum total of nothings is sublime." This estimate is, I think, confirmed by the testimony of other contemporaries. In spite of this, he was rather conspicuously pious — to the surprise of his more logical French friends. He much enjoyed acting as spiritual guide to troubled souls, sometimes assuring Protestants that it was better for them not to become Catholics. Much of his other advice is perfectly sound since he was familiar with the great masters of the spiritual life. The misunderstandings about him are largely due, I think, to his strange, bland, and, one is tempted to say, slippery psychology. Like other Modernists of this period, he had the uncanny knack of writing as if he had a split personality, sometimes sounding like a devout and rather exceptionally spiritual monk or contemplative nun, at others like the editor of a magazine for skeptics. Teilhard de Chardin also had this knack.

Von Hügel certainly did not create Modernism, but his knowledge of languages, social position, and financial independence enabled him to act as impresario for the movement in a way that would not have been easy for anyone else. He thus gave it a coherence it might not otherwise have had and without which the public measures taken by St. Pius X to put an end to the movement might not have been necessary.

SPOKES CONNECTED TO THE HUB

Among von Hügel's Modernist correspondents, less than a dozen figure prominently in studies of the movement.

Loisy, the Scripture scholar, is perhaps the best known. He lectured at the *Institut Catholique* and wrote a series of books during the nineties and just after, which seemed to be a defense of the New Testament against ideas like those of the German scholar Harnack, but actually undermined it. Laberthonnière, an Oratorian priest, and Le Roy, a layman, were philosophers. Hébert was head of the *École Fénelon* in Paris, a well-known boys' college: his interests also were chiefly philosophic, though they extended to the *Bible* and history too. Houtin, another priest, was a kind of self-appointed publicist for the movement, and the liberal Protestant writer, Paul Sabatier, an enthusiastic participant. This was the main French contingent. The Italians Minocchi, Buonaiuti, Semeria, and Fogazzaro were the principal agents in popularizing Modernist ideas in Italy. The first three were priests. Minocchi and Buonaiuti edited reviews. Semeria, a Barnabite, was a Scripture scholar like Loisy. Fogazzaro, the successful novelist, was able to bring Modernist ideas before the general reading public. In England, Fr. Tyrrell, Irish by birth and upbringing and a convert, was the most openly enthusiastic Modernist — in the view of his friends a mystical thinker and reformer of the philosophy of religion. Both he and Loisy had in them something of the *enfant terrible* — the urge to attract attention and make a splash — to the embarrassment of their more adult and prudent associates.

These were the men who made a noise, who were prepared to say openly what others were only thinking, or to take to their limits and beyond, ideas which these others were only gingerly beginning to touch, and who, therefore, eventually got themselves excommunicated, left the Church of their own accord, had books censored, or were forbidden to write. However, they were no more the cause of Modernism than von Hügel was. They were merely symptoms of a wider and deeper disorder — the tip of the rock showing above the waves at high tide.

Finally, Msgr. Mignot, the French Archbishop of Albi, was a cautious episcopal patron for the circle.

Grandier and more worldly wise figures like the French philosopher Blondel were sympathetic and played a part in the movement, but drew back from the extreme consequences of Modernist ideas. Others like Edmund Bishop, the English liturgical scholar, layman and convert, only expressed their views in private letters and otherwise laid low. The Abbé Bremond, the historian of French seventeenth century spirituality, another of the *enfant terrible* type, darted in and out of the game but mostly ran up and down the touch line, thus keeping out of serious trouble; while the French scholar Msgr. Duchesne could be said to have sat in the grandstand and enjoyed the sport without getting sunburnt or wet, sometimes egging a man on, at others crying a warning.

NURTURING THE SEEDS OF UNBELIEF

Duchesne, a hard, enigmatic, and intellectually worldly priest, was first at the *Institut Catholique* and then, for the last 20 years of his life, at the French school in Rome. While unquestionably learned, with a detailed knowledge of early Church history, he appears to have had little comprehension of what the Church actually is. His feelings for the Holy See seem to have been sardonic contempt. Hébert said Duchesne helped him to see the "reasons" for not believing in the Resurrection. Duchesne later denied this. On his instructions his papers were burned after his death. The letters that survive make chilling reading.

Here is one to Hébert urging him not to give up the headship of the *École Fénelon*, although Duchesne had good reason to believe he had lost the Faith.

"Religious authority counts on its traditions and the most devoted members of its personnel, who are also the least intelligent. What can be done?... Endeavor to reform it? The only outcome of such attempts would be to get oneself thrown out of the window...

"Let us, then, teach what the Church teaches... We need not deny that in all this there is a large part of symbolism that calls for explanation. But leave the explanation to make its own way privately.

"It may be that despite all appearances, the old ecclesiastical edifice is going one day to tumble down... Should this happen, no one will blame us for having supported the old building for as long as possible."

I have quoted this letter for two reasons. First because although Duchesne had some volumes put on the *Index*, he has an impeccable reputation as a great Catholic scholar; secondly because he illustrates what I was saying earlier about the temptations of scholarship and about what happens when Faith, Hope, and Charity decline behind a pile of learned books. What we see is something pretty sad and ugly. Behind how many other piles of books was the same decay taking place? Duchesne multiplied by several hundred would provide enough explosives to set off several revolutions.

Listening to the group of unquestionable Modernists we have just been considering was an ever-widening audience of sympathizers, whose hearts were troubled by the same questionings and whose thoughts were moving in the same direction.

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Chapter 2. The Roots Of Modernist Unbelief

What exactly did the Modernists believe, or gradually come to believe, as well as cease to believe? (For depending on which of its two faces one looks at, Modernism can appear either as a system of denials, or as a system of new affirmations replacing those denials.) What were they really saying, and how did they come to these new beliefs?

I think if we look at the order in which their ideas developed and the sources they were drawn from — even if this means covering some familiar ground — we shall perhaps get a better general picture of what took place then and is happening now, and how the intellectual transformation of Catholic and Christian into the quasi-Christian man of the enlightenment (or as we should now call him, secular humanist or believer in progress religion) has worked. While there were disagreements between individual Modernists about some of these ideas, and they were influenced by them in different degrees, they were at one on basic principles.

Darwinism and biblical criticism combined obviously did most of the damage. Both have the power of sweeping men off their feet because they deal with a vast subject matter and make their way in the mind more by suggestion than by clear demonstration or proof. What, if any, flecks of gold they contain in their mountains of dross is something the Church will ultimately tell us — at least insofar as they bear on Revelation. Here I am concerned only with the dross and that goes for all the other branches of study I shall be touching on.

Although biblical criticism had been in the field much longer than Darwinism, I think we should put Darwinism first, because its impact was far more sudden and violent. The publication of *The Origin Of Species* (1859), marked a great divide in a way that the publication of, say, Strauss's *Leben Jesu* (1835), or Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863) did not.

THE THREE ASSUMPTIONS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

Darwinism, as all the world knows, by giving an apparently different account of the creation of species from the Bible, and a manifestly different account of the origin of men, directly challenged the Bible's truth and reliability. Since by the same act a number of fundamental doctrines constantly taught by the Church as being objectively true were called into question (above all, Original Sin), in certain Catholic minds belief in the Church as a trustworthy teacher was shaken. And if Adam and Eve, the Garden, and the Fall were myths and had to go, where did the business stop? A thread had been cut and the whole fabric of Revelation seemed about to come apart.

The idea that living things came into existence through the interplay of accident (natural selection) also seemed to reduce God, when not extinguishing belief in His existence altogether, to a cold and faraway First Cause, and implicitly to repudiate His providence. What room was left for Him to care about sparrows?

Finally, evolution seemed somehow to be a general law governing not only biology, but everything else: life evolves, history evolves, civilization evolves, religion evolves. Religion is, perhaps, after all just a natural phenomenon like music and dancing, a way in which man expresses himself.

Biblical criticism undermined the authority of the Bible in a different fashion. The challenge was not as direct but just as devastating.

The mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God in literary form which we call the Bible has always posed certain problems, which scholars down the ages have tried to answer. But the critical approach characteristic of modern times, and which began in the 17th century, has this special quality: it was inspired by and has received its driving force from men intensely hostile to religion or the idea of Revelation. Before their investigations begin, three assumptions have been made: God had nothing to do with the composition of the Bible; supernatural events do not take place and descriptions of them are, therefore, the product of imagination; all peoples in the past were of a lower order of intelligence than men and women of modern times and incapable of preserving

historical facts accurately and faithfully. The whole movement has been colored by these three prejudices, which seem rapidly to infect anyone who approaches it.

The critical method proceeds by first calling in question the date and authorship of the books of the Bible, and then moves on to questioning the truth of their contents (though in practice, doubts about their truth usually come first, questions of date and authorship being raised later).

At first sight, it may not seem to matter very much whether the biblical books were, in fact, written when they are supposed to have been, or by the authors they have usually been attributed to, provided they are still believed to have been inspired by God and therefore to be true. But (leaving aside the fact that the text itself often refers to some of these authors as having composed them), it was precisely the conclusions the critics reached about date and authorship, and the way in which they reached them, which led men to doubt the contents.

THE SLEDGEHAMMER OF CRITICISM

In its most extreme form, the application of the critical method was like the application of a sledgehammer to a marble pavement. The biblical text was beaten into fragments. These fragments of different origin, it was then maintained, had been fitted together for different purposes (often dishonest), not at the times previously supposed but much later, given spurious titles and authors and incorporated in writings of their own by anonymous groups of editors or individuals who were the actual authors of the books as we now have them. The fragments themselves had been written who knows when, by who knows whom, but long after the events they were supposed to record. To begin with, it was allowed that the fragments might have been based on earlier documents now lost. But soon the much more common view prevailed that the traditions preserved in them had been handed down orally for centuries, and that these orally transmitted memories had been constantly added to and altered along the way to suit the circumstances and beliefs of the moment.

Inevitably, not only the critics were soon concluding that the Bible must be largely a work of fiction, but many other people were besides. Among other things, the human mind readily accepts the idea (whether rightly or not) that the longer the lapse of time between an event and the moment it is written down, the less likely it is to be recorded accurately.

(As practiced by the majority of critics, this method of dealing with Holy Scripture had, and still has, aspects of a frivolous scholarly parlor game. Theories and opinions were picked up and dropped like tennis balls and changed from decade to decade. The method was also being applied to secular literature. Homer was pulled apart at this time and the authorship of his epics scattered among a mob of anonymous poets covering several centuries. Today the pieces are being reassembled, authorities like Prof. Lesky of Vienna inclining to a single Homer. Shakespeare's plays and *The Divine Comedy* would unquestionably have been dismembered in the same way, had less been known about their authors.)

First the Old Testament was given the full critical treatment, then the New. In the work of pulverizing and reducing the New Testament to fragments, belief in the Resurrection was destroyed.

Since Darwinism and biblical criticism were considered a part of modern science, all or most of the conclusions just outlined were accepted by the Modernists as true. The consequences were momentous. The grounds for believing in a supernatural Revelation by God, fulfilled in Christ, recorded in Scripture, and guarded by the Church had gone.

Persuaded of this, a proportion left the Church. The majority remained behind, in appearance, at least, "in the Church" and started to build themselves a gimcrack religious shelter out of the ruins.

The attempt led them to formulate the two principles we now know.

NO CERTAINTY ABOUT GOD

Since there can be no certainty about what God has revealed, the source of religious knowledge is inner "experience". (The first Modernists inclined to lay stress on individual experience; today's prefer communal experience.)

Secondly, doctrines — or those at least which the Modernists found "difficult", or as would now be said, "lacking in credibility" — should not be regarded as statements of fact, but as in some sense "symbolic". Exactly what they symbolized remained to be determined.

Hébert was one of the first to make the demand more or less openly. Le Roy followed with his famous article, "*Qu'est-ce-qu'un dogme?*" ["What is a dogma?"] in 1905.

It was around these two points that the battle between Modernism and the Church was fought then, and is raging now; the Modernists demanding that they be allowed to interpret doctrine symbolically (i.e. not believe it) and give first place to religious experience, with the Church (though not all churchmen) resisting. Here was and still is the central issue.

Once, under the impact of Darwinism and biblical criticism, the above two positions had been adopted, Modernism was in essence there. Other aspects of modern thought merely provided supporting matter.

However, we must look at these other subjects, which are not unimportant. They made this temple of vanishing beliefs seem more stable.

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Among the philosophies in vogue in the last 200 years, we can see three clear tendencies: first a widespread rejection of metaphysics; then a growing bias against the idea of anything fixed and stable in nature, a preference for seeing it as a state of universal change and flux; finally, in the search for the meaning of life and the nature of reality, a focusing of attention on man and what goes on inside him rather than outside him, accompanied by a general downgrading of his powers of mind and a corresponding upgrading of his will, instincts, and passions.

The rejection of metaphysics consisted in this. When we look at the world outside us, it was said, and think we can detect the presence of design, of the law of cause and effect, or of the existence in individual things of an informing principle or nature which allows us to grasp what they essentially are and to group them in classes and kinds, we are deceived. These ideas which we infer from what we see do not correspond with anything real outside us. They are patterns imposed on what we see by our minds. The phenomena which our senses present to us remain essentially unknowable.

Kant. (d. 1804), building on the ideas of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, was the philosopher chiefly responsible for making this startling addition to the stock of human error and unwisdom. Among the conclusions to be drawn from it, one was inescapable. If the apparent order in nature is put there by our minds, we are mistaken in thinking it proves to us the existence of God.

Although a Lutheran, Kant was contradicting what St. Paul had plainly told the people of Lystra (not to mention a great deal that is said elsewhere in the Bible): namely that God and His purposes can be known from His works. Kant was undermining the foundations of natural religion. His theories about the mind or rather about its inadequacy) also encouraged men to judge philosophical and religious questions by their feelings.

The second tendency, the love of flux and change — which in this century has reached the proportions of an international mental illness — had a variety of causes. Darwin alone was not to blame, though he gave it a hefty push forward. Among these causes we can isolate the increased knowledge of history and biology, both of which deal with change in the form of growth and decay, and the increased knowledge of other civilizations, which suggested the idea that if customs vary, everything else may be a matter of taste and opinion, and therefore, changeable. Although everything is somehow moving forward, the universe develops according to no preexisting design, no absolute laws. Anything is possible.

For the third tendency — the downgrading of the mind — we can, if we like, blame Descartes. His ideas, which had reigned for a century and a half since his death in 1650, had seemed to make men all mind and nothing much else — minds inside machines — and not minds like yours and mine, but strictly logical and mathematical minds; clear, cool, detached. After a century and a half of delighting in this vision of himself, European man became sick of it. The downgrading of the mind, or of that part which engages in speculative thought and uses abstract ideas, and the exaltation of the passionate and instinctive life, were part of the romantic revolt against the

Cartesian picture of man. Led by the thinkers of his choice, European man began revelling in the thought that he was a "whole man" — with body and instincts just as important as mind or soul. Eventually, he will be revelling in the thought that he is mainly just a body.

ROADBLOCKS TO BELIEF IN GOD

These three tendencies should also, I believe, be seen as connected with the spread of atheism.

When men no longer believe in God, there will be a growing desire not to know that His existence can be discovered by using the mind: a desire to block the path to the possibility of such knowledge.

To men, moreover, who think they have only one brief existence here with its limited possibilities of enjoyment, what is fixed — a nature that has to be conformed to, a law which must be obeyed — is certain to be detested. Hence, the elaborate and learned attacks by today's moralists on the concept of a natural law. Even if men in this frame of mind do not immediately want to do anything wicked themselves, they do not like the thought of being hindered should the whim to take hold of them.

Finally, when men are persuaded that their minds are useless as instruments for finding and knowing God, they are either going to give up the search or rely on their instincts and feelings.

Between 1890 and 1910, the philosophical currents I have described flowed together into the then fashionable creative evolution or vitalism of Bergson, and pragmatism of William James — pragmatism being the philosophy of maximum human advantage.

For our purposes, the important thing about these philosophies is the view of truth they popularized.

The accepted view of truth, applied to an idea or statement, is that it describes or corresponds with reality. ("Tell it like it is, man" is a popular and forceful way of making the point.)

According to the new conceptions, an idea was true if it was (a) alive, or (b) had what were considered useful or beneficial results. An idea is alive when a lot of people believe in it, and beneficial when it gives them spiritual satisfaction or makes them better or happy. Belief in Moloch was therefore once alive and in this sense "true". For the Canaanites, as they flung their babies into the furnaces, Moloch-worship was, as people would say today, "meaningful". When there were no more Moloch-worshippers, the idea was "dead" and no longer "true". Christian beliefs are "true" insofar as they make people unselfish or act as a psychological tranquillizer, an idea popularized by James's immensely influential *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

We should not underestimate the power of this last idea. It readily wins acceptance from Mr. Average-man, since, without faith and grace, most men will incline to be pragmatists; they will care more about results than about truth. This is why today "Christian" Modernists of all denominations are emphasizing orthopraxis ("right action") at the expense of orthodoxy (true belief), and why orthopraxis (in the sense of agreement about what should be done) is being put forward as the proper basis for Christian reunion, rather than orthodoxy (agreement about what God has revealed).

WHAT IS TRUTH?

In reality, the meaning of the word truth had been altered. Men who use it in this way are not talking about truth but about utility, though they will mostly claim that what they regard as useful is also good and right.

The above is really James's view of truth. Bergson's was slightly different: it is based not on the principle of utility but on his concept of reality. Truth was always changing because reality was always changing. "Reality", as he put it, "is always in the making." This idea opened up different delightful possibilities. Since everything that happens is part of reality as it makes itself, more or less anything can be justified. We have here one of the foundations for situation ethics. (Needless to say, as so often with philosophers, neither was personally immoral in the way his system was.)

All these tendencies had their effect on learned Catholics and most of the Modernists seem to have been bowled over by them. Because new, they must be true, expressing evolving reality at the furthest point of its advance.

We find among most Modernists a hatred of metaphysics bordering on paranoia, which spilled over on to the person and philosophy of St. Thomas, as well as onto Plato and "the Greek mind": the same infatuation with change, growth, and "dynamism" and revulsion from whatever is considered "static", as though these two aspects of creation were enemies and could not live together like friends in a single universe; the same dislike of religious certainty, the same prejudice against the use of the mind as a source of religious knowledge, and above all, of abstract thought in connection with religion or the important philosophical questions that lead to religion.

This prejudice did not, however, extend to the use of the mind for scientific purposes. In science, there was to be accuracy and precision, only in religion, uncertainty and wooliness.

An agitation began for the Church to adapt her teaching to the outlook of Bergson and James. The lead was taken by Blondel and Le Roy. Although much less well known in English-speaking countries than Loisy or Tyrrell, Le Roy was, I think, far more important, for reasons which will appear shortly. His "philosophy of action" was a synthesis of Bergson's evolutionary view of reality and James's opportunistic view of truth.

Here is an example of the way he applies his philosophic principles to the interpretation of Catholic dogmas. Dogmas, he argues in *Dogme et Critique*, do not give information: they are not truths to be believed but guides to action. The doctrine of the Three Persons in the Trinity, for instance, does not tell us anything about God, but is a way of telling us to value personal relations. In another passage, he uses the same principle differently, but with even more deadly effect. After announcing: "I believe without restriction or reserve that the Resurrection of Jesus is an objectively real fact," he gets down to whittling away this bold profession of faith and taking it back. The Resurrection, we are told, has nothing to do with the "vulgar notion" of the "reanimation of a corpse". How, then, can he say it is a real fact? By his *reinterpretation* of the meaning of the word real. Things are real (he is actually talking about ideas at this point) if they can be put to use without breaking down, and if they are "fertile for life". The illusory idea that Christ rose from the dead has inspired generations of men to lead self-sacrificing lives: in this sense it is "real" and "a fact".

This interesting equivocation is worth pondering on, I think, because it provides the pattern for all the equivocations which now surround us. It also allows us to see, in regard to today's "new teachings", how old they are under their wigs, rouge, and eyeshadow.

AN AVALANCHE OF HISTORICAL STUDIES

After philosophy, history and historical studies seem to have done most to wear away faith. Two factors had an influence.

The first was the accumulation of new historical material. Over the previous 100 years it had increased enormously and by the end of the century had become an avalanche.

Now in any subject, the sudden appearance of a mass of new and detailed information often has the effect of bringing about a temporary increase of darkness and misunderstanding rather than light. As the commonplace phrase has it, "men cannot see the wood for the trees." Something like this happened as Catholic scholars applied their minds to sorting and assessing the mass of new information about the history of the Church. The supernatural character of the Church began to dim as they looked at it through a thicker and thicker screen of natural and human appearances. Thus was hurried on the process which failing faith had already started and which would end with the Church seeming to have nothing divine about it.

The other influence in this work of erosion was the German school of higher criticism.

ERODING THE SEEDBED OF FAITH

Higher criticism was in essence simply a new and more rigorous method of testing the trustworthiness of the documents on which our knowledge of the past is based and reassessing their value (of the kind that was already being applied to the Bible). There was nothing wrong in itself with this reassessment, as applied to secular history. But the movement as a whole had two objectionable features. The documents were tested according to certain rules; and the impression was given that if these rules were properly applied the results would be cast-iron; the historians

wanted the degree of certainty available to the exact sciences, for which this higher level of precision is only possible because they deal with the lower realm of matter. But the rules of the higher critics did not have the value and certainty they attributed to them, as other historians at the time, equally distinguished, pointed out, and much valuable evidence about the past was impugned or cast aside as untrustworthy when it wasn't.

The second objectionable feature was the extraordinary arrogance and self-assurance of the higher critics.

Their principles were absorbed by the majority of Catholic historians, who quickly adopted an uncritically iconoclastic attitude towards ancient Church documents and antiquities, and who started demanding complete freedom from ecclesiastical supervision in the pursuit of their studies. (Catholics cannot enjoy this kind of independence in any of the so-called human sciences, any more than they can about the Faith, because they deal with the spiritual nature and activities of men which are the province of the Church as well.) Through the higher critics, they also seem to have been influenced by a Protestant view of Church history; that the true nature of the Church has been lost, but can be rediscovered or reconstructed by study of the "surviving documents", though fewer and fewer of these were being found satisfactory: or else by historicism, the idea that the nature and beliefs of the Church are the product of historical circumstances and change as they change.

A SPIRIT OF CONTEMPT

The spirit of the higher critics was possibly even more damaging than their principles. As with biblical criticism, the pioneers were mostly Protestant or unbelieving and, as such, unsympathetic to the Church. With their immense erudition and imperiousness they were able to batter down the resistance of all but the toughest opponents. (To them we owe that display of critical apparatus which now weighs down the most trifling scholarly works.)

Intimidated and impressed, a high percentage of Catholic scholars started to imitate their tone and manner as well as picking up their contemptuous attitude to much of the Church's devotional life and past. They began to take an almost gleeful pleasure in dwelling on the historical mistakes or supposed historical mistakes of earlier times (the folly of Medieval canonists in accepting as genuine the decretals of the pseudo-Isidore; the credulity of the Catholic people in imagining that St. Dominic had received the Rosary from Our Lady), and ended by giving the impression that the Church is the Mother of forgeries, while good modern science alone is the protectress and preserver of truth. We have noted the influence of this spirit on Dollinger, Acton, and Duchesne (who, however, preferred an amused Voltairean manner); it more than touched the Bollandists, and disfigures the Thurston-Butler *Lives of the Saints*. Catholic history can be written honestly and realistically without any of this servile making-up to grand reputations. The truth is there is a great deal in all learned debate which can't be imitated by Catholic scholars. What may do for secular historians quarrelling over Ptolemaic tax records — sardonic comments, acid footnotes, the coldly clinical approach — will not do where religion is concerned. The effects on the Faith and reverence of the scholars themselves were damaging enough. When this spirit began to reach the nonscholarly and to penetrate footnotes to the Bible, the consequences were ruinous. The clergy were the worst affected. It gave many of them the idea that hardboiled cynicism is the proper tone for talking about holy things in a clever, well-informed priest. I believe we can trace to this source a great deal of the post-conciliar barbarism and vandalism and that decline of the sacred Prof. James Hitchcock writes about.

Comparative religion was another subject coming into vogue in the period under consideration which Catholic scholars had to tackle. This was the age when Frazer's *Golden Bough* was beginning to oust the Bible from the bedside tables of cultured men and women. It seems to have undermined not only faith but common sense.

The fact that all religions were found to have certain common features (people pray, or fast and give alms, or offer sacrifice to unseen beings) seems to have made it more difficult for some of them to believe that one religion, Christianity, could be unique. This is like thinking that because all houses have certain common features such as windows and doors, there is nothing special about the

White House. The common features are simply traces of those natural religious truths, knowable without Revelation by all men, even if frequently distorted or lost sight of. Students of comparative religion — and this was the fate of many early Modernists — also easily slide into regarding the boiled-down residue of these common features as the essence of religion and end as devotees of some kind of one-world ethical monotheism towards which, they consider, the religious consciousness of mankind is evolving. There are many apostles of this "faith" today, working under Catholic auspices and imperilling the dialogue with members of non-Christian religions. They are simply following where the early Modernists led the way.

DESTINED TO SAVE THE CHURCH

In discussing the above five subjects — Darwinism, modern biblical studies, philosophical pragmatism and relativism, higher criticism in history, and comparative religion — I think I have mentioned the main intellectual trends that went to the making of Modernism and gave it the characteristic features of its first appearance. In combination, they tended to produce a high-minded agnosticism or refined and watery theism under a Catholic veneer. With them often went a purely natural curiosity about mysticism, states of prayer, and psychic phenomena. In some respects, early Modernism reflected the *fin de siècle decadence* of cultivated European society as a whole, which was both rationalistic and anti-rational, skeptical and superstitious at the same time, uniting "scientific" unbelief with a craving for spiritual experiences of a not particularly spiritual kind.

Why with the views they held did the Modernists not leave the Church?

Their psychology, at first sight puzzling, is however quite common in the history of the Church.

They saw themselves as an elite destined to save the Church for herself. The ordinary rabble of Catholics, which included the Pope (a canonized saint often rather snobbishly referred to as "the peasant Pope") and most of the cardinals and bishops, might not understand their high purposes. But for their own good and the world's they must be persuaded to. The Church could only be saved if she accepted, once and for all, the Modernist thesis that her teachings were myths and symbols — blundering attempts of the religious sense to express the inexpressible. Only in this way could she be reconciled with modern science. But this did not mean her teachings would be useless, or that she herself would have to go into retirement. Myths like parables can have an improving effect on the character, and this was the function which, in the future, Catholic doctrine must fulfill in the lives of the ordinary faithful.

If the Church accepted this view of her role — as the wife, a rather abjectly submissive one you may think, of science and modern thought — she still had a great future ahead of her; she could still be the moral educator of mankind. But if she ignored Modernist warnings and insisted that her teachings be taken literally, then she and modern science would meet in a head-on crash and she was doomed to succumb.

For highly educated and, in some cases, gifted men, yesterday's Modernists, like today's, had a strangely naive view of science — what it is and what it can achieve: they were unexpectedly like bright schoolboys who have discovered science, spelled with a big S, for the first time.

We may note another peculiarity. They were totally unlike the skeptical *abbés* of the century before, who seem to have been contented with their unbelief while living comfortably off the Church's revenues. For them, religion was superstition and that was that. Why make a fuss? But late nineteenth-century man was a different creature; the winds of romanticism had been blowing over him. (At least this could be said of a high proportion of nineteenth-century men.) He had learned to appreciate the pleasures of powerful emotions and "immortal longings", even when no longer believing in immortality: he had learned to relish his anguishes and anxieties as well. Most of the early Modernists were more or less of this stamp. They liked religion *per se*, regardless of which religion, and almost, one could say, regardless of whether it was true or false. They liked to feel themselves religious men, as well as being mightily taken up with the world's and other people's spiritual improvement. Many had their psychological roots in pious and happy Catholic childhoods, a factory which also provides the key, I think, to understanding the trait I mentioned earlier — what

ordinary people might call their two-faced way of writing. Even when belief had gone, religious language and sentiment kept its charm for them.

Common to them all was a near pathological hatred of Rome because it blocked their efforts to bring to modern man that new reinterpreted "Christian faith" which he would at last find acceptable. Rome was brutal, harsh, ignorant. The rest of the faithful were silly, superstitious, or purblind. They themselves, in the words of Msgr. Mignot were *âmes sincères et intelligentes* [sincere and intelligent souls]. From their lofty view of their role, they developed the practical principle we have seen Duchesne recommending. Stay put; don't let yourself be driven out; transform belief from within.

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Chapter 3. Neo-Modernism: An Underground Plague

By 1900, Modernist ideas were spreading among the more cultivated clergy and penetrating the seminaries. Everywhere priests started having crises of faith. (Von Hügel's daughter had earlier, in 1897, had a crisis of faith when her father had disclosed to her his spiritual doubts and his hopes for a change in doctrine. Fr. Tyrrell had been called in to resettle her mind.) Books were put on the *Index*, warnings issued, reviews prohibited. Loisy, Tyrrell, and some others were ex-communicated. Loisy, who for years had been protesting his Catholicism, later admitted that he had begun to lose his Faith around 1885.

However, those not excommunicated continued to push their ideas, regardless of censures. In 1907, the Pope issued the decree *Lamentabili* and the encyclical *Pascendi*. These listed, analyzed, and condemned Modernist errors. After 1910, priests were required to take a special anti-Modernist oath. Bishops were instructed to make sure that no one teaching in their seminaries held Modernist views.

St. Pius X was, and still is, bitterly attacked for these measures. But the steps he took were proportionate to the danger. They were made necessary partly by what I'm afraid we must call the Modernists' deviousness, by their determination to continue posing as Catholics when they no longer were, but chiefly because their beliefs struck at the heart of the Christian religion. Who can blame a Pope for condemning ideas which led a priest into denying that Christ is God, that the Church has authority to teach and rule in His place, and that its doctrines are objectively true? One does not have to be a Scripture scholar to know what St. Peter and St. Paul would have said.

The ordinary faithful who opposed Modernism and fought back were also attacked. Writers sympathetic to Modernism speak of a White Terror: though there was no loss of life. The truth is that in any serious conflict a proportion of people, even with right on their side, are going to act badly, or in the heat of the fight give blows below the belt. But when all cases have been accounted for in which individuals became overexcited and flung accusations at the wrong target, or took advantage of the crisis to work off petty grudges, the reactions of the faithful are thoroughly intelligible.

As soon as they became aware of the new teachings, they recognized them, like the Catholics of the fourth century so highly praised by Newman, as a deadly temptation. A powerful temptation, in anyone aware of what it is, evokes a forceful rejection, and temptations against the Faith have to be dealt with just as firmly as other temptations. When a naked woman was introduced into St. Thomas Aquinas room in the family castle where he was being held captive, he did not, on grounds of charity, sit down and discuss with her why she was underdressed. He pushed her out of the room and slammed the door. The position of the Modernists was analogous to that of the woman. They were trying to stay in the Church without wearing the wedding garment of faith. For Catholics, their doctrinal nakedness was an enticement to infidelity, and that was why they were strenuously repulsed.

FOLLOWING DEVIOS ROUTES TO THE PUBLIC MIND

After 1910, Modernism went underground for 50 years. The majority of those involved in the drama outwardly submitted, some, according to their private letters, taking the anti-Modernist oath with mental reservations. Most Catholics imagined that Modernism had died out. Two world wars and the economic and political troubles of the twenties and thirties helped to turn away attention from the movement and to keep it in control: there were seemingly more serious things to worry about.

But although Modernist ideas were no longer openly expressed or defended, they persisted and continued to exert an influence.

Laberthonnière only died in 1932. Although forbidden to publish, he continued to write, and these later books appeared as soon as he was dead.

Le Roy lived on until 1954. As a professor at the College of France, with the prestige of that position, his influence was greater. Being a layman, he was not forbidden to publish. His books

were merely censured as they came out. Each time he submitted, but without changing his course; the same ideas would be developed in a succeeding book. Official formulas, he maintained, should receive only official submission and be interpreted to bear an acceptable meaning; he was not dealing with an infallible authority. But his importance for us today lies in his having been a close friend of Teilhard de Chardin. He and *Père* [Father] Teilhard, he confessed, had discussed their theories together so often that he could no longer tell which were *Père* Teilhard's and which his own. As a result, many of Teilhard de Chardin's ideas got into print long before the publication of his own works after his death.

Young men who, around 1910 at the height of the crisis, were having their minds formed in the seminaries were still only in their late sixties at the death of Pius XII in 1958. If only a relatively small number lost their Faith, many emerged with battered confidence in the certainty of some of the Church's teachings, a grudging attitude towards the *Magisterium*, or generally fretful feelings.

Memoirs, apologias, histories of Modernism also appeared in great numbers between the two wars and exerted an influence on the more intellectually inquiring Catholic clergy and laity, helping to enlarge what one might call the Church of Discontent.

However, most of the Modernist literature produced between 1910 and 1958 appears to have circulated among the higher clergy in typescript or mimeograph, and it seems to have been principally against this that in 1950 Pius XII directed his encyclical *Humani Generis*, on false trends in modern teaching, one of the chief, though not the only figure aimed at, being Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

DE CHARDIN: HERO AND MARTYR

I don't mean to linger over Teilhard de Chardin. More than enough has been written about him, and I want to avoid giving an unbalanced picture of his place within Modernism. His fame has given many people the impression that he and Modernism are more or less synonymous — that without him Modernism would not have survived — which is certainly not so. Devastating though his ideas have been, they represent only one strand — the evolutionary strand — of Modernism.

This strand may be considered the most important one. But Modernism in its totality, as we have seen, is something much more: the attempt at substituting, not just natural selection and the emergence of man from ape, but a whole spectrum of unacceptable theories for the Catholic Faith.

However, in writing an historical sketch of Modernism and its development, I cannot leave him out altogether. I will, therefore, confine myself to what seem to me some salient points about him as a personality, without going into an analysis of his ideas.

Père Teilhard did not play any part in the first Modernist movement and during his life was unknown to the general public. But from 1922 — when an essay on Original Sin, calling it in question, accidentally reached Rome — until his death in 1955, he was a person the highest authorities in the Church were increasingly aware of and worried about. Although forbidden to teach and publish, he wrote prolifically, and what he wrote was read by those who mattered. His active life thus corresponded with the period of Modernism's life underground, during which he was certainly its most significant figure. But he was neither a leader nor an organizer, and at this time was important chiefly, I think, as a symbol. Being prepared, like Loisy and Tyrrell, to say with less circumspection what others would have liked to say if they could have done so without damaging their reputations, he became for Modernism a blend of hero and martyr — who happened not to have been killed and in spite of official displeasure lived a comfortable and interesting life — and a focus for Modernist hopes. What was hoped for, among other things, what his vindication, if it ever came, would represent, was the death and burial once and for all of Adam and Eve, and with them Original Sin and eternal punishment — "the cruel doctrines" as they were coming to be called.

Now that it is possible to see him in perspective, I think three things strike one (apart from his loss of Faith): how lacking in originality he really was; how spiritually coarse-grained; and — in the grand way that only a deluded savant can be — how densely stupid!

This may seem an extreme judgment to make about a man who has been applauded by so many highly educated people, but I think it can be justified.

THE MAN AND HIS UNBELIEF

A slight acquaintance with Modernism shows that many of de Chardin's most typical ideas — his pan-psychism for instance (the notion that even in stones and chemicals there is a rudimentary presence of "spirit"), his refusal to allow any distinction between a natural and supernatural order — were already ideological currency when he came on the scene. Most of the rest of his system is just evolutionary progress religion disguised in language and concepts borrowed, after suitable adaptations, from the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation and the Mystical Body.

If people are unaware of the other qualities I have mentioned it is partly, I imagine, because they have only read his more "presentable" books where his thought is to some extent veiled.

What might be called the "dangerous writings" — those confidential letters and essays which have made their appearance more slowly, often apparently against the wishes of his friends, and which give a different impression of the man and his mind, are less well-known.

Only in these do we discover the extent to which he idolized power and cunning: that he regarded Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia as the triumph of civilization over savagery; that he had favorable words for Hitler and fascism as long as they were winning ("constructive idealism, however distorted" was on their side); that he thought the German fifth column a force for good (after all, was he not himself a fifth column inside the Church?); that after the defeat of Germany, Communism began to receive his approval, this now representing the wave of the future. From the same sources we learn that he believed in the existence of superior and inferior races and had a generally low opinion of black Africans. (In spite of being fine physical specimens, were they fully "hominized", i.e. human? They were probably doomed to die out.) "Progress implies an unquenchable force", he writes, "that insists on the destruction of everything that has outlived its time."

I think it would be difficult to say anything more stupid and coarse-grained than that. One seems to be listening to a particularly ruthless business tycoon planning to shut down an unproductive factory, sack the work force, and exploit a new market.

These aspects of his thought, though appropriate enough in a consistent disciple of Darwin, have of course been soft-pedalled because they are damaging to his reputation as a Christian and a progressive.

SINCERE BUT WRONG-HEADED

But if he was neither original nor very intelligent, how are we to account for his success? As big business, he must be in the same class as the pop-star industry.

I think we must admit that, whatever else he lacked, he had literary abilities and imagination. It was these which enabled him to give his ugly banalities the appearance of a mystical vision. Through the haze, people are not quite sure what they are being shown — though Catholics should be.

Secondly, he really believed in his system, and in putting over ideas, however wrong-headed, conviction and tenacity, which he had in abundance, are often what count most.

He also seems to have had to an unusual degree that difficult to define power — similar to charm without being it — of attracting disciples and fascinating his friends. This is not now easy to understand: the personality that has come to light is so unsympathetic, not to say repellent. But it is plainly a fact. It explains I think why writers like Fr. Henri de Lubac, who should know better, spend so much time bolstering his reputation and whitewashing his spots.

But I think his success is chiefly to be accounted for by the fact that his books carried a message which many were longing to hear. They fell on a world of believers whose faith had for several generations been giving way under the hammerblows of "scientific" materialism. (Scientific materialism is no different from straightforward materialism. It is simply materialism propped up with arguments drawn from the natural sciences.) At last Darwin (popularly, though not entirely accurately, seen as the symbol of that scientific materialism), had, so these anxious believers supposed, been in some mysterious way reconciled with Christ. Evolution had been made to sound

religious and religion scientific. They did not see that by *Père* Teilhard, Christ had been sacrificed to Darwin.

All of this also no doubt explains the protection he enjoyed and more than once boasted of, from men enjoying high positions in the Church, both within the Jesuit order and outside. In view of what it knew, and he was saying, "brutal" Rome was surprisingly lenient to him. Evidently his friends and protectors were able to persuade the authorities that even if they had a heretic on their hands, the heretic was a world genius and they must hold on to him at all costs. Only later did anyone realize that the world genius was just Nostradamus all over again, but this time wearing a Roman collar and reading the fossils instead of the stars.

Père Teilhard's great influence, of course, only began after his death, when his friends started to publish his manuscripts, and Catholics, ignoring warnings, to read them. But here I will leave him for the moment and return to Modernism in general.

In spite of the influence of men like Le Roy and Teilhard, it would be a mistake to attribute the continuance of Modernism to some isolated individuals or survivors from its first phase.

Modernism persisted through the '20s and '30s because the causes which had first brought it into being persisted: Catholic intellectuals weak in faith — and also, I am sure, insufficiently supported by the prayers of their fellow Catholics — trying unsuccessfully to grapple with the problems presented by modern thought: trying to map the jungle and gradually getting lost in it.

By the '40s, it was in essence the same, but had received some important additions and adornments. Aspects of modern thought which in 1910 had been in the background had been brought forward to more distinguished positions. Catholics had been making friends with them too.

In addition to enthusiasts for Darwinism, biblical and historical criticism, philosophical pragmatism and comparative religion, there were now clergy anxious to incorporate into Catholic belief chock-a-block and largely unexamined, the principles of Freudian psychology, existentialism, sociology, Marxist and liberal-democratic theory, and a whole range of other subjects and ideologies.

It is these which have given today's Modernism its slightly different overall appearance and which justify its being called neo-Modernism. We are looking at the same woman with a new hairstyle, some extra jewelry, and a harder expression on her face.

To complete our understanding of Modernism, we must now glance through these too to see what notions derived from them were being taken on board.

I will start with two general ideas; progress and liberty. Neither, of course, is connected with any particular branch of learning, but like *Père* Teilhard they are too important to ignore. In any consideration of neo-Modernism they should be put at the center of the stage.

THE NEW MESSAGE OF SALVATION

Progress deserves consideration. Like *Père* Teilhard, in a general survey of the formation of Modernism, progress is too important to leave out.

Belief in progress as a force in some way immanent in nature and driving it forward to a state of perfection, an earthly paradise, is, as we know, the new message of salvation, which has been growing in power and influence since it was first preached 250 years ago — with liberty, equality, and fraternity replacing Faith, Hope, and Charity as the three absolutely necessary requirements for beatitude. In one or all of its branches, Marxist, secular humanist, or utopian liberal, it is the Church's major religious rival, whose teachings she has to take into account and which faces her at every turn.

Since 1900, as Christians of all kinds have, with increasing rapidity, fallen away from their religion and joined those who believe in some kind of progress religion, so has the influence of progress religion on the remaining Christians become correspondingly greater. Its power also seems to grow with prosperity.

By the 1950s, more and more of the westernized clergy were plainly feeling its attractions. Just as progress religion is the heart of modern thought, so, when the lid is taken off the cauldron, it will be found that progress religion is the heart of neo-Modernism — and will be preached by enraged

ecclesiastics as "liberation theology" and by the sedate and respectable as "human advancement" and "making a world fit for humans to live in."

What the Church means by expressions like these is something quite different. Although we are to engage wholeheartedly in all good works and make the best we can of it, says the Council, "the form of this world, distorted by sin, is passing away" (*Gaudium et Spes*, N° 39).

All the ambiguous references to "hope" and "salvation" which will abound in the catechism to come, will have in mind the earthly, not the heavenly paradise.

Between 1956 and the opening of the Council, the hearts of many bishops and priests as well as laymen were turned even more decisively in this direction by perusing *Père Teilhard's The Phenomenon Of Man, The Divine Milieu, and Hymn Of The Universe*, and using them as their spiritual reading. The two first were the books *Père Teilhard*, while he was alive, tried hardest to get permission to have published, and in which he tailored his ideas to make them as little unacceptable to the ecclesiastical censors as possible. They converted influential clergy in large numbers to his semi-pagan, semi-materialist "Christianity".

BLESSED ARE THE SUCCESSFUL

In *Père Teilhard's* version of progress religion, the reality and effects of the Fall are denied or ignored. Moral evil has been more or less abolished, as has the need for grace. Sin and evil have been more or less identified with pain and suffering (the consequences of sin) or with whatever else limits and keeps men down: all of which men by their ingenuity must abolish. (Men have now taken over from God in the running of evolution and are responsible for its further development.) The cause of sin and evil is not wickedness in the human heart or rebellion against God; nor is death a punishment for sin. All these things are due to the statistically unavoidable accidents of evolution (which God is unable to prevent) or men's failure to cooperate with it. The Christian worldview preached for 2000 years, beginning with the Apostles, and foreshadowed in the Jewish worldview, is completely wrong. We are not a fallen, but an ascending race. This world is not substantially a "vale of tears", a damaged paradise. The purpose of life is not primarily personal sanctification through the service of God and neighbor amid trials and tribulations in the hope of an eternal reward. We are the work force in a booming contracting business. The task of Christians is to dominate nature and transform the world into a well-organized garden suburb full of healthy, happy (and immortal?) citizens, which our Lord, when He comes again, will find humanly fit to live in. He will then take over this desirable property. There will not apparently be a Judgment, which would be an affront to human dignity. (The end of the story, however, is ambiguous. When *Père Teilhard* talks about our Lord as the culmination of human history or the summit of the evolutionary process — his Omega point — one can never be sure whether he believes in a Second Coming or even that our Lord still exists and is God. The name Christ in this context often seems to be simply a symbolic word for the future race of supermen he looks forward to. The same can be said of very many of his followers.) Throughout, no conflict is recognized between holiness and worldly success: "economic and social emancipation", it is assumed, automatically produces virtue; sanctity and prosperity are seen as advancing hand in hand. "Blessed are the occupants of the Ritz Hotel." We are dealing with a religion for successful professionals.

These naive and, in Christians, astonishing ideas, were given clear expression at the Council by a Philippine Archbishop, and are now preached in whole or in part with embarrassing candor by public figures like Archbishop Hurley of Durban (see the Archbishop's address to a medical congress in Bombay reprinted in the London *Tablet* May 20th, May 27th, and June 3rd, 1978).

BLESSED ARE THE LIBERATED

I come next to **Liberty**; the *summum bonum* [highest good] for genuine liberals. I would say that in places where basic needs are satisfied, equality and brotherhood are, as objects of desire, very much second best. Having been now in the air for several centuries, liberty as the supreme ideal now is the air for western civilizations, its indispensable oxygen.

But this liberty is, in important respects, at variance with the Christian concept of liberty, the liberty of the sons of God. All men understandably value their liberty as a most precious possession. But for Christians the highest goal is not liberty: it is the pursuit of truth and goodness, and liberty is only valuable insofar as it serves that end. As ingredients of happiness, the friendship of God and a right conscience are infinitely above it. If we are abusing our liberty to the danger of our salvation, it is a blessing to have it curtailed. This is why poverty and suffering are called blessed states. In no other sense are they. In Heaven we shall all be rich.

The western cult of liberty, however much it once had in it that was good and reasonable, is now closer to the quasi-neurotic passion for one's own way and the resentment at restraint of frantic adolescents and spoiled children, regarding all authority as an evil and subordination as an affront. One cannot help thinking that Eric Fromm should have written a companion study to his famous *The Fear Of Freedom*, and called it *The Loathing Of Authority*. It is just as much a western disease, and looks as if it may lead to the loss of the liberties we have.

Over the last 50 years, the non-Christian idea of liberty has been seeping into more and more Catholic hearts, and for many of the Catholic intelligentsia had plainly become the highest good, more precious, more in need of protection and preservation than the Faith itself. It now dominates all their thinking, indeed, is often the sole subject of their thinking. As an idea, it is perhaps this more than anything else which has emptied religious houses, secularized the life of seminaries, and produced doctrinal chaos. Ecclesiastical authorities of nearly every kind are, it seems, so terrified of challenging it, so apparently uncertain what is objectionable about it, that the majority find themselves powerless when it makes its demands. Both progress religion and the cult of liberty are far more important components of neo-Modernism than they were of early Modernism. In that first drama, they only had a walk-on part.

Leaving these general notions, however, which live on the public highways of modern life, we will return in the next installment to the studies and libraries of the learned and look at the most important new arrival there: existentialism.

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Chapter 4. Existentialism — The Ugly Intruder

The philosophies which were modern in 1910 and which the Church had been told she must adapt to were no longer so modern in 1940. A number of newcomers had made their appearance. But existentialism rapidly reached top place.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of this philosophy, which has transformed religious thinking everywhere — inside and outside the Catholic Church. If the shape of Christian belief once seemed to you clear, but now seems fuzzy and without substance; if your priest speaks to you of Christian faith, life situations, commitment, encounter, or meaningful experiences, without your being sure whether he believes in the Incarnation and Resurrection, the after-life, or even in God, existentialism is largely responsible.

This philosophy, which was put together in Germany in the 1920s and '30s, principally by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), with contributions from Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) and some philosophical technicalities borrowed from the Austrian Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), represents the same philosophical trends I mentioned earlier in this booklet but with some differences. One could call it a cousin of the vitalism and pragmatism of Bergson and James; not a direct descendant, but a member of the same philosophical family. The German occupation of Paris popularized it in France, and after 1945, it was introduced to the world at large by Sartre, Camus, Samuel Beckett, and a host of other successful writers. By 1950, there can have been few self-respecting Catholic intellectuals, orthodox and unorthodox, who had not dipped their minds in this murky spring.

Although some of its devotees have recently been putting it at the service of Communism, it is really the last desperate cry for liberty as western intellectualism feels itself being sucked for good and all, as it fears, into the omnipotent collective society. It is also the culmination of the romantic revolt against Descartes' picture of man as just a computer-like mind, and against objectivity in religious and philosophical thought. Existentialists, like their forerunners, take for granted Kant's assumption that reality outside us is essentially unknowable. Only through self-awareness do we have direct contact with the inner nature of the real. Reality, therefore, can only be understood by analyzing our inner feelings and states of consciousness. These, in a sense, constitute reality.

In the background to existentialism are the writings of two thinkers who by the 1920s had long been dead: Kierkegaard (d. 1855), a gifted but highly eccentric Danish Lutheran; and Nietzsche (d. 1900), the also gifted but unbalanced German atheist who eventually lost his mind.

Kierkegaard is a preeminently subjective thinker and his view of reality, religion, and human nature derive from the experience of his conversion — he had lost his beliefs at university and recovered them when about 25 — and his neurotic reactions to certain episodes connected with his father and fiancée; his father had once cursed God, and the son thought he shared his guilt.

A STATE OF UNKNOWING

Kierkegaard's view of his conversion and of the foundations of belief is an extreme Protestant one. Faith is a blind, basically mindless act — a leap in the dark. A man "commits" himself to Christ without having any reason for doing so; he is urged to make the leap by what he has gone through emotionally beforehand. The emptiness of life without God, and the consciousness of his own nothingness have led him from dread, through anguish to despair. The pain and terror of despair drive him to jump beyond himself, and in so doing he "encounters" God.

(It is true that God sometimes uses unhappiness to make us think about Him. But that is different. Thinking, under the attraction of grace, leads to knowledge (and love), not to jumping off a cliff.)

Even after his conversion, however, Kierkegaard's Christian continues to live in a state of partial dread and anguish because he is daily faced with the necessity of making decisions while having no way of knowing what God requires of him. He has total freedom and total responsibility for his acts, but no guide as what will be right or wrong in given circumstances, or what the consequences of his acts will be.

Like the other philosophers we have considered, Kierkegaard, too, had a passionate dislike of metaphysics and of objectivity in philosophy, his work being full of diatribes against both. He had a similar dislike of doctrine and of universally applicable moral principles in religion. The way things look to the individual, the way he feels about or experiences them, is the criterion of truth, which is thus different for everyone. As for moral choice, each of these decisions has to be governed by the situation in which it must be made. We must take our courage in our hands, says Kierkegaard, not knowing whether the outcome will be salvation or damnation.

Kierkegaard's strong feelings and intellectual brilliance, the fact that his writings contain much that is true and psychologically penetrating, that they provide useful arguments against the crude rationalism and materialism of what is called "the scientific outlook", that he was trying to make his contemporaries realize that belief in Christ and following Christ should be a matter of deep conviction rather than of social conformity, have unfortunately led today's most influential thinkers in the religious field into ignoring his profound errors. The element of melodrama in his religious approach has also, I think, been an attraction. It has been largely responsible for the painfully pretentious way of talking and writing — the notable lack of modesty with which people speak about themselves as caring Christians, committed Christians, anguished Christians — which are at present such a feature of the religious scene.

Kierkegaard's writings made little impact outside Denmark until about 1918, when they were translated for the first time into German. From then on, however, his influence on the European intelligentsia, religious and irreligious, was tremendous — reaching even to Spain, where Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset took him up. He was read for his own sake, not just as a source book of the new philosophy, and in this direct way he profoundly modified nearly all forms of European Protestantism.

So much for Kierkegaard. Nietzsche's message was different. Western men, so the message reads, know "that God is dead", i.e. doesn't exist. But they are hiding from the fact, or rather from its logical consequences. They must be made to face them. Man is totally free. No laws bind him. He may do anything. He must, therefore, dare and achieve.

(From this aspect of Nietzsche's thought, Bonhoeffer, the German pastor put to death by the Nazis, took his ideas that modern men "have come of age", are incapable of understanding the supernatural or the sacred, have taken over the role formerly attributed to Providence, and that Christians must now live and act as though God did not exist — in other words what is called "secularized Christianity".)

The leading ideas of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche together provided the foundations on which Heidegger and others constructed existentialism.

EVERYONE WRONG EXCEPT HEIDEGGER

Heidegger was a lapsed Catholic ex-seminarian who was professor of philosophy first at Marburg (1923) and later at Freiburg (1929-1945), being forced to retire in the latter year because of his connections with the Nazis. He believed, and publicly claimed, that from Plato onwards the whole approach to philosophy had been wrong. All philosophers, until himself, had misunderstood the nature of the problems and how to solve them; he had found the right method and was going to put philosophy on the right track for the first time. Like Karl Marx, he found his ambitions greater than his capacities. He was never able to finish his major work (*Sein und Zeit* [Being and Time] — 1927), which was to establish his claims.

In existentialism, the mind is not just dethroned, it is, in effect, abolished. To use it for thinking in the normal way by distinguishing object from object (cat from mouse, and mouse's tail from mouse's body), or objects in the outside world from the thoughts in one's mind (object from subject) is treated as if it were a sin. This kind of normal thinking — though plainly designed for us by God, and in use since the creation of Adam — was supposedly introduced by wicked "Greek intellectualism", and is said to falsify reality, which does not consist of separate creatures with distinct natures, but is envisaged as a liquid continuum like treacle or soup. Making statements about the nature of God, for instance, as Our Lord did — saying that He is a Father, or that the Son

existed from all eternity — should be forbidden because they turn God into an "object", and God cannot be considered as an object among a variety of other objects (even if we are unquestionably objects to God).

To understand reality, there must be a total surrender of the self to experience, a plunging of oneself in the treacle or soup (the self being part of the soup, though possibly the soup, or the experience of being in the soup, is just an extension of the self — views differ and are not always clear). This is called "openness" or "openness to Being" and is one of the existentialist virtues. There are, of course, many experiences in life which we ought not to be "open" to.

In Heidegger's later philosophy, the attempt to understand life and reality in this way — by the immersion of the self in experience or Being — resembles oriental mystical practices. Influenced by the German poet Rilke, he has developed an atheistic nature mysticism. Instead of thinking, the philosopher, through his passive "openness", seeks communion with the One — or the All.

The fallacy at the root of all existentialist thought, as I mentioned in another article, is the idea that "experience" can be a path to knowledge on its own, separate from and, in some sense, in rivalry with the use of the mind. In reality, experience is merely the stuff out of which knowledge is derived. Unless we analyze or think about what we have experienced (which necessarily involves the use of abstract ideas and propositions) our experiences will tell us nothing or deceive us. The way we feel about things is not necessarily the way they are.

Existentialism also assumes, along with Kierkegaard, that we all experience reality differently; each has his own version of the "truth". This is why each must be allowed to "do his own thing"; whatever he finds "meaningful" or "relevant". The word meaningful in existentialist talk does not mean true, right, or intelligible, but what gives the individual satisfaction.

WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT

In fact, as might be expected, Heidegger and the existentialist, having dethroned the mind (though, like their predecessors, only for philosophy and religion) and exalted "experience", then proceed to use their minds in the normal way (employing abstract ideas and terms like the rest of us) in order to carry out their analysis of human moods, states of consciousness, and what is considered to be man's basic life situation, and to construct their picture of what a human being essentially is and life is all about.

It is really a picture of what life looks like, after reading too much Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, to an unhappy guilt-ridden atheist.

Man finds himself "thrown into the world" without knowing how or why he is there and with no real way of finding out. His basic states are those of Care (he is condemned to preoccupation with pointless worldly tasks) and Dread (like Kierkegaard, he has constantly to make decisions, but every situation is different and there are no rules to guide him. At the same time he is responsible for the remotest consequences of his smallest acts.) So he moves through life, haunted by the flight of time, burdened by guilt, trying to reach "self-understanding" through the experience of his "present situation", and "projecting himself into the future" as he endeavors to "realize his possibilities", until he reaches death, the last of his "possibilities" which will put an end to him. As his present situation is never quite the same today as it was yesterday, he is ever having to change his understanding of things and make a new beginning. Not surprisingly, the existentialist decides that life is meaningless and absurd.

Existentialist literature is full of rather pretentious talk about death — as though its existence were a recent discovery. There is much complaining and posturing about the tragic situation in which the inescapability of death puts a man, and his anguish at finding himself there; existentialist man is angry and not a little sorry for himself because he cannot have two things at once, atheism and immortality. Even "Catholic" theologians, who are supposed to believe in Heaven, talk about death as if it were a gloomy indignity.

In all these ideas we see the roots of ongoing revelation. Imitating the existentialist, the neo-Modernist Christian seeks to realize his possibilities and understand his ever-changing existence and spiritual and material needs in the light of his also ever-changing "present situation". Through

ongoing revelation God sends messages about how to do it. God's messages are received interiorly through "religious experience", and exteriorly through the circumstances of the moment. There has been no other revelation.

The above is the aspect of existentialism which emphasizes experience and mood, and describes the human condition. It is mainly Heidegger's contribution.

PASSING THROUGH SUCCESSIVE EXPERIENCES

The other aspect deals with what men and women specifically are, their essential nature, and stresses their nothingness, will, and freedom. On this subject, Sartre speaks loudest.

When existentialists speak of nothingness, they are not describing what Christians mean when they speak metaphorically of man's "nothingness" before God. They mean it literally. In connection with ourselves it is a difficult idea to make sense of. How can men exist and not exist at one and the same time? Nevertheless, this is another vital part of the existentialist message.

Men and women are not beings who have a substantial and enduring reality from the moment of birth, or rather conception, onwards. Man is a nonbeing who achieves, or semi-achieves being of a transitory kind by passing through his successive experiences. He is like a wisp of vapor — capable of absorbing "experience" — which has materialized (unexplainably) in a void. A man's existence, as the famous existentialist pronouncement has it, precedes his essence. But, in fact, existentialist man never has an essence. What he essentially is can only be calculated at death when his gradually accumulating units of existence or experience are added up — presumably by his friends after his funeral — and then he no longer, in any sense, is.

However, for hard-line existentialists of the Sartrean, and more recently the "Christian" type, the mere passive reception of experience does not confer true existence. A man only exists in a real sense by continuously making free and conscious acts of will.

Perhaps we can make sense of what is being said here by returning to the image of reality as an extended treacle or soup. The human will is pictured as an eddy of energy making a hole or space in the treacle or soup of Being. Man is this empty space created in the continuum of reality by the whirlpool of his free will. If he stops exercising his free will, the hole closes up and his existence is swallowed by the treacle. He is, essentially, a free will and nothing else.

These notions may seem to you abstruse and ridiculous, but they make it clear why people now "become" persons, rather than are persons. You become a person insofar as you are able to act consciously, make decisions, and realize your possibilities. If, through poverty, failure of bodily or mental faculties or their lack of development, you are wanting in any of these things, you cease to be a person and can be dealt with accordingly.

Abstruse notions have a way of producing far-reaching public consequences.

When these ideas are translated into "Christian" terms, people are not Christians as a result of their beliefs and Baptism, they are in a state of perpetually "becoming" (but never perhaps actually being) Christians through engaging in "Christian" activities — an outlook which (unintentionally) encourages a new Phariseism, since these existentialist Christians can only "prove" their Christianity to themselves and others by conspicuous good works which it is necessary to draw attention to. We have here another reason why in Modernist "Christianity" activity is all important and knowledge and belief are at a discount.

At this point in the philosophy, there is a change of key from minor to major, and the tempo becomes brisker.

Common sense must eventually have suggested to the father guardians of existentialism that few men are going to pay attention for long to a system of thought which holds that life is pointless. Some more positive ideas, therefore, started coming to the fore.

AUTHENTIC LIVING AND COMMITMENT

Confronted with his absurd and meaningless existence, which will be extinguished by death, man has two choices. Either he can live "inauthentically".

This means hiding from the truth, the fact that life is meaningless, and accepting the standards and values of the crowd: he thus escapes the inner misery and despair that result from an honest appraisal of the facts.

Or he can take the heroic course and live "authentically", as the heroes of Camus' novels do. Authentic living means facing the truth, life's futility, and temporarily, at least, submitting to the despair which is the necessary consequence, but which, if it does not lead to suicide, will eventually purify him. Despair will drive him out of himself and away from "trivialities". By it he will be impelled to commit himself to a life of dramatic choices or a particular cause. As we saw, only the use of the will can cause a man truly to be.

This is why Mr. Average-man, who is supposed to drift through life without committing himself to anything in particular (except perhaps supporting his family, bringing up his children in the service of God, and quietly fulfilling the duties of his state), is looked on with such scorn by the existentialist faithful. These semi- or nonbeings are, for existentialists, like the reprobate in the Calvinist system, destined for damnation, or the bourgeois in the Marxist system destined for the firing squad. However, as death wipes out "good" and "bad" alike, Mr. Average-man has perhaps followed the wiser course.

But what is a man to commit himself to?

Theoretically, it ought not to matter. Since life is a string of pointless unintelligible "happenings", gardening, stamp-collecting, agriculture, or overturning the state should all be on the same level. Man's choice and activity alone give the experience of living whatever ephemeral and factitious meaning it can be said to have. Man can make good evil and evil good. He, not God, is the author of meaning, "truth", and value.

In practice, however, it seems to be generally agreed among existentialists that a man should commit himself to one or other variant of that familiar enterprise "transforming the world" or building the earthly paradise. He now has a blueprint for "realizing his possibilities" and "making his future".

The history of human thought is full of strange alliances and one of the most surprising is this which has brought what is perhaps the most radically individualistic philosophy ever invented into the service of political collectivism. Sartre and other French existentialists of the left like Merleau-Ponty have been the principle marriage-brokers.

How does the existentialist come to this decision?

"They (the existentialists)" said Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis* on false trends in modern teaching, "attribute to our appetitive nature a kind of intuitive faculty, so that a man who cannot make up his mind what is the true answer to some intellectual problem need only have recourse to his will: the will" — guided solely it seems by its appetites, and without reference to the mind — "makes a free choice between two intellectual alternatives. A strange confusion", the Pope continues, "between the provinces of thought and volition."

WHISTLING IN THE DARK

To encourage men not to lose heart once they have made the decision and launched into transforming the world, and to prevent them from relapsing into the nihilism which existentialism has logically prepared them for, the philosopher Ernst Bloch here obligingly produced his "philosophy of hope", which has been introduced into Christian circles by Jürgen Moltmann. This is why you may possibly have been hearing a lot about hope from the pulpit recently. But this meaningless existentialist "hope" is not Christian Hope — trust in the providence of God and hope of eternal happiness with Him. It is frightened existentialist man whistling in the dark when he thinks that possibly the forces modern man has let loose are going to be too much for him to control, and he will blow up the world before he can build the only paradise there is going to be.

In committing himself to an activity, thus rising from inauthentic to authentic existence, a man "transcends" himself, and in doing so encounters "the other" with whom he can enter into a "meaningful" relationship or "dialogue". He "opens himself" to others; he is "a man for others": he pits himself at their disposal. Insofar as these ideas have value, they are a grand way of saying that

unselfishness is a good thing. How often when studying existentialism one is tempted to define it as fantasy occasionally punctuated with platitudes!

In this way, existentialist man breaks out of the lonely private world of his personal experience. The "other" is usually men, but in the case of Jaspers and his followers could be God, who, however, is rarely called God; the preferred expressions are "Transcendence" or "Transcendent Being". Dialogue is chiefly an exchange of experiences. It can generate fellow feeling and lead to joint decisions in practical matters. But it is never a discussion of ideas undertaken in the hope of reaching agreement about truth of a serious kind since that would be impossible. As we have seen, the worlds of our personal experiences are not the same. Of its nature, existentialism is the enemy of human unity, because it rejects the preconditions for it: a common nature and a common understanding of things.

So far, I have mostly been considering the atheist existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre and the agnostic existentialism of Jaspers. But before finishing with the subject, we should look briefly at a slightly different philosophical current which has been simultaneously flowing into the existentialist pool. This is the theistic existentialism deriving from the Jewish thinker Martin Buber (1878-1965), and the French Catholic quasi-existentialists Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) and Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950).

A LOOK AT THEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

All have been influenced in their thinking by Kierkegaard and existentialism generally, but they reject its atheist, pessimistic, and excessively individualistic formulations. The human person and the human community are the subjects of concern and the poles round which their thinking turns.

Martin Buber's *I And Thou* is the important source book for this stream.

Although not intrinsically harmful like the existentialism we have so far been discussing, this personalist and communitarian brand (which has had the most influence in France — Heidegger's influence has been mainly in countries of German culture), is, owing to its generally shaky and subjective foundations, easily turned to undesirable purposes. All philosophies that make their starting point man and his inner life rather than creation as a whole are likely to end by having as their determining principle man's wants rather than the intentions and designs of the Creator as visibly expressed in things through their natures.

Some of the teaching of this kind of existentialism is simple enough. We ought to remember that other people are human beings, not things. Every human being is unique and precious. We must not allow people's social functions to swallow our awareness of what they truly are: a garage mechanic or bank clerk is more than just that. We must overcome our self-centeredness; we are not isolated units but members of society. Being is more important than possessing.

Such, for instance, is the burden of Marcel's message; he also philosophizes interestingly about particular topics like fidelity and friendship.

No one will quarrel with all this, even if it is hardly news. It can even with advantage be stressed. It is what made existentialism palatable, even attractive, to a proportion of the European clergy anxious to revivify parish life.

However, this French *personalism* also has more expressly existentialist things to say, as well as, I think, tending to foster a Rousseauist sentimentality about people and human problems in general.

We meet again the idea that people are not fully human to start with, but become so. This time there is a new condition for genuine existence. It is doubtful if a person on his own can properly be said to exist, since we fully exist only when we "transcend our self-centeredness", are "open to others", and commit ourselves to "living for others". What makes a person a person, we are told, is his commitment. So for an "I" to exist there must be a "Thou" for him to encounter, communicate with, and at whose service he can put himself. Robinson Crusoe on his island was barely human until Man Friday turned up. Marcel summarized his thought thus: "Person — engagement — community — reality."

These are some of the reasons why the existentialist Christian is first and foremost a "man for others", not a man for God, or a servant of God. Insofar as God is encountered, it is chiefly through meeting other people and sharing in their projects.

While theoretically, in this kind of existentialism, the human person is the focus of attention, in practice the relationships between people tend to be given greater importance, and a higher degree of reality, and to be seen as goods and ends in themselves. When Crusoe and Friday met, their "encounter" was the really precious element in the situation, they themselves being significant only as the poles between which the encounter took place and which made it possible.

Communities, being a network of relationships, are given an even higher value and degree of reality. The community readily becomes an object of worship, and fostering the growth of "community" the one really necessary apostolic work. One can be fully and finally human, it is suggested, only when consciously and continuously engaged in communal activities. A community, simply by being such, is seen as having a healing and sanctifying power. In the community, "reconciliation" takes place: the troubled are psychologically tranquilized, and the divided learn to live together, forgetting their disagreements. What the community is like or its members are thinking and doing becomes a secondary consideration — if it is considered at all.

In fact, as we all know, there are relationships and encounters in life which should be avoided and communities from which one has to separate oneself (like Lot from Sodom and Elijah from the priests of Baal). In living for others (that is willing and working for their good), moreover, we often have to say "no" to them; to be shut, not "open", to their wishes and desires.

ROTTING THE ROOTS

While it is true that we always need the presence of a Someone Else, the Supreme "Thou", in order to exist, that we are always in a relationship of at least one to One; God is an "I" who needs no "Thou" in order to exist, and however delightful and necessary human companionship may be, it is not the source from which we derive our being, and it can and occasionally has to be dispensed with. We sometimes need to be less with others in order to be more ourselves. We should also perhaps add that the selfish are just as much human beings as the unselfish. They are then bad human beings, not semi-human beings.

No doubt Buber and Marcel would have made most of these qualifications, but millions of their followers seldom do. And many of the distortions of their thought seem logically to follow from it, or to be the result of its misplaced center of gravity. For Mounier, the importance he attached to the community led him to put a halo around socialism and he eventually became one of the fathers of "Christian" Marxism.

The truth is, it is not always by their positive errors that philosophies do harm. All philosophies contain grains or elements of truth, and just as much damage can be done by mishandling these; by making what is a part appear to be the whole, or by moving what belongs at one side to the center.

Existentialism has many other interesting things to say. But these are the only ones I have room for here.

I should perhaps apologize for having dwelt on it so long. However, if you understand existentialism, you will understand why in so many hearts Christian beliefs are being rotted at the roots. For intelligible thought of all kinds, and the Catholic Faith in particular, it is like a powerful solvent. It is not, I think, difficult to see how much of neo-Modernism flows directly from it.

ENTER KARL RAHNER

Such is the system of ideas, or view of life, chiefly in its Heideggerian form, which the German theologian Fr. Karl Rahner and his followers have been trying to push and haul into place so that it can be made the philosophical foundation for the teaching and preaching of the Catholic Faith and the training of Catholic priests. It is to replace not only the philosophy of St. Thomas but all the natural categories of philosophic thought — pejoratively described as "essentialism". To make the enterprise look more presentable, Fr. Rahner's particular brand of existentialism is called

"transcendental Thomism". What they are doing is shifting the Faith from a philosophical foundation of concrete onto a bed of sand and silt.

Fr. Rahner, who studied under Heidegger, had been his lifelong admirer and disciple, and was one of the principal theologians whose ideas were censured by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*. After 1960, however, chiefly through the efforts of certain German bishops, the authorities in Rome were persuaded to let him loose. His supporters represented him as a new St. Thomas Aquinas, who is repeating in the 20th century what St. Thomas achieved in the 13th. St. Thomas reconciled the Faith with the thought of Aristotle; Fr. Rahner, they claimed, is reconciling it with the thought of Heidegger. Heidegger is supposedly the new Aristotle. Perhaps comment would be superfluous.

(If any parallel is to be drawn, an actual one would be between Fr. Rahner and Malebranche. In the 17th century, the French Oratorian priest Malebranche tried to marry the Catholic Faith indissolubly to the rationalism of Descartes. Nearly everyone now agrees that his efforts were disastrous — even the "new theologians". When they complain that before the Council the presentation of philosophy in seminaries was too abstract, insofar as they are not objecting to the fact that it was orthodox, they are objecting to the results of Malebranche's influence.)

THROUGH THE SOPHISTICATED ELITE

Unlike *Père* Teilhard de Chardin, Fr. Rahner does not have a wide popular following or reputation. Among other things, he is much more difficult to read, as well as being a great deal more cautious in the way he advances his ideas. Nevertheless, his prestige with the intellectually sophisticated in the Church is immense (it has been helped by a Madison-Avenue style campaign of adulation and fame-building) and through them his influence has reached the most unsophisticated of the faithful. He is the only figure so far in neo-Modernism of comparable importance to Teilhard de Chardin. He has been doing for existentialism what *Père* Teilhard has done for evolutionary progress religion. It would be difficult to say which of these two men is responsible for the most damage. It is the introduction of existentialist terminology and categories of thought which has enabled the theological revolutionaries to make it seem as if all Catholic doctrine were dissolving in a mist of doubt, and to persuade people that their innovations are "developments of doctrine" instead of the heresies they actually are. To soften up the resistance of the clergy, they are told that existentialism is the philosophy of modern man, that modern man won't be parted from it, and that unless modern man is allowed to bring existentialism with him into the Church he won't be converted.

Nothing could be less true. The clergy have simply been lied to. Very few modern men consciously know anything about existentialism; and fewer still knew about it before the Council. The majority of Anglo-American philosophers have been hostile to it, regarding it as romantic continental eyewash (whether or not justly is beside the point); it is alien to the scientific mind — one finds few scientists either familiar with or interested in it; as for modern men in general, if they are not believers of some kind, then insofar as they are philosophically anything, the majority are likely to be old-fashioned rationalists or materialists.

HANGING QUESTIONS OF DOUBT

Fr. Rahner, however, is more than the champion of a doubtful system of philosophy. Using existentialism as his base, he has played an active role in the destruction of Catholic belief, functioning as the revolution's heavy artillery. He moves slowly forward, keeping well behind the lines, and fires over the heads of the advancing troops (Fathers Küng, Schillebeeckx, Häring, Schoonenberg et al.) so as to weaken in advance the dogmatic positions they are about to assault. He rarely himself attacks a doctrine directly. His method is to sow doubts in the mind about it by putting a question.

Is it possible, for instance, that we can no longer understand the Chalcedonian definition of our Lord's Divinity; or that the sacraments owe their origin to men rather than to God (man erects them as "a landmark"); or that the Pope could turn himself into a constitutional monarch; or that the office of bishop could be filled by a committee of clergy; or that heresy is now an impossibility —

Catholics can in good faith stay in the Church no longer believing what she teaches; or that everybody who is committed to "building the future", atheists included, is somehow a member of the Church?

Having put the question, he moves cumbrously round it, peers at it as if it presented insoluble difficulties, then stands back, sucks his forefinger and wonders. At last, when he has given the impression that the answer must be "yes" and the Church will have to accept whichever of these heterodox opinions he is pushing, he retreats behind a smokescreen of qualifications and affirmations of orthodoxy, leaving the questions still hanging in the air, and the doubts fixed like barbs in his readers' minds. The 13 volumes of his *Theological Investigations* are the books which have sown most of these doubts. But at the time I am writing about, he was not much known outside a restricted circle. Fame, with its deadly breath, had not yet touched the poor man.

CATHOLIC IMMORALISM

Existentialism, as will readily be seen, is at the heart of the moral as well as the doctrinal revolution. It not only destroys the metaphysical framework of reality by which the mind ascends to God, reducing everything to a fog and a flux where He is lost. It provides the justification for situation ethics (every situation demands a different response), and the theory of the fundamental option (there is only one grave sin — not to be "committed to Christ" or "a man for others").

In this field, another fateful figure, Fr. Bernard Häring, leads the way with his new "Catholic" immoralism.

The claim is made that Fr. Häring has put back "the person of Christ" at the center of moral theology. What he has actually put there is existentialist man who, after "encountering Christ" and "committing himself to Christ in love", is supposedly free to decide for himself as circumstances arise what the law of Christ allows — mortal sin, if he so wishes.

With existentialism as the acid, Fr. Häring is dissolving Catholic moral theology the way Fr. Rahner is dissolving dogmatic theology.

Such so far, I would say, has been the influence of existentialism on the Faith and the Catholic mind. Substantive and destructive inroads, aimed at dethroning the soul as man's center of concern, were made easier by the philosophy of existentialism and the rapidly maturing science of psychology.

THE SOUL AND PSYCHOLOGY

Under the impact of the "new" psychology, with support from existentialism, Catholic teaching about the soul — that it is a substantial reality which gives unity and form to the body and continues in existence even when its faculties are dormant or prevented by physical damage or disease from working — began to be questioned or rejected by large numbers of learned book-reading clergy.

The transforming influences in this field have been chiefly Pavlov and Freud — and, I suppose one must add gloomily, the *Kinsey Report*, which from the early fifties many priests seem to have used as their handbook for the science of the soul.

One cannot say that the ideas of Pavlov, Freud, or their followers, of themselves destroyed belief in the soul. The existence of the soul is denied for other than purely intellectual reasons. But the new psychology did attach the prestige of science to disbelief in the soul, whose nonexistence could now be thought of as somehow an experimentally proved fact.

The behaviorism derived from Pavlov is really just the vulgar old notion that man is only a body and his body a machine; what were thought to be his spiritual faculties are just nervous and muscular reflexes. Western men have had to listen to something like this since La Mettrie popularized the idea in *L'Homme Machine* [Machine Man] over 200 years ago (1747). But behaviorist ideas have now profoundly influenced "Catholic" educational theory, education being seen as reflex-conditioning or programming the computer, rather than feeding the mind with truth and training the will in virtue.

Freud's presentation of psychic activity is more complex and subtle without being any less materialistic. Man is a center or fountain of psychic energies which the body generates somewhat in

the fashion it sweats. More importantly, as we know only too well, all these energies are said to be sexual in origin. Although the human "personality" is built up by directing the greater part of these energies into other channels by means of fear and disapproval, so that they form a crust or shell of "personality" around the still undirected and free-flowing energies of the libido, their fundamental nature is not changed.

NO SOUL - NO SIN

From all this, men have logically concluded that if man's basic energies are sexual, he is essentially a sexual animal. Happiness must therefore lie in giving these energies release, and misery, as well as damage to health, results from controlling or restraining them. This conclusion is now, as we know, another accepted principle for the new moral theologians as well as the educationists.

The existentialists have made a contribution in this area. Sexual activities being one of man's "possibilities", he becomes more of a person the more he indulges in it. This is why the famous "Catholic" sex-education program in America is called *Becoming A Person*. On their side, the psychiatrists support the existentialists in their preoccupation with "relationships", since a characteristic of many of the psychologically sick with whom they deal is not being able to get on with people. It is for the same reason that we hear so much about the need for "maturity". A weakness of those with a penchant for psychology is to see everybody as needing a visit to the psychiatric clinic.

Rejection of belief in the soul on the grounds that it conflicts with the findings of modern psychology (as well as with the principles of existentialism and the most recent biblical research — the concept of the soul was a Greek invention) and the materialism implicit in all this, is, I think, the most important recent addition to Modernism.

Contemporary psychology has also, needless to say, helped to weaken or demolish belief in the reality of sin. This it has done largely because it provides no theoretical basis for recognizing the distinction between character (what we make of ourselves) and temperament (the qualities we find ourselves in some sense "given" at the outset) and consequently between responsible actions and reflex or compulsive actions. All actions can be presented as conditioned. Adler was the only important modern psychologist who did provide a basis for such a distinction — Freud in spite of his personal self-discipline does not — and Adler has had least influence at the popular level.

Another novelty derived from this source is the rejection of chastity as something harmful and evil. To this we may add the present conviction of many of the clergy that men and women are incapable of living chastely. (So they are without grace; but grace is available.) The *Kinsey Report* supposedly provided statistical proof for this assumption, thus making contraception, sex outside marriage, and the abandonment of celibacy for the clergy a necessity.

The early Modernists did not for the most part deny the existence of the soul: on the contrary they were proud of their souls: and to their credit they were not apologists for lust. Will as much be said at some future date of the neo-Modernists encountering the faithful in nearly every corner of the world in the present day?

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Chapter 5. The Essence Of Our Present Day's Tragedy

At this point, let us continue our perusal of more of the secular sciences, which are being used to fill the void left after any semblance of faith in things Catholic has waned.

WHAT'S FILLING THE VOID?

Sociology, it hardly needs saying, studies men collectively; as members of a culture, class, or group. Although sociologists accept the idea of intercultural influence and change (as they could hardly avoid doing) their minds are not, I think, so dominated as those of other intellectuals by the fashionable affection for flux and perpetual motion. They tend to see the sociological group or cultural unit which is the object of their study as something fixed and absolute, like a person, piece of furniture, or room in a museum.

This way of looking at things has had a profound effect on the Catholic clergy. From sociology they seem to have taken the notion that each culture or civilization is a kind of prison cell, and that communication between the inmates of the separate cells is almost impossible. The best the prisoners can do is tap muffled messages on the dividing walls indicating "There is someone here." The Greek and Hebrew minds, as we are told, can never meet.

Since each culture, Hindu, Moslem, Confucian, Euro-American, has its own special vision of life, its own private way of thinking and expressing itself which outsiders can never fully penetrate, each must be allowed its own version of the Catholic Faith. This is really just the individualism of the existentialist extended to societies. It comes from the sociological belief that man is wholly determined by his culture, a bundle of cultural influences and nothing else. Missionaries have been among those most affected.

Anthropology has had much the same influence, though it concentrates on Primitive societies where unusual tribal customs dominate the scene. The tendency for anthropologists is to regard all customs — short perhaps of eating grandmothers and suchlike — as equally interesting and worthwhile expressions of the human spirit. This leads to a kind of moral and aesthetic neutralism. Distinctions between good and bad, better and worse, beautiful and ugly become blurred. Any distinction between higher and lower cultures also tends to be repudiated as snobbish and offensive. Here, too, cultural determinism and separatism reign. Man is defined in terms of what is accidental to him and varies from place to place (his tribal habits), instead of what is essential to him and is the same everywhere.

Sociology and anthropology have moreover fostered the subordination of the individual to the group, since, for the sociologist, the culture is the object of all-absorbing interest. It tends to become a kind of Super-Person, to whom all individual rights and interests must be sacrificed. In the revolutionary clergy this has produced a schizophrenic state of mind, their sociologically based collectivist spirit clashing with their passion for doing as they please.

Under the influence of sociology, historical epochs and past cultures have been compartmentalized too. For each age, then, its own version of the Faith. The beliefs of St. Augustine or St. Anselm will not do for the 20th century, nor seemingly, for many Scripture scholars, will the beliefs of Christ.

Nor is this the end. Differences of age and occupation are now being made into impassable barriers separating groups within the same society, culture, or even parish. Each of these groups has its own particular outlook which only its members can comprehend; so for each there must be a special Mass with its own liturgy. Perhaps ultimately husbands and wives will be expected to meet at different times or in different churches.

It is curious that the revolutionary clergy, who are so frequently enthusiasts for One World, should, under the influence of sociology, be at the same time breaking up the unity of the human race, spatially, temporally, and at the level of the local community. Of course, most of this is not the madness it seems to be, but is used purposefully to justify altering Catholic belief.

Semantics and Linguistic Analysis comes in for abuse also and such abuse of the meaning of language has had much the same results as the abuse of sociology: to make understanding between men more difficult rather than easier.

When ordinary people talk, they mostly, it is suggested, either do not know what they are saying, or what they are saying is meaningless. The latter is above all true of statements of a metaphysical or religious kind. (The most influential figures in the linguistic field — men like Wittgenstein and the English logical positivists — have been unvarnishedly hostile to religion.) If religious statements do have some sort of meaning, they are simply ways of expressing feelings or "value judgments" — which in this context means personal likes and dislikes: they are not statements about supernatural or metaphysical facts. (Logical positivism represents the last-ditch stand of the anti-metaphysical tradition.)

When today we hear a theologian or bishop tell us that the Church is reexamining some part of its moral teaching to discover what exactly it means; or that the word Person in connection with the Blessed Trinity has to be reconsidered in the light of modern knowledge and years of research may be necessary before the experts come up with an answer; we are hearing not just the opinions of a single sinful ecclesiastic, but the voice, or echoes from the voice, of the linguistic analyst.

LET'S REMODEL THE CHURCH DEMOCRATICALLY

I now come to a class of ideas which, while influencing many Catholics and leading some into trouble, were not to begin with directly associated with Modernism. They, however, become swept up into the circle of philosophies revamped, adopted and stridently forced upon the Catholic faithful.

I am referring to the various social and political theories which play such an important part in modern life.

I will group them under two heads: "democracy" and "socialism", meaning by the latter state socialism. They are, in practice, opposed, although frequently represented as inseparable twins and as forming the goal towards which all men should be striving. The attempt to reconcile them overlooks certain inescapable facts of human nature; they are also things of a different kind. Democracy is a theory of government or the distribution of political power; socialism is primarily a theory of ownership. Political power and ownership in most societies are closely connected but they are not identical.

What does democracy mean? It can mean simply a republican system of government in which the rulers are chosen by vote and are answerable to, or limited in their powers by some kind of assembly, also chosen by vote, both being meant to pay attention to and harmonize the interests of the governed; in which public office is open to anyone who cares to compete for it, and the law is the same for everybody. This is what most people mean when they talk about democracy. But it can mean something more. It can also mean that there exists such a thing as "the people", all having the same needs, thoughts and will, and that collectively they are the source of right and truth and the power to command obedience. Many people, when they talk about democracy, have this idea obscurely in mind too. It is often this they are thinking of when they talk about democracy being "government by the people".

Of these two views of democracy, the first is compatible with Catholic belief, the second is not — being also incompatible with common sense.

Under the spell of this word, many Catholics have come to believe that democracy, in both the above senses, is not only the best form of government (which was the view of Montalembert and other 19th century liberal Catholics) but is the only Christian political form, and moreover that the government of the Church as well as all secular governments should be remodelled to fit it. This means not just the possible election of bishops and priests by the laity or by groups of electors (something which has existed in the past) or bishops consulting the laity more often without ceasing to be true shepherds and rulers, but the laity as the supreme authority, deciding what is to be believed and giving orders.

The impact of socialism has been different.

THE ENCOMPASSING PAW OF SOCIALISM

As I said, it is primarily a theory of ownership, which sees justice as the equal distribution of material goods and natural opportunities, or their equal availability for use by all. Socialism only becomes a theory of government when the attempt is made to bring about this equal distribution by handing over all ownership (except for that of trifles), and the power to decide about its use, to the state.

Although the adoption of socialist ideas is often in the young the response of generous impulses to great injustice and came about for that reason in the first place, as a theory the socialist solution is really the angry, hasty, or lazy intellectual's escape from trying to think of intelligent and possible ways of harmonizing legitimate individual independence with the protection of the rights of the weak.

The key to doing this successfully is, as we know, in the Church's social doctrine which in recent times she has developed at more than usual length in face of the changes and evils brought on by early (and often latter-day) industrialism, and the errors in democratic and socialist theory that have multiplied as a result of them.

However the Church only lays down general principles, and instead of applying their minds to realizing them in practice, from the time of Leo XIII and earlier, a proportion of Catholics interested in winning better conditions for poorer workers and recognition of their rights have been tempted to adopt the socialist solution (For the Church, complete communal ownership can be lawful, but only when all the members of the community practicing it enter into the association freely — as in the monastery, or the kibbutz.) Catholics open to the attraction of the socialist solution incline to it, I think, because they adopt the socialist conception of justice — equal use, in equal amounts, of everything by all — with state ownership seen as the best and quickest way of achieving this. The Marxist state, being the most radically socialist state, then comes to be seen as closer to the Christian ideal than any other; while impatience with the wrongs they want to right seems in the eyes of such Catholics further to justify their departure from the Catholic standpoint.

This seems to be more or less the train of misconceptions that is presently drawing Fr. Pedro Arrupe, the General of the Jesuits, into the quicksands.

From its beginnings down to recent times, the mainstream of the Catholic social and political movement was orthodox and obedient.

It is true there were troubles along the way, beginning with Lammenais and *L'Avenir* in the 1820s, while simultaneously with the first Modernist crisis the Sillonist movement in France had to be suppressed, and the Italian priest and public orator Don Romolo Murri (a proto-Christian-Democrat) was excommunicated. But the difficulties had to do with obedience as often as with doctrine, with exaggerated ideas of what were possible forms of political action rather than with attempts to alter belief. Most of the Catholics in question were little interested in the kind of speculative ideas that were agitating von Hügel and his circle (biblical criticism and evolutionary philosophy) and these latter were not concerned with social reform. For long, Modernism and the social movement developed side by side with relatively few direct contacts.

However, after the First World War the situation changed and the aberrational ideas of both movements began to blend.

With the collapse of the old European society, as the secular world outside the Church became more and more taken up with political and social ideologies and embroiled in the struggles that resulted from trying to realize them, their impact on the minds of all members of the Catholic intelligentsia, but especially the new generations, became much greater. The tendency we have noted to make the democratic or socialist "way" a part of the Catholic religion, and the profounder heresy that the construction of the earthly paradise is the true goal of all Christian activity, became indispensible ingredients of neo-Modernism. By the 1950s, it was accurate to talk about a social and political Modernism, if not so earlier.

ALLURING PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

From the time of the first Modernism, the learned in the Church had increasingly been looking towards certain kinds of Protestantism with a sympathetic eye; its attractions lying, as faith failed, in what this Protestantism rejected rather than in the positive beliefs it had kept.

In the interwar period (1918-1939), interest in Protestantism was confined to a relatively small, though still very influential, group of the higher clergy, and, leaving aside legitimate work for reunion, centered chiefly on the theories of the most radical Protestant biblical critics and the ideas of the Danish Lutheran thinker Kierkegaard (d. 1855), whose writings are a source book for existentialism. The pressure to have the Church accept the principles of neo-Protestant and rationalist biblical criticism was dealt with by Pius XII in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943). Kierkegaard's ideas were taken either directly from his own writings or filtered through neo-Lutheran and neo-Calvinist theology.

But after the Second World War, which in Germany, Holland, and elsewhere on the continent had often thrown Catholics and Protestants together in opposition to the Nazi government, interest in Protestantism intensified and later through books and periodicals spread far beyond to a wide circle of clerical and lay Catholics.

The result was the introduction into Catholic priestly minds of two distinct streams of thought reflecting the great divide that has come about within Protestantism itself, between historic Protestantism and Protestant Modernism.

Historic Protestantism provided the desirable goods: no Pope, no Holy See, and consequently no final arbiter as to what must be believed; the Bible privately interpreted as the only source of Revelation; the primacy of the individual conscience; and the Eucharist as a memorial meal. (A reading of Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* suggests that by 1947 Protestant ideas about the Eucharist and the priest as the community president were already making headway among the Catholic clergy.)

These negative Protestant ideas, dating from the 16th century, represent a first downward flight of stairs for Catholics when departing from the fullness of belief.

Protestant Modernism, for Protestants themselves and Catholics who follow them, represents a further descent, this time frequently ending in the basement of unbelief where any semblance of Christianity (except as a polite label) is finally abandoned.

INTERTWINING OF BELIEFS

Modernism among Protestant churches came about for the same reasons as among Catholics, but started much earlier — Schleiermacher (d. 1834) was a protagonist — and undermined belief more quickly, because in Protestantism, as we know, no authority is recognized which can determine whether a new idea can or cannot be reconciled with what God is held to have revealed. It penetrated deepest into those churches with the most highly educated clergy or with the backing of a government or ruling class. What is called liberal Protestantism is a kind of sister movement which developed alongside and eventually merged with doctrinal Protestant Modernism. It represented the practical and socially active side of modern Protestantism and rapidly ran into the same errors we have noted among socially and politically conscious Catholics.

In its encounter with Protestant Modernism, the Catholic intelligentsia, or rather its Modernist contingent, did not meet any ideas with which it was unfamiliar. Catholics and Protestants alike had been reading the same books, studying the same subjects; the minds of both had been played on by the same intellectual radar beams. But the Swiss, German, American, and English Protestant theologians had been much bolder in advancing Modernist ideas and drawing out their consequences. As a result the "Catholic" Modernists found much of their work already done for them, and readily adopted the language and concepts of Protestant Modernism.

What is now being widely preached from Catholic pulpits, and more openly taught in Catholic seminaries is simply the Modernism developed in Swiss, German, and American theological faculties during the 1920s and 1930s by men like Barth, Bultmann, Brunner, Tillich, and the

Niebuhr brothers. (A writer like Berdyaev shows us that Modernism had not left Orthodoxy untouched either.)

To call all of this Protestant theology is not really fair to our many Protestant brothers who are resisting Modernist ideas, often with more energy than Catholics. They defend great doctrines like the Fall, Redemption, the necessity of grace, or the reality and gravity of sin, which many Catholics passively watch being demolished before their eyes. The struggle between Christian beliefs and Modernist beliefs is just as real within Protestant churches as it is within the Catholic body, though in Protestantism, the frontier between the two spiritual domains is less clearly marked and the contest more shadowy. As I suggested elsewhere, Modernism should now be seen as a new and powerful "fourth denomination" whose members are scattered among already existing Christian bodies and are fighting to take them over.

ATTACKING THE CHURCH TODAY

We come now to today, to the last 20 years, the end-result of heretical out-croppings in the past century and a half.

By the late fifties, the heretical and proto-heretical tendencies we have been following had produced within the Catholic Church a much larger body of revolutionary scholars and theologians determined to alter belief as well as practice than had existed around 1900.

These tendencies did not yet represent an absolutely consistent body of belief. They had materialized one by one or in groups, as we have seen, over a period of 100 years and had been adopted in different degrees by individual members of the Church Learned according to taste. But they inclined towards coherence. The first person to make a synthesis of them was the Fr. Lemius who drafted the encyclical *Pascendi* for St. Pius X.

So far there have been three Modernist syntheses. *Père Teilhard's*, which is not so much a synthesis as the absorption of everything into his own peculiar evolutionary system; then the various Marxist attempts — these are not really syntheses either but more or less undiluted Marxism with other Modernist beliefs as trimmings; finally Bultmann's, based on the existentialist view of man as a self-creating freewill, knowing only the light provided by his "present situation", with the Bible symbolically reinterpreted for each generation in terms of that situation.

Bultmann's system is much the closest to being a true synthesis; it draws together nearly all the existing Modernist strands and gives each a place, and for this reason, I think it may carry the day. His orderly denials look superficially more like what people are accustomed to than *Père Teilhard's* outlandish flights of fancy and rather naked earth-worship, or the Red-flag-waving of the liberation theologians. They appeal to the sober sensible cleric without faith.

The neo-Modernism which all this represents, when it eventually came out of the tunnel, was, as I said, a harder, tougher proposition than the rather refined and soulful thing that disappeared into it in 1910. The new Modernism would no longer be ashamed of appearing quasi-atheist, quasi-materialist, or, in regard to sex, totally amoral. (This is the way the world had been going and religion must follow the world.) It was also prepared to identify the Faith much more openly with secular goals and the pursuit of the earthly paradise. At its heart, and holding the system together, were still those interlocking principles we looked at to begin with. 1) No public Revelation by God; neither the Bible nor the Church are trustworthy; 2) Science and modern thought the highest and only certain source of knowledge; religion must adapt to them; 3) "Revelation" (in so far as it exists) through inner experience; 4) The Church's doctrines to be understood symbolically as the evolving expression of man's religious needs, or (in the up-to-date version) of his own self-discovery. The transformation of the Catholic and Christian religion into quasi-Christian secular humanism or progress religion was all but complete.

Those who accepted these principles were in the fullest sense Modernists, regardless of their personal opinions on lesser questions — their preference for this or that philosophy, this or that school of psychology, or whether they were collectivist or individualist in inclination, interested or not in history or sociology. They had been wholly converted to the new religion; they had embraced it in its essence.

For others the conversion was still partial. They might incline to its viewpoint, but without full assent to its basic propositions. (Perhaps some of the Bible was true, perhaps occasionally the Church was right; though where and when, who could be sure?) They had been influenced by the intellectual currents we have been reviewing in a looser and more general way. Their thought was less consistent. But the ideas they had opened their minds to, would, when the time was ripe, sweep them closer and closer to the full Modernist position.

For nearly 40 years two strong Popes kept these forces and the men in their grip under control. But with the death of the second, Pius XII, they were to be allowed to break forth, blowing about the tree of the Church at gale force, tearing through the branches, tossing and wrenching at twigs, until every leaf, flower and fruit not firmly attached and full of living sap had been shaken off. Or so it would seem.

PLAN OF ASSAULT

When the Council was announced, the leading theological revolutionaries seem quickly to have got in touch and decided what immediate goals to aim for, their expectations at this stage being relatively modest. (They must have imagined they would have against them countless bishops and theologians of granite-like orthodoxy.)

With our present knowledge about the Council we can see fairly well what these goals were.

They can be briefly summarized.

First, "academic freedom" — recognition of their right to teach what they pleased; as such it is a necessary precondition for altering belief. If authority would not grant it officially, let authority be frightened into assenting to it tacitly. For this, attack the *Magisterium* at its heart, the Holy See, through its most vulnerable organ, the Curia; (vulnerable because unpopular — government departments always are). Divide the *Magisterium*. Win over the bishops by stressing collegiality; endeavor to get the college of bishops made equal in authority with the Pope, or better still put above him. Back any teaching about the laity that allows the Church to be restructured "democratically", and try to forestall a condemnation of Communism. Work through liturgical reform and the movement for Christian reunion to get Protestant ideas about the Eucharist and priesthood and Modernist Protestant theology accepted. (Play down reunion with the Eastern Christians whose beliefs are mostly indistinguishable from those of Catholics and therefore undesirable.) If possible, get a statement implying that the Bible is the only source of Revelation, and that the Bible as interpreted by Scripture scholars is the supreme authority in matters of belief. Press for the abandonment of Original Sin and the acceptance of Darwin's view of human origins. Prevent a condemnation of contraception, if approval of it is withheld. Demand married deacons: the door will then be open for married priests later. Do everything to have St. Thomas demoted and existentialism exalted. Lose no opportunity for advancing the view that Catholics should stop thinking about saving their souls and should concentrate on "transforming the world".

Of course, in 1962, no sensible priest would have thought of proposing such ideas except in a wrapping of ambiguities. But it was over these that during the Council the battles behind the scenes were fought, and the attempt on the one hand to get them accepted, and on the other to fight them off, explains, I think, the disconcertingly uneven tenor of so many passages in the Council documents. It is as though two people were trying to drive a car at the same time, alternately snatching the wheel from each other. (None of this detracts from their authority. It only makes some of their teaching less immediately clear, and, more importantly, much easier to misrepresent.)

However, I will not follow our revolutionaries into the Council hall. We will say good-bye to them as, transformed into *periti*, they wait at the airport with their bags, briefcases and expectations for the planes which will take them to Rome and the Council's first session. Their greatest victory will be the practical one. With the war cry "Liberty in danger", they will whip up public opinion outside the Church in their favor, and eventually extort from frightened and more or less reluctant ecclesiastical authority the *de facto* permission they now possess to attack and undermine Catholic belief from within the Church while still officially acting as the Church's representatives, thus

creating the impression that almost every article of Faith (God's existence not excluded) is under reconsideration and may one day be junked.

I turn instead to a question which has so far been postponed, but must now be faced.

WHY NO ORTHODOX RETALIATION?

Modernism could never have spread and succeeded as it has if the rest of the Church Learned had put up a stronger fight. Why hasn't it? (In truth, by far the greater number of its members have put up no fight at all but have dithered and compromised.)

There can I think be only two answers: (a) they are no longer able to see quickly and clearly what is heresy or tending that way, and what isn't; or (b) heresy does not seem particularly dreadful or serious. Probably both answers are applicable.

This being so, the reason will in the first place be a spiritual one, of the kind I considered at the outset of this booklet. In regard to most of the Church Learned we have, I believe, to make the same distinctions I made elsewhere in connection with bishops between the "bad" — those who, through sin, have lost the Faith; and the "sad" — those who have not utterly lost it but, also through sin, are, in regard to Faith, afflicted with a kind of twilight of the mind and apathy of the will. These latter, like their counterparts in the episcopate, from lack of spiritual vitality, are lying listlessly about like wounded commanders bleeding to death (intelligence officers rather than generals this time) while the leaderless troops are massacred. It is necessary to refer to sin in this connection, otherwise loss of faith is likely to be attributed to accident, or worse, to God. I will not dwell any more on this aspect of the subject.

There are, however, some purely natural factors, which I think it may be helpful to consider. The first is of a rather specialized kind, but nonetheless very important. It has to do with the nature of the Faith and the human mind, and the difference between the way the Catholic people look at the Faith and the way scholars and theologians do.

The Faith, as we well know, is both luminously clear and simple, so much so that a child can grasp it; yet it unveils to us mysteries and therefore, when examined in detail, is full of things difficult to understand. The human body and nature, as a whole, are in this respect similar: simple in their general conformation and purpose, which are quickly perceived, yet in the details of their inner workings, exceedingly complex. Now close study of the details of any subject has the same effect as peering through a microscope. The significance of the whole whose parts are being studied tends to fall into the background of the mind; larger color changes become difficult to detect: main outlines and major distinctions disappear. It is rather as though a man were studying Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* through a magnifying glass from a distance of two inches. Being absorbed in detail, he forgets about the picture itself, and after a year, we can suppose, becomes so shortsighted that on stepping back he can no longer see it properly or tell if anyone has been making alterations.

This kind of scholarly shortsightedness is, I think, an additional reason why Catholic intellectuals, even when they have kept the Faith, frequently appear incapable of telling where acceptable ideas shade off into unacceptable ones. Nearly everything written since the Council by the Learned shows signs of this scholarly defect. It also, I believe, explains why a proportion of the ordinary faithful and clergy have kept a better hold on the Faith than most of the Learned. They have not been peering at the picture of the Faith from a distance of a few inches, so they have kept their normal vision. Still being able to see the whole picture clearly, they quickly notice changes — though ignorant about the nature of the artist's brush strokes, the kind of pigments used, or the way to deal with cracks in the plaster.

According to Cardinal Newman, it was for some such reasons as these that, in the early centuries of the Church, the ordinary Catholic people often gave a clearer testimony to what the Church believed on certain points than theologians or even some of the Fathers (see *On Consulting The Faithful In Matters Of Doctrine*). They simply stated what they had been taught: their minds had not been perplexed by complicated questions and subtleties and so their testimony was uncolored by private opinions, their own or other people's. We are dealing here with a difficulty for Catholic scholars which might be called an occupational hazard.

NO LIVING FIRE

More ordinary weaknesses have also played their part in clouding the vision and weakening resistance; things like fear, friendship, and professionalism.

Many members of the Church Learned were, as could be expected, friends, even close ones. It is never easy to tell a friend he is doing what is seriously wrong, and, where love of God and the friend's true good do not have first place, a man will shrink from breaking off a friendship that matters to him even when he knows he ought to. For many Catholic intellectuals today, a courageous stand could mean losing all their former friends, as well as insults and an end to success and approval. For all which reasons, although it should not be so, heresy in a friend is likely to seem less wrong, less horrible, less truly what it is, or there will be a tendency to minimize its dreadfulness. Also because of the clouded state of mind of the "sad" and their uncertainties about the Faith, on many points where they should not be, they are half, or more than half in sympathy with the "bad" — suspecting that the "bad" may be right, that most or a very great deal of what the Church has always taught probably is "reformable doctrine", and that one day the Church will abandon, say, her teaching about original sin or the indissolubility of marriage, even though for the sake of Church discipline, or "saving face", we have to continue upholding these teachings for the time being.

Professionalism mainly contributes to tepidity and indifference.

Just as doctors don't get upset when they hear the words cancer or death, so it is with the learned religious professional in regard to heresy and falsehood. The Faith is no longer a living fire burning in his veins and belly; it has become "the subject he is qualified in" and which earns him his living. Doctrinal error is all part of the day's business — office work; you don't lose any sleep over it. Equally, like other professional men, you stick up for your colleagues, even bad ones; no letting down the side in front of the clientele. The ecclesiastical life rather than the Faith is now the substance of religion. As long as the cogs of ecclesiastical life remain in place and the wheels still go round, what the machine is churning out is an insignificant consideration.

Proof of this I would say is provided by the present state of the University of Notre Dame and the Catholic Theological Society of America. What staggers one most about the latter is not that a group of its priestly members could compose a work as unsurpassedly evil and wicked as *Human Sexuality*, or the majority give the book their backing (terrible though this is), but that the society is allowed to continue in existence with the name "Catholic" and that its still-believing members (whom one presumes exist) have not resigned in a body from what has plainly become a convocation of God's enemies.

However, there has, I believe, been a more powerful factor than any of those so far mentioned, whose existence chiefly accounts for the nonresistance of the theologically "sad".

PENCHANT FOR REFORMING THE CHURCH

Before the Council, many of the clergy, whether affected by Modernism or not, were persuaded, not necessarily without reason, that reforms of some kind were desirable. They, too, felt that the Church was in some way lagging behind and needed "bringing up-to-date". Existing undertakings — the initiatives of Pius XII, for instance, or new movements for the laity like *Opus Dei*, the Legion of Mary, or *Focolare* — were considered insufficient. They saw (often, one is inclined to think, exclusively) everything that was narrow and routine-bound in Catholic life and believed that if only they could sweep away what irked them, that life would blossom anew. Unfortunately, a very large number seem to have been afflicted with the naturalistic outlook which characterized the reform-minded European bishops I discussed elsewhere. By far too many, reform was regarded as chiefly a matter of making the Church "look modern", rather than of making sure that Catholics became more holy. Each, in addition, tended to see his own particular remedy, whatever it might be — greater lay participation, liturgical change, better relations with separated Christians — as the magic formula which alone could set things right.

This preoccupation with reform — I am talking here about legitimate reforms as well as unlawful kinds — created a new principle of unity, a new kind of brotherhood, and what for many amounted almost to a substitute religion; a "church" within the Church, joining together the "bad", the "sad", and even some of the "not-so-sad". In the climate of opinion which resulted, the essential thing was no longer believing what God has revealed, but "being on the side of reform", now seen more or less as an end in itself and of greater importance than the Church and the Faith it was meant to save. A man who was keen on reform would be looked on as an ally, even if he doubted the Real Presence; while anyone judged cool towards reform was slipped subconsciously into the category of opponent, even though he so held all the truths of the Faith. And making sure that nothing stopped reform took precedence over every other consideration — even the fact that in many instances the abuse of the reforms by the "bad" was causing vast numbers of the faithful to abandon their beliefs. The "sad" preferred not to notice.

To see how this worked in practice, let us imagine two French fathers: *Père Gretry* and *Père Bourgeois*. Both have dedicated their lives to the cause of greater lay participation. *Père Gretry's* ideas have remained, even if sometimes barely, within the bounds of orthodoxy; *Père Bourgeois'* have wandered far beyond them. But because the cause of lay participation would be compromised if *Père Bourgeois'* heresies became known, *Père Gretry* covers them up.

There are many *Pères Bourgeois* and many *Pères Gretry* today, and great is the covering up the *Pères Gretry* have done in order to protect the "cause of reform".

A CONTINUAL DRIFING INTO HERESY

These, I believe, are the principal reasons why most of what remains of the non-Modernist Catholic intelligentsia has for the last 15 to 20 years been so shamefully feeble; why, the moment Modernism resurfaced, they did not instantly come to the defense of the Faith and the Catholic people, but instead faced about and protected their old-time friends, justifying their equivocations and concealing their infidelities. Since the Faith tends to be lost where it is not defended, among scholars, as among bishops, there has been a continuous drift of the "sad" into the camp of the "bad".

Of course, for the higher clergy as a whole, Modernism did not "reappear" in the sense that it did for everyone else, like the ghost of someone dead. In their world, anyone who was anybody had known all along that Modernism was still in the house and in reasonable health even if having to live in a closet under the stairs and be let out for exercise in the middle of the night. What must have surprised the higher clergy, orthodox and unorthodox, was the welcome Modernism received from so many of the ordinary faithful once it was able to get out of the closet, come upstairs, and make its appearance in the state apartments.

TO WITHSTAND THE DELUGE

In the foregoing survey, I have tried to show the various causes, moral, psychological, spiritual, and intellectual of the great rebellion of "Catholic" scholars and theologians which is devastating belief and largely paralyzing reform.

In doing so, I hope I have made it easier to understand not only why the rebellion has come about, but what it is we have to oppose, and the nature of the difficulties that still face us.

The moral, psychological, and spiritual causes are fairly straightforward; we are confronted with those simple things: loss of the supernatural gift of Faith, human weakness, bad will, and sin. They have to be combatted chiefly by spiritual means. The intellectual causes present us with more of a problem. In the special circumstances of today, with general education and the mass media bringing the most abstruse notions and facts instantly to the attention of even the simplest Catholic hearts — they are not so easily dealt with.

If we stand back for a moment and survey the century and a half during which Modernist ideas have developed, for the human mind and soul this span of time seems to resemble the Earth at the time of the Deluge.

A great tidal wave of natural knowledge, much of it of uncertain import, and carrying along with it a thick flotsam and jetsam of ideological rubbish, has poured over mankind. In it all westernized men, Catholics along with them, are now spiritually floundering, and Modernism is just the death by drowning of supernaturally revealed knowledge in this unprecedented flood of purely natural information. It is this flood which we call modern thought. Only Catholics who keep their lifejackets well inflated with Faith, Hope, and Charity and a spirit of docility to the Church's voice seem likely to survive.

Will the flood subside? Or can the waters, good in themselves, be tamed, purified of their rubbish, and channelled into the basins and reservoirs where they belong so that they are no longer spiritually destructive?

As far as the Church is concerned, this can only be the work of Catholic scholars strong in Faith and goodness as well as adequately qualified.

Do such men exist? Are there any members of the Church Learned left who do not belong either to the category of the "bad" or the "sad"? Are there any "good"? Yes. But in the recent disturbances they have become isolated voices, scattered here and there and so unable to have much effect.

LET US PRAY...

However, American and English-speaking Catholics generally can now perhaps take heart.

In February 1978, *L'Osservatore Romano* carried an article about the formation, in St. Louis, of a Fellowship of Catholic Scholars dedicated to putting their abilities "at the service of the Catholic Faith" as "authoritatively taught by the Pope and the bishops in communion with him."

Let us pray earnestly for these men and all like them, wherever they may be; these more gifted "elder brothers" we so badly need. The Faith of coming generations may to a considerable degree depend on their success or failure.

Let us pray that, making a new and much more careful analysis of modern thought, they will always know how to separate wheat from chaff, gold from dross, untainted water from ideological waste. In doing so, may they not be surprised at finding the Word of God often in conflict with the opinions of men. May they ever remain indifferent to human respect and unimpressed by this world's grand reputations. May they be unfailingly submissive in everything that touches on the Faith to the voice of the *Magisterium*, and, just as important today, able to distinguish the authentic voice from any counterfeit — that of the true shepherd from that of the mitred hireling. But above all, may the vision of the world and human history provided by Revelation have such a hold on their minds, may they be so convinced of its absolute certainty, reality, and preeminence that no other "worldview" fractures or distorts it, and all reflections arising from their purely natural studies are kept firmly in subordination to it and within the radiant cone cast by this highest and most blessed source of light.

And let all of us faithful remember: "Nothing is impossible with God."

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Conclusion. The New Religion

In the first part of this booklet I have set out in their chronological order of appearance the ideas which have gone to the making of Modernism and neo-Modernism and have tried to show where those ideas were taken from.

As the synthesis made for St. Pius X was composed prior to the developments which transformed Modernism into neo-Modernism, in this second part I have brought the ingredients together in a synthesis of my own so that the reader, seeing the various ideas in combination, can more easily trace the outlines of the new religion which neo-Modernism in fact is. Although the principles of the new religion are not yet set out fully and systematically in textbooks still purporting to be Catholic — there is not so far a Modernist catechism, creed, or profession of faith — nevertheless neo-Modernism is already a self-consistent, logically related body of beliefs. The closest thing to a systematic presenting is, I think, the Catholic-Lutheran *Common Catechism* or "Book of Christian Faith", as it is subtitled. This new religion is what countless bishops and priests all over the world, and nearly all the most influential theologians, are pretending is the Catholic Faith as renewed by the Council.

For the present, the new religion lives a parasitic life; its members, as I said earlier, are scattered through the older parent bodies, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism; there is as yet no identifiable Modernist "church". But this situation will certainly not last. Much that goes on under the name of ecumenism, in opposition to genuine ecumenism, is the coming together not of Christians to discuss their disagreements, but of Modernists who already share the same beliefs, and who are not in fact Christians in any real sense. Such is the new "fourth denomination", whose beliefs are here presented.

In the new religion the first principle is not that God should be glorified and His will done but that man's convenience should be attended to. The relationship of creature to Creator has been reversed. Man, at least implicitly, comes first, God second. God, if He is still believed in, is the slave of His own children. He underwrites everything that man does. There is great emphasis on His love, care and concern for man; one cannot say on His mercy or justice, because God has no right to take offense at anything man does. He has a duty to look after man, usually without even receiving thanks. Only man has rights.

In those versions of the religion which are sliding closer and closer to atheism, God not only plays an ever diminishing role, He is less and less recognizable as God. From a living Being, He is reduced to a life force. In some versions, He is not a Being who already exists, but a being who is coming into existence.

Although in all these versions He scarcely counts at all, from time to time He is found fault with for not having arranged things better. God is to blame. Man is naturally nice, good, and always in the right. Of course he makes mistakes. But who can blame him, seeing the difficulties he has to contend with. If he does wrong, external circumstances are to blame. Not only is the relationship of Creator to creature reversed. Sin is turned topsy-turvy. Guilt, if there is any, is on God's side: righteousness on man's.

In the beginning this weak God set the universe going and then more or less abandoned it in an embryonic state to complete itself through the working of accident limited by the law of "statistical necessity" — in other words by natural selection. Eventually the universe produced, by natural selection, not Adam and Eve, but a generation of semi-humans whose descendants were step by step transformed into real men. Or were they yet real men? Are we? Evolution still goes on. You may think that the perfect Man, Christ, has already come. But you are mistaken. The perfect men will only arrive at the end of history when evolution is complete.

Evolution, which embraces everything that takes place in history, good and bad, is the expression of God's plan for the universe — if He can be regarded as having one. No distinction is made between His active and permissive will. He looks with equal coolness on evil and ugliness, goodness and beauty. Evil in any case is a necessary part of evolution. Statistics make it unavoidable. God is the prisoner of statistics.

Although the new clerics are, in the fields that interest them, strict moralists, with their own notions of good and evil, they are philosophically committed to the principle that "everything that is, is right" — including racial prejudice, unjust political structures, legalism, authoritarianism, the whole bag of tricks.

A SECULAR PARADISE

Having arrived on the scene, man found he had a task to perform. He had to transform the world: not to sanctify himself by the service of God and neighbor so as to be fit for a life of eternal happiness in Heaven, but to build a secular paradise. In doing this he was cooperating with evolution. Sin, when it exists, is failure to cooperate with evolution. Sin is evil not so much because it is an offense against God as because it damages man. It lets the side down — the human race. The evolutionary steeple-chase to the terrestrial paradise is slowed up.

There was no original rebellion of the human race against God in the person of its head. For those who do still recognize sin as an offense against God, original sin was the collective sinfulness of early men and women as they evolved from the semi-human state; it is also the "sinful situation" into which each new child is born.

In this system there is no need for a second head of the human race, a Redeemer who by obedience repairs the damage done by the first head and wins for us the restoration of the supernatural life of sanctifying grace. Jesus Christ is a man; full stop. He died, was buried, and did not rise again from the dead. He was either the perfect example of what man should be — a man in whom God dwelt in a unique way; a prophet like Buddha or Mohammed; a revolutionary; or a dim historical figure whose real personality can barely be made out through the coating of fiction plastered over it by the evangelists.

The Church came into existence through mass self-deception on the part of the Apostles and disciples. This happened at Pentecost. They suddenly had a psychological "experience"; they became convinced that Christ was alive. This does not mean that He was really alive. They were deluded. But their delusion transformed them. Christ has "risen in their hearts." The impression made by this experience was so powerful that they persuaded others to share their delusion. Easter and Pentecost were not forty days apart; the events, or imaginary events, associated with them all took place on the same day.

The apostles could, of course, have visited the tomb to see if their experiences corresponded with the facts. Was Our Lord's body still there or not? But apparently they did not think of doing this, even though the tomb was only a few hundred yards away. Nor did their hearers.

What happened at Pentecost was, however, the work of the Holy Spirit, even though it resulted in the apostles spreading through the world and perpetuating down the ages a collection of falsehoods.

This imaginary Christ, the product of the apostles' imaginations, is referred to as "the Christ of faith", while the man who died and was buried is called "the Jesus of history". Little is known about this man, although he probably did live. The "Christ of faith", the imaginary one, is the object of Christian belief and devotion. Christians worship a fictitious being. It follows that the Catholic doctrine of the Mass cannot possibly be true. A no-longer living Christ cannot possibly be present on the altar.

Although the Good News of the apostles was untrue, they spread their teaching in good faith and men were persuaded by it to lead better lives. The delusion was therefore beneficial, because it produced useful results. This degraded view of religion owes some of its popularity to the philosopher William James. It was held by the first Modernists, at the beginning of the century, who saw the Catholic Church as the moral educator of mankind, even though it was perpetuating a myth.

MERE DISGUISES

We here meet the second principle of the new religion. Religion is not based on objective facts about God known from His creation and by Revelation. It has its origins in man's religious needs. He makes it up to satisfy his spiritual cravings. As history proceeds, man is always changing and so

his religious needs change too. Since it is right that he should feel happy and at ease, he must discard from his religion whatever makes him feel spiritually uncomfortable and add to it what satisfies him. If he wants suddenly to indulge in a "baptism of the spirit", like the pentecostals, let him. If he wants to abandon prayer for protest movements, let him do that too. Man is the arbiter of religion.

Just as the apostles invented the myth of the Resurrection, the members of the early Church, referred to as a "faith community", invented the rest of Christian belief and practice to satisfy their religious needs. Except for a few moral precepts, these beliefs and practices did not come from Christ. The New Testament is largely the record of the evolving religious ideas of the faith community; very little of what it says is true or records historical fact. The Church leaders — the elders or presidents of the assembly — were not guardians of truths revealed by God. They merely interpreted and gave expression to beliefs and wishes of the Christian people. Only later, as the religious needs of the people developed, did they come to regard their leaders as bishops and priests.

This picture of the early Church is also true of the Church throughout its history. Like everything else, the Church is evolving. Having gone through various transformations in the past, we can expect others in the future. These ideas are the basis for Process Theology and Situation Ethics, which are merely disguises for adapting faith and morals to suit the times.

God, if He exists, has revealed very little, either through the Church or Holy Scripture, that is certain and definite. The Old Testament, like the New, is seen as a collection of fables designed to impart a few imprecise "religious" ideas. For many its message amounts to little more than the injunction: "Be nice to other people."

On the other hand, God is continually revealing new truths to us individually, through our inner feelings or the events of daily life. This is called "ongoing revelation". Here two things are confused: the public Revelation of religious truth given through the Church for all mankind, and the private inspirations which God gives to individuals so that each can see how to fulfill God's publicly expressed will in his particular circumstances, or the kind of illumination about the meaning of divine things which He may give in prayer. For Catholics, no inner inspiration, however apparently convincing, which conflicts with God's publicly expressed will, can possibly be from God. These inner inspirations or private ideas, usually called "insights", are given first place in the new religion as a source of religious knowledge and truth.

What happens when the members of the faith community have contradictory "insights"? They get together in a group discussion at which they share their experiences and interpret them for each other. The result, it is hoped, will be a consensus. The "insights" with majority support will become the beliefs of the community. This is how theology and dogma are made. But if agreement cannot be reached, no one needs worry. Existentialism is at hand with a convenient maxim. "You do your thing, and I will do mine." The new religion alternately exalts the individual or the community according to the end in view at a given moment. In matters of belief, individualism is encouraged: anyone may believe what he likes. But when convenient the community is idolized.

A SPURIOUS SENSE OF UNITY

At this point the apostles of the new religion are in a difficulty. How do you make a community out of people who have very little in common? Common beliefs are the strongest bond in any religious society and there are very few beliefs left. The internal principle of unity has gone. This is why the clergy, in order to keep the flock together, depend more and more on launching them into activities. But these in themselves cannot counteract the disintegrating effects of the new religion. A spurious sense of unity is therefore generated by various forms of psychological manipulation. In group dynamics and sensitivity sessions, physical contact helps to bring about what was once achieved by union of mind and heart. Perhaps this is also why, when priest and penitent meet in the new face to face confession or reconciliation room, they clasp hands and give a good friendly squeeze.

In the 1960s, after 2,000 years of existence, the faith community went through another of its many transformations; this time an unprecedented one. The word mutation is borrowed from the science of genetics to make it sound more impressive and probable. Modern man came of age. He grew up, and Catholic man along with him. This produced a new relationship between man and God. Hitherto man had been a child (though you may think a pampered one).

It is part of the mythology of popular psychology that human beings can only reach adulthood if at some stage in adolescence they rebel against their parents. For man to reach an adult relationship with God something similar has to happen. Man needs for a time to turn his back on God, disbelieve in Him and break His commandments. It is part of growing up. Later, when man has made some mistakes and has begun to miss God a bit, the two meet again and the quarrel is made up. Not that man has to apologize. He was only freeing himself from excessive parental control. From now on they meet as equals.

(The above is not a parody. It is seriously presented as an interpretation of the parable of the Prodigal Son in pamphlets of French origin sold with episcopal permission all over the world.)

Some Modernists hailed the Sacred Vatican Council as the expression of man's coming of age; his coming-of-age party, so to speak. A new era was beginning. An age of the Holy Ghost, perhaps?

In his childlike state, before coming of age, Catholic man had needed the Pope, the bishops and clergy to tell him what to believe and how to behave. Had he not, with his sure instinct for spiritual self-satisfaction and self-preservation, invented the ecclesiastical hierarchy just for that purpose; to act as Father and Mother? But now that he was grownup, he would decide these things for himself. In the new age, God would be talking to the individual directly by telephone, as it were, instead of sending him messages in a round about way through letters to his "parents". This rejection of ecclesiastical authority is referred to as the "liberation of the Church".

"THE LIBERATION OF MAN"

Mankind in general having grown up, God wants man to run the world on his own; man from now on is personally in control of the world and the evolutionary process. The faithful should therefore no longer pray to God for their religious needs. God does not want to be consulted; He expects men to provide for themselves. He is like the father who has retired and watches with satisfaction while the son handles the family business in the father's place.

Unfortunately, the son has found that the family business is far from being in good shape. Although the past is the history of human progress and everything has been getting better, the son is shocked to find in what a disorderly way evolution has been allowed to proceed. The past is such a mess he can hardly bear to look at it. However, once he is on top of things, no doubt they will move ahead faster and more efficiently. First and foremost, the world is full of unjust social, economic, and political structures, and these will have to be changed before the world can be transformed. This is called the "liberation of man", and it is the duty of Catholics to join in this work. Indeed it is the essence of their vocation.

The faithful might well be puzzled as to which of these many citadels of evil they are meant to assail. The world is full of institutions of every size and kind. Which are the new apostles referring to? The United States Congress? The Chase-Manhattan Bank? The Russian, French, or Italian Communist parties? No one tells the faithful. Nor are they told whether these institutions are unjust in principle and must be abolished, or whether they are only functioning badly and need reforming. Perhaps there is no need to instruct them. The radical left is always there to show them what to look at and what to look away from.

Unjust structures are not only the cause of all the sin in the world, they are at the same time the concrete embodiment of sin. But one of the characters of this sin is that the members of the new religion do not share in it. That is why the new structures which are going to replace the old ones will not embody injustice or sin; they are going to be built by men without sin. As I said earlier, men — those at any rate with the right point of view — are naturally nice and good. The new religion knows nothing about grace or what happens when it is absent.

MAN HAS NO SOUL

We have come back to man, who is, after all, the center of the new religion, which has three more things to tell us about him.

To begin with, man has no soul. This is the discovery of the Biblical critics. The Bible, they say, does not recognize the existence of the soul, which was the invention of Greek philosophy. (Apparently the critics have not studied Egyptology or any of the major world religions.) "Who", reportedly said Bishop Hélder Câmara at the 1974 Synod "has ever seen a disembodied spirit?" This is why references to the soul in vernacular versions of the liturgy or the Bible are omitted or mistranslated. Before going up to Holy Communion we no longer say, as Pope Paul's Latin does: "Only say the word and my soul shall be healed." We say: "I shall be healed." "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffers the loss of his life" — so runs the *Jerusalem Bible* — not "of his soul", which the Greek and Latin have.

A man might well argue that he was happy to gain the whole world at the price of his life, since everyone is going to die, but not if he was going to risk losing his soul in Hell. If the soul cannot exist apart from the body there is no life after death and therefore no judgment. Man is not going to have to sit for the great final examination; he will not even have continuous assessment.

Another attribute of man is that he is a genius. He is almost limitlessly creative; there is hardly anything he cannot do. And since men are equal, every man is a potential genius; only defective education and oppressive institutions prevent his talents from flowering. Unless he can develop all his powers to the extent of their capacity and give them full expression he remains stunted and incomplete. He must therefore be allowed to try everything and forbidden nothing.

This is where the new religion adopts from existentialism and psychiatric theory the principle that personality and human nature are not something fixed which a man or woman possesses from the moment of conception for all eternity. They fluctuate. He can have more or less of them. Certain conditions make him more or less of a human being, more or less of a person.

The first condition necessary for full humanity is the power to communicate, to talk and be able to make oneself understood. Embryos and infants are barely human, so are the senile and mad, who may at certain points not be human at all and may consequently be put to death. Partly because of this, man is not fully human on his own; he must be part of a group. The community makes the individual, not vice versa. A hermit in a cave is a semi-man: there is no place in the new religion for the contemplative solitary.

COMFORT AND PROSPERITY

To be completely human, a man must also have a standard of living fit for a "fully human existence". The amount of comfort and prosperity required seems to be that enjoyed by the well-provided-for European or American theologian — with perhaps a bit more. People who live in cottages with stone floors, who drink water out of wells, walk to work and cook their food in iron pots are not only poor, they are, even when happy and contented, suffering from diminishment of their human nature. Was the Holy Family affected in this way? The new religion, unlike the Gospels, has nothing encouraging to say about poverty.

Among a man's faculties are his sexual powers. These too must be given full rein if he is to be fully human. All must be allowed, everything tried. This is why the Vatican has had to issue its *Declaration on Sexual Ethics*. Fidelity in marriage and chastity before it, produce an enfeebled person, and virginity a nonperson. The Savior would fall within this last category.

Developing one's "human potentialities" is what one might call the spirituality of the new religion as opposed to its dogmatic and moral theology. It takes the place which in the true religion is filled by the search for spiritual perfection, and proceeds by exactly the opposite principles. The saints advanced to glory by bearing wrongs patiently, accepting gladly the frustration of their wishes, and rejoicing when they were looked down upon. The new religion abhors these ideas. Everything which humbles and limits man and helps to keep him small in his own esteem is to be deplored as an unqualified evil.

Perhaps this is why, when the new theologians meet to share "insights" and discuss strategy, although preoccupied with world poverty, they so often gather in expensive hotels.

TWISTED REMNANTS

What I have just described is now the religion of countless "Catholic" bishops, priests and laymen all over the world. It finds expression in hundreds of books, and nearly all catechetical and educational material is steeped in it. Not all, of course, who depart from Catholic orthodoxy embrace the new religion in its totality. Some stop short at various resting places along the way. But it is the pole of attraction to which most tend and many of the most influential have now reached.

If for a moment we ignore the twisted remnants of natural and supernatural truth scattered about in this collection of religious and philosophical debris — the truth for example that we are meant to care for each other and be cooperative (provided it is for an honorable purpose); and if we overlook the obvious tendency to identify the task of the Christian with the objectives of secular humanitarianism and Marxism, one sees that the new religion, like its secular counterparts, not only aspires to build an earthly paradise, but is involved in the worship of man and the deification of change.

It is also the gospel of riches, which, without facing it, the clergy are preaching, as they denounce the rich and run after the poor.

Blessed are the rich. They have a fully human existence.

Blessed are the healthy. They are complete human beings.

Blessed are the impure. They have not had their instincts frustrated.

Blessed are you when men think highly of you and flatter you because you are one of them; then the Church has a good image.

Blessed are you when you are liberated, not only from injustice and oppression, but from every kind of subordination; when you can have your own way in everything, as the rich do.

Hate your enemies; your employers, your parents, the bank manager, the oppressing classes, or whoever it may be.

Speak insultingly of those who find fault with you; the cardinals in Rome who examine your theological books.

Think ill of those who have authority over you and restrict your freedom — the few faithful bishops who still fulfill their duties.

Cursed are poverty, chastity, obedience, humility.

Woe to you poor, you sick, you mentally defective, you neurotics who will never be mature enough to contract a valid marriage. You will have no reward. You will die before the earthly paradise is built.

So, demonstrating and protesting, the new "church" proceeds on its way; this strange, tragic community of loving, caring, concerned, infuriated fully human persons, advancing expectantly into the future with bandaged eyes.

What will happen to it in that future, when it finally detaches itself from the Catholic Church and launches out on its own, as it ultimately will, though probably taking with it most of the Church's material possessions and a great part of its membership? Where will it end?

Will it have a long existence and lingering death as the emasculated state religion of the Common Market or a Euro-American empire of the Atlantic Alliance? Or, as the westward rolling tides from the east come onwards, will it, with all its expectations shattered, be submerged weeping in the depths of some Gulag archipelago? Is it there that it is destined, through Catholic fellow prisoners, to find again the lost pearl, the hidden treasure — like St. Hippolytus meeting Pope St. Pontian in a Sardinian silver mine and being absolved of his heresies before both went to their martyrdom?

"By the waters of Lake Baikal we sat down and wept..." *"O Roma felix... O alma mater... Domine misere nobis."* ["Oh, happy Rome... Oh, nurturing soul... Lord, have mercy on us."]

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