

The Western Dilemma: *Calvin or Rousseau?*

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I

NEARLY EVERY ONE who saw the film called *The Third Man* remembers a sardonic gibe by one of the leading characters: "And what has Switzerland given to the world? The cuckoo clock!" Many, even among those who like and respect the Swiss, believe this to be the lamentable truth. Switzerland, they tell themselves, may have excellent trains, clean well-managed hotels, an efficient postal system, and fine chocolate; but as for great ideas and higher intellectual and cultural contributions, it is too small and too materialistic to have achieved them. Such a view reflects the monumental ignorance that characterizes so many of our contemporaries. As a matter of fact, Switzerland, situated at the crossroads of Europe, has always been an intellectual and spiritual powerhouse—not so much perhaps in the fine arts but certainly in the domains of philosophy, technology, the natural sciences,

medicine, psychology, and above all, theology.

At the middle of this century the three most influential theologians of the Reformed Church were Swiss: Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Oscar Cullmann.¹ In the age of the Reformation itself two of the three leading Reformers worked and preached in Switzerland. Indeed, were it possible to excise from the map and from history just a single Swiss city, our Western civilization would not be what it is, for by eliminating Geneva we should eliminate two of the most powerful influences on the modern Western mind: Jean Calvin, French-born though he was, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Without the one the puritan capitalist "work ethics"—Max Weber's *Protestantische Wirtschaftsethik*—would probably never have taken root, and without the other the course taken by the French Revolution would have been unthinkable.

To understand the Western world's dilemma, its vacillations between the Calvin-

ist and the Roussellian way, one needs above all a thorough understanding of the true significance of the Protestant Reformation. It is too frequently regarded—as for example in de Rochemont's film about Luther²—as the beginning of liberalism and democracy with their various sequels, such as the United Nations and medicare; yet it was, to the contrary, a *conservative* revolution. The birth of the Reformation was not in 1517, the date on which Luther nailed up his ninety-five theses, but a half dozen years earlier in the winter of 1510-1511 which Luther spent in Rome. It was there in the Eternal City that the German Augustinian friar made his first contact with modernity. Before then he had encountered Humanism only in its literary form; in Rome he found himself face-to-face with the synthesis of Christianity and Antiquity, whereby the mediaeval concept of the world as a circle with God as its center had been replaced by the concept of an ellipse with two focal points—God *and* man. Luther had no patience with what Karl Barth has called *das katholische Und*, “the Catholic And.” Neither could he accept the Catholic-Humanist doctrine that everything true, everything beautiful, whatever its origin, had to be embraced and integrated into the treasurehouse of Christianity. To Luther the spirit and climate of the Renaissance were a treason to Christ. The new age, visibly perfected in Italy, was the revival of paganism; it represented a triumph of rationalism, estheticism, and secularism, all of which he detested and rejected.

Thus it is a mistake to think of Luther as “the first modern man”—a designation more appropriately applied to Nicholas of Cusa—or as “modern” in any sense; rather he was a Gothic man who came from a very new German university in a truly “colonial” area, for from the wall of Wittenberg one could then look over the thatched roofs

of the cottages of the indigenous Slavic inhabitants. When Luther learned to his horror that Ulrich Zwingli, one of the few Humanists among the Reformers, believed in the possible salvation of pagans and was looking forward to conversations with Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek sages in Heaven, he furiously denied Zwingli's right to call himself a Christian. The other leading Humanists of the epoch—Reuchlin, Erasmus, Adelsmann, Pirckheimer—all originally favorable to reformation, became fiercely anti-Lutheran as soon as they recognized the friar's real position. Thus it is clear that the Reformation began as a reaction *against* Humanism and the spirit of the Renaissance.³ In Germany the movement was distinctly illiberal and anti-intellectual.⁴ It supported royal absolutisms as against the later mediaeval conception of the monarch restrained by law, the principle of *rex sub lege*; but at the same time Lutheranism was an organic outgrowth of the mediaeval spirit.⁵ While Catholicism moved on from the Renaissance to the Baroque, and from the Baroque to the Rococo,⁶ the world of the Reformation continued to adhere to the Gothic style, to the old order and the common law. For a long time the Reformed Church remained the most conservative force in Europe.

II

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, of course, to think of Calvin without Luther, yet the two are in many ways different, though the differences have sometimes been wrongly evaluated. The patently fallacious notion of Luther as the inaugurator of a liberal-democratic outlook has been transferred to Calvin. He has been represented as the father of political liberties and of the right of resistance to tyrannical rule. In reality, Calvin's political attitudes were aristocratic or oligarchical. He considered arbitrary government

to be a chastisement divinely ordained, *un ire de Dieu*,⁷ to be endured with humility and patience. In this he agreed entirely with Luther. It was not until more than a century after his death, that is until after Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, that a Calvinist theory of the right to resistance, largely inspired by earlier Jesuit teachers, was developed by Pierre Jurieu. As for predestination, we should remember that Luther, too, was a predestinarian, as is shown in his essay *De servo arbitrio*, although Melancthon, another Humanist and an early ecumenist, made sure that Luther's position in this matter was not incorporated into the Augsburg Confession. Calvin's view of predestination did not wholly erase the older Christian tradition of free will, and though it was a strong factor in the shaping of the "Protestant" mind,⁸ it never became the same fatalistic force as Kismet in Islamic religion. Western man may accept the idea of belonging to an elect few, but his dynamic nature does not allow him to think of himself as a mere puppet manipulated by God. It is significant that Karl Barth, founder of a neo-Calvinist orthodoxy, has rejected Calvin's theory of predestination.⁹

Both Luther and Calvin were true wrestlers with Christ. The doctrines of both were strictly theocentric—more so, in a sense, than those of the Catholic Church. The outlook of both was essentially monastic¹⁰ and, in Calvin's case at least, decidedly ascetic.¹¹ Both were severe types, convinced that without strict discipline man is destined to founder because he is by nature a sinful wretch bent on mischief. They condemned those elements in the Catholic tradition and temperament which were anthropomorphic, sensual, artistic, personalistic, intellectual and rational. The Catholic Counter-Reformation for its part was frequently inclined to take positions directly opposite to those held by the Reformers.

III

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY we encounter in the Western world the twin phenomena of Rationalism and the Enlightenment, both derived from Catholic culture and civilization. Rationalism, as J. Bochenski has pointed out, is the grandchild of Scholasticism,¹² and the Enlightenment is a late product of the Renaissance spirit. Both emphasize the power and the glory of man. Both—to borrow the phrase of Romano Guardini—are expressions of *menschliche Selbstbehauptung*, human self-assertiveness. The catastrophic consequence of these two currents was the French Revolution. The genius of that revolution, as Hegel wisely observed,¹³ finally triumphed in the Reformed rather than the Catholic orbit. The reason for this paradox was that, thanks to the character it had acquired in the Renaissance,¹⁴ the Catholic world had been "vaccinated," so to speak, against the new ideological infection. The influence exerted by Rationalism and the Enlightenment had little or no permanent effect on the Catholic world, but with the churches of the Reformation it was another story.¹⁵ There the influence was profound and divisive; thereafter these churches developed in one or the other of two distinct directions—either along a line determined by the deposit of faith established by their founders, or taking a radical turn away from that line, following the road of secular liberalism on to relativism. Since then almost every "Protestant" church has had two branches: an orthodox Christian—though not necessarily fundamentalist—branch and a secularized and relativist one.¹⁶

Thanks to this intrusion of the secular—and to a degree the Renaissance-Catholic—spirit into the post-Reformation world, we find in the nineteenth century, though not until then, a growing belief that "Protes-

tant" nations are somehow enlightened, progressive, advanced, intellectual and individualistic, whereas Catholic nations are ignorant, backward, uninventive, sterile, mediaeval, and so forth. Such views are due to a profound confusion of facts in the semantic order. The notion that Catholics live under an ecclesiastical autocracy which denies them the pleasures of life is held only by those "Protestants" who no longer share the spiritual and cultural values of the Reformers but live instead in the shadow of liberal relativism. In the eyes of a true Reformation-Christian the Catholic ethos is one of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," or, to put it in somewhat kinder terms, one of pagan *joie de vivre*, the Renaissance spirit, and anarchical inclinations. If you doubt this, just compare the views expressed about the Catholic faith by a dominie of the *Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk* in Groningen and those expressed by a minister of the Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue, New York. You will find them diametrically opposed.

The person chiefly responsible for the change of outlook was that other Jean of Geneva, Jean Jacques Rousseau, who for a brief period of his youth had accepted the Catholic religion. His view of human nature was exactly opposite to Calvin's. Whereas Calvin, the adopted son of Geneva,¹⁷ had held that man is a creature so vile that his sins can be washed away only by the Blood of the Lamb, Rousseau, the native Genevois who lived most of his life abroad, believed that man is by nature wholly good. If man shows signs of wickedness, external circumstances alone are to blame: "Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains." Everything, therefore, depends upon a right order. Rousseau is the philosophical coordinator of a not-very-rational rationalism and of an Enlightenment which, as we can now perceive, heralded the coming of an age of darkness. His

contradictory message consists of an appeal to man's innate goodness, especially in his natural state as the noble savage, to a concept of liberty which has a purely collective character, and to a most unclearly defined political order which is entirely restrictive. No wonder that his books were burned at Geneva or that during the French Revolution his remains were transferred to the Pantheon. Rousseau is the one who anticipated the Grand Inquisitor's message to Christ in the *Brothers Karamazov*:

The time will come when mankind, through the mouth of its philosophers and scientists, will proclaim that there is no such thing as crime, perhaps not even sin, but only hungry people. On the banner they will carry against You will be written: "Feed them first and then you can ask virtue from them!" and with this they will destroy Your cathedral.

The numberless contradictions in Rousseau's thought merely reflect the contradictions in his personality¹⁸ and in the ideas he spawned and which are still effective today. Vague notions of freedom and of collective slavery, inherent in his concept of the *volonté général*, alternate with exaggerated notions of the efficacy of "education." We must not forget that, with all his totalitarian ideas, Rousseau is perhaps not so much a child of the Enlightenment as the central figure in the Romantic movement with its ambivalent veneration for sophistication and simplicity, its adulation of *philosophes*, shepherdesses and peasants, its craving for absolutes combined with a latent anarchism, its sentimentality coupled with a trend toward the utmost brutality.¹⁹ In fact, if we consider the antagonism between Classicism and Romanticism, as brilliantly formulated by Irving Babbitt,²⁰ we can say that if Calvin was a classicist—which, unlike Luther, he

certainly was—then Rousseau represents Romanticism *par excellence*.

IV

THE DILEMMA of Western Man, torn between Calvin and Rousseau, is less perceptible in Europe than in the United States. In the Old World so many other painful alternatives offer themselves—Adam Smith *versus* Karl Marx, Burke and de Maistre *versus* Sade and Robespierre, the First Rome *versus* the Second and Third—that the only real choice at issue, the occupied tomb of Lenin *versus* the empty tomb of Christ, is obscured. In the New World, however, where the tables of history are not rewritten over and over until they become almost illegible, the transition from Calvin to Rousseau stands out in stark relief. If we call the American statesmen of the late eighteenth century the Founding Fathers of the United States, then the Pilgrims and Puritans were the grandfathers and Calvin the great-grandfather. In saying this, one need not exclude the Virginians because Anglicanism has essentially Calvinistic foundations still recognizable in the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Pilgrim Fathers, like the Puritans generally, represented a kind of re-reformed Anglicanism. Though the fashionable eighteenth century Deism may have pervaded some intellectual circles, the prevailing spirit of Americans before and after the War of Independence was essentially Calvinistic in both its brighter and uglier aspects. They were a hard-working, frugal, plain-spoken, intensely nationalistic people,²¹ aware and proud of their moral standards which included the “Protestant work ethics.”²² As a nation of such virtues they aroused the admiration of the world²³ and in their own self-esteem they were convinced that their nation had a messianic mission to save the world through a *novus ordo seclorum*.

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century religion played a much larger role in America than in Europe, not so much perhaps among the intellectual and social leaders²⁴ as among the people generally. “Pluralism” was not then the cant word it has become today, but it was much more the fact, and the sectarian divisions served to strengthen rather than to weaken religious zeal. It is worth remembering that the Colonial wars against the French had something of the character of crusades against Popish idolatry and popular enthusiasm for the War of Independence was helped along by a belief—absurd as it was—that George III had secretly become a Catholic and by the Quebec Act of 1774, granting religious toleration to French Canadians, which the Colonists considered a direct threat to their liberties.²⁵

American Catholics were for a long time, as was shown in their puritanical ways, a tiny minority much influenced by the Protestant culture that surrounded them, their religious sobriety, their clericalism²⁶ and legalism and total acceptance of Thomistic theology.²⁷ They were at the same time culturally Calvinistic and intellectually mediaeval²⁸ and this was the occasion of many misunderstandings between them and their Continental European coreligionists. To many American and Irish-American Catholics the Italian immigrants seemed more pagan than Christian. Indeed, as Everett Dean Martin has pointed out, the American spirit was—and to a small extent still is—more mediaeval than modern. D. H. Lawrence came to much the same conclusion.²⁹ Martin thought the American was not a modern man because he had missed the liberalizing influences of the Renaissance; Lawrence maintained that the Renaissance influence was precisely what the Pilgrim Fathers had fled from. Before the First World War most colleges and uni-

versities, some banks and a good many millionaires' palaces were built in the Gothic style and some skyscrapers had Gothic pinnacles. Even the so-called Gothic letters were deemed to have a sacred character and were favored for religious inscriptions and the advertising of liturgical objects. But perhaps the contrast between the Gothic American and the Renaissance European may be best understood by comparing the faces and figures in Grant Wood's famous work of portraiture with the "baptized goddess" in Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*.

While European peoples within the Catholic orbit generally pursued the sweetness of life, the United States, thanks to its Calvinist psychology and virtues, became a world power. The Spanish-American War and its aftermath marked the radical turning point. Under the banner of John Calvin the American saga began to unfold. Forgotten were the days when the aid of two Catholic monarchs, Louis XVI of France and Charles III of Spain, had been eagerly welcomed by the nascent Republic. When in 1917 the United States came to the rescue of the Anglo-French Allies against the Catholic-Lutheran Central Powers, French Calvinist writers expressed their satisfaction and delight.³⁰ George D. Heron, Woodrow Wilson's left hand in foreign policy and perhaps his chief ideologist, persuaded him to propose Geneva as the seat of the League of Nations because it was the source and origin of both puritan theology and the French Revolutionary dynamism.³¹ It was a symbolic indication that the United States, although still Calvinist in spirit, was already on the steep and slippery road laid out by Rousseau in the *Discourses* and *The Social Contract*. The descent to a moral and political Avernus had begun.

V

OF COURSE the American propensity to

withdraw from Calvin toward Rousseau did not begin just yesterday. Some aspects of Jefferson's thought are distinctly Roussellian and we find still stronger evidences in Thomas Paine, a champion of the French Revolution. The cult of deism is violently opposed to the Calvinist ideas of God. Freemasonry, a considerable factor in the American Revolution, is decidedly deistic in temper, and its conception of human nature is much more "Catholic" than "Protestant," that is to say much closer to the Renaissance than to the mediaeval notion of the condition of man. Yet the American retreat from Calvin was never a complete one, nor is it so even today. His influence continues to run like a dark, subterranean stream through the American subconsciousness. The presence of *Maistre Jehan* of the Genevan theocracy can be felt throughout all great American literature and to a lesser degree through all other forms of American artistic expression. For all their superficial optimism, Americans cannot wholly rid themselves of the notion that man is a wretched creature totally crippled by Original Sin and that God's grace alone can save him. Beneath all the frenetic activity, the restless pursuit of pleasure, a certain somberness pervades American life and finds expression in a folk music which is profoundly Calvinistic, expressing in its own way what Jacques Chardonne, a Catholic, has called *les terribles vérités chrétiennes*.³² No doubt Calvinism gives an enormous impetus to those who believe themselves to be saved, to be among the predestined elect—a belief held collectively by the American people. But the Calvinist doctrine of election and reprobation can also crush the lesser souls, those troubled by an inferiority complex; hence the bitter and biting nature of poverty in all countries where the Reformed Faith and its ethics prevail, and where the pauper and the beggar are outcasts.

A delayed historical reaction, however, caused a large sector of American thought to be deflected in a direction opposite to Calvinism. The prevailing temper became one of buoyant optimism which made itself felt even in the national folklore. This was in harmony with the new political trend toward egalitarian democracy which the Founding Fathers in 1787 had sensed and rejected, a fact that is too often willfully ignored. The popular distinctions drawn between Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy³³ ought not to obscure the fact that Washington, Hamilton, Adams, Gouverneur Morris, and Fisher Ames were as hostile in their way to democracy—and to the French Revolution—as were later the diehards of the Holy Alliance, though for somewhat different reasons. But throughout most of the nineteenth and all of the twentieth century we can observe the gradual democratization of the American Constitution concurrent with the psychological democratization of American society in which birth,³⁴ wealth and learning had once³⁵ played an important part. The Rousseauian notion that man by nature is intelligent and good, that he is politically knowledgeable and responsible, began step by step, to permeate the American outlook. Americans began to consider themselves masters of an Island of the Blessed where these “self-evident truths” were recognized and understood. The picture of Europe as a continent whose shores were teeming with “wretched refuse” enslaved and oppressed by kings, aristocrats and priests became an addition to American folklore, though it was never accepted by such hardy spirits as Herman Melville, Irving Babbitt, and H. L. Mencken.³⁶

By the middle of the twentieth century the deification of the Common Man, heralded by his prophet Henry Wallace, was complete. The ancient moral disciplines were replaced by a new gospel of permis-

siveness. For Calvin's *Soli Dei Gloria* was substituted the worship of human agglomerates, entire races, entire nations, entire classes—or, by contrast, the worship of the alienated individual, the non-hero. If there is anything wrong with any of these, whether collectively or individually, the fault is not in themselves but in external circumstances—in economic oppression, faulty education, traumata due to minority status, exclusion from clubs, fraternities and sororities, inadequate sexual “outlets,” socially imposed *tabus*, authoritarian fathers, run-down neighborhoods, unsuitable toilet facilities, lack of recreational opportunities, ethnic discriminations, and so on *ad infinitum*.

For all its predestinarianism, Calvinism had fostered an ascetic manner of life. Though God may have decided from the beginning of time just who was to be saved and who was not, mankind was never absolved from the duty of at least striving for eternal happiness through prayer, hard labor, and the chastening of appetites, by severity to oneself and charity to others, by obedience, discipline and the reading and following of the Holy Scripture, by reception of the two sacraments and by general personal saintliness. In Calvin's eyes man, though inescapably born into sin, was nevertheless a responsible creature. In Rousseau's eyes, man is at once good and irresponsible—a creature of circumstance. Though nature may permit physical and intellectual inequalities, one man is essentially as good as another, a notion now deeply imbedded in American folklore. A wayward Christian theology has indorsed the notion by asserting that “we are all equal in the sight of God.” But the Scriptures speak nowhere of equality; we are given varying amounts of Grace. Christ did not love all his disciples equally, and if Judas had been admitted to be the equal of St. John, Christianity would have had

to close shop. There is no equality in Heaven, nor for that matter in Purgatory, but there may very well be equality in Hell, where it belongs.³⁷

It is sad to reflect that the gradual transfer of the Christian imagination from the Calvinistic to the Roussellian concept of human nature has been fostered by various denominations, especially in their liberal branches, and that it has been accompanied by a smuggling of secularism into their theologies. Instead of *leading* their flocks, the clergy began to *follow* the secular trends, heedless of Chesterton's warning that the Church is the only thing that saves us from the degrading slavery of becoming children of our times. In this respect the Catholic Church, too, in America and elsewhere has failed her followers. In her counter-reformatory zeal, she ran full speed away from Calvinism, only to have her apologists end too often in the arms of Jean Jacques.

The constant, lachrymose chatter about "the dignity of man" is depressing. Of course it exists, but it can easily be forfeited. Dignity is something that must be regained every day; it is not to be taken for granted,³⁸ nor is it to be automatically conceded to every little windbag or to every scoundrel great and small.

In some Catholic theological quarters of late there has been a respectful reevaluation of the personality and teachings of Martin Luther. A similar reassessment of John Calvin would be a more difficult matter both doctrinally and psychologically, for where Luther was choleric but warm-hearted, Calvin was hard, cold and balanced. Still, it has been Calvin rather than Luther who has had enduring significance and has changed the world; and as between Calvin—after all a Christian theologian of genius—and Rousseau the pagan *philosophe*, there should be no doubt about which merits the appreciation of Catholics.

VI

IT IS IN the social and political spheres that the shift of loyalties from the religious reformer to the philosophic romanticist has wrought the greatest mischief. In the conduct of both domestic and foreign affairs the actual or potential wickedness of human nature is willfully overlooked. Since nobody anywhere is deemed really guilty of anything, social conditions must be constantly criticized and corrected; thus one noble experiment follows upon the failure of another, a good example being the socialist experiments in Soviet Russia. That human beings can be lazy, deceitful, avaricious, envious, spiteful, and just plain stupid is apparently never allowed to enter the neo-Roussellian mind. Original Sin and its manifestations are, of course, at the core of the Calvinist theology. The dominant Catholic doctrine on the subject is less severe: "Man is deprived of his extraordinary gifts and wounded in his nature." We are left with an enfeebled will, a darkened understanding, and a strong inclination to evil. With the aid of grace sought and obtained, however, the inclination may be resisted, thus allowing the possibility of salvation by free choice as well as by divine election. But the contemporary tendency is toward a total rejection of the doctrine. In place of a mankind corrupt by nature we are given an image of man as naturally good, sometimes weak perhaps, but aspiring always to goodness, truth and beauty. Since the evident facts so often contradicted this pleasant theory, it was necessary to democratize it. Majorities are always good, always right, were it not for the existence of inimical minorities—aristocrats, capitalists, Jews, priests, generals, bankers, manufacturers, certain politicians or certain intellectuals, as occasion may require. The majority, representing the average, consists, as the popular

idiom would have it, of the good guys, the minority, representing the exceptional few, of the bad ones.³⁹ The doctrine of the *volonté générale* allows no room for minorities and all the ideological movements stemming out of the French Revolution—Jacobin democracy, socialism, communism, fascism, national socialism—are theoretically intolerant of them. The notion of an infallible majority ruling by a kind of divine right has become part of the American political and social folklore; hence the suspicion of conspiracies by the few. The Nuremberg trials, for example, were based on the charge of a conspiracy by the Nazis, though everyone knows, or should know, that the Nazis were the largest party in Germany, voted for by the good people in free elections, and so came to power by the democratic process. Similarly, the Italian Communists today are hoping to gain power by the democratic process, without a conspiracy, without a revolution.

The attitude of most Americans and many Europeans toward conditions in Latin America affords another example of distorted political perspectives. To the liberal mind it seems obvious that the social structure in Latin America must be all wrong since the virtuous masses there are frustrated in their effort to find work that will earn them better living standards, and are therefore turning to communism, just as the exploited Italian masses have done. The truth is that virtually all the leaders of the radical leftist movements in Latin America are the children of oligarchs or of the bourgeoisie; the masses so far have remained unmoved by them. Nor have the masses shown much enthusiasm for the bourgeois way of life or the bourgeois virtues of hard work and thrift. Our contemporaries tend to cling to the unhistoric notion that history is strictly rational, that action and reaction follow in a logical and mathematical fashion.⁴⁰ The superstition

underlying this belief is again Roussellian, though it also derives in part from a certain Catholic naïveté which has placed too much emphasis on the Aristotelian and Scholastic concept of man as a rational animal. The notion of a “communism of the stomach” fits easily into the concept. So does the interpretation of the Bolshevik revolution as a reaction to Czarist oppression, as a rebellion of landless peasants against feudal landlords. Yet except for Kalinin and Dybenko, none of the Bolshevik leaders of 1917-20 was a proletarian. The leaders were nobles like Lenin and his wife, like Chicherin, Dzerzhinski, Lunacharski and Alexandra Kollontay, or Jewish bourgeois like Trotsky, or ex-seminarians like Stalin and Mikoyan. Besides it was not the Bolsheviks that overthrew the Russian monarchy; that was largely the work of other liberal-democratic elements. In 1917, moreover, only 23 percent of the arable land in Russia—as compared to 55 percent in Great Britain—belonged to large landowners.

VII

THE BELIEF that man is good and becomes bad only in desperation is utter nonsense. The Portuguese proverb, *Castigo o bom, melhorará, castigo mau, peorará*—“Punish a good man and he becomes better, punish a bad man and he becomes worse”—is far more realistic; suffering separates the wheat from the chaff. One must face the fact that man is a sinner, that he is weak and inclined to be wicked. No scientific or philosophical preparation is needed to recognize this sad truth: all we need do is look into our own lives and into our own souls to realize that we have at least the potentiality for great evil. This is something that the neo-Roussellian, whether a democrat, a socialist, a communist or an anarchist, wishes to ignore. He prefers to believe in the inexhaustible capacity of

man for good. The *liberal* Roussellian expects him to achieve it through a boundless permissiveness, the *illiberal* Roussellian would have him find it in "systems" and utopias. But total dissolution and total regulation both mean death.

Political, social, and economic history, even the history of religions, shows us clearly that though saintliness and altruism do exist in the world, the prevalence of envy, malice, hatred, cruelty and avarice can never be safely ignored.⁴¹ Nor does history give any assurance that the good will eventually triumph. Good governments as well as bad have been destroyed in revolutions, good rulers and statesmen have been murdered, scoundrels and monsters have succeeded, evil causes have prevailed. By comparing Luther's concept of this world as *des Teufels Wirtshaus*, the Devil's Inn, and Rousseau's concept of the limitless perfectibility of man on earth, it becomes evident where both the lesser error and the greater arrogance lie.

We are living today in an age of Roussellian triumphalism. Bolshevism is only one evidence of its victory; another is the

hippie movement of the intellectual *Lumpenproletariat*. Rousseau is the grandfather of the concentration camps and also of those armed brothels that we continue to call universities. We have with us on one hand the Old Left, a finished product of *l'éducation sentimentale*, with its bent for social engineering and its tendency to identify its own plans and policies with the *volonté générale*; on the other the New Left which has taken up the slogan *Retournons à la nature!* exemplified in the rabble of unwashed, unkempt, debauched, unbridled ignoble savages who look to the Third World of the underdeveloped for inspiration. Its heroes are Chairman Mao with his Little Red Book, Ché Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, Holden Roberto, the Harlem criminals and the pistol-packing priests. The New Left will continue its game until its time is up, and that will be either when the Roussellian dissolution engulfs us all or—as we should rather hope—when out of the deeper recesses of the American subconscious memories of the other Genevois rises to a new life. That will be a new day for Maistre Jehan, a great day and a bitter one for the rest of us.

⁴¹The three most outstanding living Catholic Swiss theologians of world fame are Hans Urs von Balthasar, Otto Karrer and the controversial Hans Küng.

⁴²The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* remarking on the complete lack of modern scholarship which characterized this film, called it *Der amerikanische Luther*, the very caricature of the Reformer.

⁴³On the profoundly Christian character of the Renaissance and Luther's reactions cf. H. W. Rüssel, *Gestalt eines christlichen Humanismus* (Amsterdam: Pantheon, 1940), esp. pp. 142-147; G. Toffanin, *Storia del umanesimo* (Rome: Perella, 1940); Fred Bérence, *La Renaissance Italienne* (Paris: La Colombe, 1954), p. 16.

⁴⁴The resistance of the German universities (and university cities) to Lutheranism is well described by Herbert Schöffler, *Die Reformation* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, n.d.), pp. 20, 42, 50.

⁴⁵In Catholic American colleges the character of the Reformation was always taught "the other way round." All this went with an excessive and naïve praise of the Middle Ages (versus the wicked Renaissance). James J. Walsh's *The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries* was then the most popular book. (Heaven knows what it is today!)

⁴⁶The greatest praise for the Renaissance and the strongest criticism of the Middle Ages written by a Catholic are perhaps contained in Giovanni Papini's *L'imitazione del padre. Saggi sul Rinascimento* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1942), pp. 4-5, 8-9, 18-19, 27.

⁴⁷Cf. Calvin, *Institutions*, IV, xx, 25.

⁴⁸We put this term in brackets as it is a term of opprobrium invented in the sixteenth century by the Counter-Reformers who began to use it more generally a hundred years later. It has no official standing on the European continent. The

explanation that "Protestant" comes from *pro-tes-tare*, i.e. to stand witness is a nineteenth century legerdemain.

⁹Cf. H. U. v. Balthasar, *Karl Barth. Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie* (Cologne: Jakob Hegner, 1951), p. 186.

¹⁰Sebastian Franck (1499-1543) exclaimed that one merely thought to have escaped the monastery but now everybody had to be a monk. Cf. A. Rüstow, *Ortsbestimmung der Gegenwart* (Erlenbach: Rentsch, 1952), Vol. 2, p. 291. It is, however, significant that the revival of monasticism among the Reformation faiths came primarily from Calvinists—vide Taizé.

¹¹On Geneva under Calvin and his successors cf. F. W. Kampschulte, *Johann Calvin. Seine Kirche und sein Staat in Genf* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1869 and 1899), 2 vols. esp. Vol. 1, p. 444 sq.

¹²Cf. I. M. Bochenski, *Der sowjetrussische dialektische Materialismus* (Bern: Francke, 1956), p. 14.

¹³Cf. F. W. Hegel, "Philosophie der Geschichte" in *Werke* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1948), Vol. 9, pp. 541-542.

¹⁴We should say that without a real grasp of the Renaissance and the Baroque spirit an understanding of the Catholic world is well-nigh impossible. The only Catholic country which has escaped these influences, significantly enough, is Ireland.

¹⁵In German Lutheranism auricular confession (which Luther himself practiced to his dying day) fell victim to Enlightenment. It was revived and reinstated only in 1956.

¹⁶It is one of the common errors of the American Catholic who ignores the very healthy survival of the former (though in a certain isolation from the big world). to see in the latter the real representative of "Protestantism." No wonder, because he still believes that Luther stood for "private interpretation." Luther did nothing of the sort. Wee to the man who disagreed with him!

¹⁷On Calvin and Rousseau cf. also A. M. Cornelissen, *Calvin en Rousseau* (Nijmegen-Utrecht: Dekker, 1931) and Corrado Eggers-Lecour, "Calvino y Rousseau o la ambivalencia ginebrina" in *Razón y Fé*, Vol. 165 (May 1962), pp. 481-494.

¹⁸Rousseau who had written so beautifully on education put all his children into an orphanage. He could not be bothered with them.

¹⁹On Marx as an organic product of German Romanticism cf. Ernst Kux, *Karl Marx. Die revolutionäre Konfession* (Erlenbach: Rentsch, 1967).

²⁰Cf. Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919).

²¹Is there a connection between the theatrical figure of Chauvin (Chauvinism) and Calvin? The meaning of the Latin-French word is originally the same.

²²The attitudes of Jefferson and Franklin towards money were similar—counting, calculating, cautious.

²³Jefferson, too, was convinced that the United States (due to its agrarian character but also for other reasons) was more virtuous than Europe where nascent republicanism identified virtue as the essence of the republic while the monarchic system was "depraved." Honesty, fortitude, chastity, veracity became *vertus républicaines*.

²⁴Alexander Hamilton, however, seems to have been a truly religious man. This is evident from his farewell letter to his wife before his duel with Aaron Burr. Cf. *The Basic Ideas of A. Hamilton* edited by R. B. Morris (N.Y.: Pocket Library, 1957) p. 451.

²⁵Cf. Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 17 and John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Little Brown, 1943), pp. 190-191, 373-374.

²⁶Genuine clericalism exists only in "decapitated" societies where the priests can assume the function of the First and Second Estate. For this reason clericalism existed or exists in Ireland, Holland, French Canada, Slovenia, Slovakia, but never in Spain, Bavaria etc.

²⁷It is significant that there were in the United States during the nineteen-forties, nineteen-fifties three Catholic theological reviews called *Modern Schoolman*, *New Scholasticism* and *The Thomist*. To uphold a non-Thomist view in Catholic circles was considered extremely "rash" if not down-right heretical. Today the fashion aims at the other extreme.

²⁸There were several Catholic clubs in the United States calling themselves *The Medievalists*.

²⁹Cf. Everett Dean Martin, *Liberty* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1930), pp. 79 and 81; D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1953), p. 15.

³⁰Cf. Emile Doumergue, "Calvin et l'Entente de Wilson à Calvin" in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, Vol. 25 (Sept.-Dec. 1918).

³¹Cf. Herron's Letter to the President, dated March 20, 1919. In the *Herron Papers*, Box of Docum. VII a. (Hoover Institute, Stanford.) He wrote: "We are in the bounds of historic truth when we say that the Puritan Revolution, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, all had their springs in Geneva." Indeed, they had, but Calvin and Rousseau were two different men and Cotton Mather no more than George Washington would have accepted Danton as brother under the skin.

³²There is a tombstone at the *Stadtpfarrkirche* in Klagenfurt which carries the inscription *NASCI, PATI. MORI*. To see the switch from Calvinist seriousness (and Christian devotion) to modern hedonism (and illusionism) one must compare ancient New England graveyards with modern "Memorial Parks."

³³Jackson was undoubtedly a democrat, but the position of Jefferson is by no means clear. In all his collected works (Washington edition) he only

once spoke out (indirectly) in favor of democracy when in a letter to Dupont de Nemours he called the "temper" of the American people democratic. Yet in a letter to Mann Page (Aug. 30, 1795) he spoke about the "swinish multitudes." Cf. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Ed. P. L. Ford (New York: Putnam) 1896, Vol. 7, p. 24. His outlook was essentially elitarian and he proposed the establishment of harems so that superior men (like himself), could have a large progeny. Cf. L. J. Cappon, *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (Chapel Hill: U. of N. Carolina Press, 1959), Vol. 2, p. 387.

³⁴On America in the early nineteenth century cf. Francis J. Grund, *Aristocracy in America* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1959), *passim*.

³⁵Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), *passim*.

³⁶Today it ought to be evident to all and sundry that suppression by such enlightened and uncrowned "leaders" as the late Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin, Fidel Castro or Mao Tse-tung, Ernest Gerö or Antonín Novotny was worse than that of kings in times bygone.

³⁷Equality invoked by our theologians is usually *adverbial* equality. We have equally souls (but, of course, not equal souls), we are equally children of God (but not equal children of God), etc. If we have equally banking accounts, it does not mean by any means that we have equal bank accounts.

³⁸It could, however, be argued that in no political system is the dignity of man so challenged than

precisely in those stemming from the French Revolution, i.e. those inspired by Rousseau. "Democracy" belongs into the same group. Here man is a mere cypher, an arithmetical, not an algebraic unit. Long ago Aristotle remarked that men in democracies are counted by numbers and not according to worth.

³⁹Locke was convinced that "right is what the majority wills—what the majority wills is right." Cf. Willmoore Kendall, "John Locke and the Doctrine of Majority Rule," in *Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1941), p. 132. This notion is very Roussellian. It would certainly not have been shared by Voltaire who belonged to the Enlightenment, but not to Romanticism. His contempt for Rousseau was impressive. Cf. his exchange of letters with d'Alembert in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Société Littéraire, 1785), Vol. 68.

⁴⁰The worst upheavals in Latin America are taking place in that former Model-State, the Latin American Switzerland—Uruguay. This is a strictly dereligionized welfare state with a very balanced social structure. There are neither grave social nor racial problems. The leaders of the terroristic *Tupamaros*, however, are sons (and daughters) of well-to-do or even rich families. The *Tupamaros* are called after Tupac Amaru, an Indian-Peruvian eighteenth century rebel . . . but there are no Indians in Uruguay.

⁴¹Envy according to the late Earl Bertrand Russell is the driving motor of democracy. Cf. his *The Conquest of Happiness* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1930), pp. 83-84.