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THE CONTRIBUTION OF MARTIN LUTHER TO THE
CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

by

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1965

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INTRODUCTION

A. Individual liberty; the nature of the problem; the structure of the quest; and the relevance of the inquiry.

Any inquiry into individual liberty is at least implicitly an ontological inquiry. Stated most universally, to be at liberty is to be free from something and to be free for something else.

Stated in other words, any inquiry into liberty is, at the same time, an inquiry into the nature of the context, the network of relations, in which liberty occurs. It is also, as well, an inquiry into the nature of the entity who is "free."¹ Man is the entity whose liberty is our basic theme for analysis. Although our inquiry does not necessarily presuppose that world and man are created by God, such a view will be considered when relevant.

Within this framework of the inquiry indicated, we shall be concerned primarily to develop and clarify Luther's concept of individual liberty and the historical context of that concept. To provide preliminary orientation, let us briefly indicate what we shall attempt to show in the present essay.

¹When used without qualification, the term world will be used in this essay as a name for the context or network of relations.

B. Luther's contribution: the nature of his quest; the relevance of his quest to the philosophic inquiry; and the structure of his quest.

Martin Luther was above all else a man of religion. The great crises of his life which outwardly manifest dramatic incidents and some significant contributions were to Luther himself trivial in comparison with the inner struggles of his quest for God. Luther was, to be sure, interested in political liberty, in the questions of natural law, scholasticism, humanism, and ecclesiastical structure. At various times he lectured on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, translated Valla's work on the Donation of Constantine into German, and at one point considered himself to be a follower of Erasmus. But these questions were not his primary concern. To better delineate Luther's primary concern, let us first consider a typical case where that concern is misconstrued. Goethe is probably the most significant example for our purposes:

We have no idea how much we are indebted to Luther and to the Reformation in general. We have been set free from the bonds of intellectual obscurantism. We have been enabled by our advancing culture to return to the fountain-head and apprehend Christianity in its purity. We have the courage again to plant our feet solidly on God's earth and to be conscious of our divinely endowed human nature. No matter how much our culture advances, no matter how much the natural sciences expand and grow in depth, no matter how much the human spirit is extended, we shall never rise above the sublimity and ethical culture of Christianity as it is reflected in the Gospels. For as soon as the pure teaching and love of Christ is apprehended and appropriated as it is, man will become

aware of his greatness and freedom, and he will no longer lay particular weight on slight deviations in external forms.¹

By implication, four concepts are credited to Luther in this statement which were not his primary concern or with which he would not be in agreement:

1. "We have been set free from the bonds of intellectual obscurantism." This was not, as we shall see, primary in Luther's quest. Luther was not anti-rational as some have interpreted him to be. Instead, he set limits to the accomplishments of reason.² In the field of man's relationship to God, Luther considered reason unable to comprehend God. Indeed, when man depends on reason to approach God, it becomes his "enemy," in that, reason stands between man and God.

2. "We have been enabled by our advancing culture to return to the fountain-head and apprehend Christianity in its purity." While Luther was grateful for the scholarly work of the Renaissance and expressed his appreciation often, he would not agree that "culture" has led back to a renewed apprehension of pure Christianity.

3. ". . . we shall never rise above the ethical culture

¹Quoted in Here We Stand, Herman Sasse, (Rock Island, Ill.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1946), p. 26, 27, from Conversations with Eckerman.

²"Reason" in the sense of being opposed by "revelation." Cf. Luther's Doctrine of the two Heterogeneous Realms, p. 120.

of Christianity as it is reflected in the Gospels." Luther did not feel that ethical culture was the basic concern of his own quest, of Christianity, or of the Reformation.

4. ". . . as soon as the pure teaching and love of Christ is apprehended and appropriated as it is," Luther would note that "man will become aware of his greatness and freedom." Man does not apprehend the logos¹ by either reason or intuition; instead he is apprehended by the logos in the form of agape² of God.

For other reasons, each of the above concepts will be dealt with in detail in later chapters. Here they were selected to bring out the difference in the nature of Luther's quest from a typical misconstruing of his contribution as he would have seen it.

What, then, is Luther's relevancy to the philosophic quest for individual liberty?

Luther's quest was primarily a religious quest which asks how a man can appear worthy or acceptable before a righteous God. But the philosophical consequences of this religious experience go beyond Luther and his conception of the faithful. It leads to a whole restructurization of society and the world which is the source of modern individualism and human freedom in society. In the present essay we shall limit ourselves to showing only the beginning

¹Logos - the plan of God.

²Agape - the unearned love that God evidences to man.

of this transformation with Luther.

Luther carried out his quest within the framework of a metaphysical monism and a religious dualism. Stated very formally and briefly, this signifies that existence and essence are one in God. That existence and essence are one in relationship to God, is true of all creation and true in a particularly unique way for man, since man is created in "the image of God."¹ When God and man are united through the unearned, "uncaused," love or agape of God, existence and essence are one; man is at liberty to live in relation to God (reality), and has recovered possession of his essence in the world.

Since God has created all things, Luther affirms a metaphysical monism. God existed before matter and created matter ex nihilo. Matter and all created things were necessarily good, that is, in harmony with the Creator. But God has given the possibility of evil, in that, man may choose to be apart from Him, and creation may also be apart from Him. This opens the possibility of a religious dualism, good and evil as oneness or apartness from the Creator-God.

It might be argued, falsely, that much of modern individualism has its origin in the Stoic view that so far as it dwells in all men, divine reason is the ultimate foundation of all human

¹This is a biblical presupposition which is not argued in Scriptures.

dignity and justice. Man's rationality, attributed to the general divine reason, allows him to be free from the world and grants him dignity and individuality.

The significance of Luther's contribution was that all human dignity derives not from a principle of rationality but the personal will of a loving Creator-God which calls each individual person into being. Individual personality is therefore determined by the will of God just as is the general dignity of humanity. Every human being has his own personal dignity residing in his predestination¹ to personal being and is identical with the dignity of every other human being. The Creator-God calls each individual human being a "Thou"² and summons him into fellowship. Individuality is thus never inessential to man's nature, but is a basic part of man's being in the world. According to Luther, by denying relationship with the Creator-God, man can forfeit his dignity and true being. Man's dignity then is not a fist set down once and for all, but a state of being which must be achieved. Luther makes possible this attainment in the world. As Luther understood it, in the acceptance of the I-Thou relationship

¹The presupposition of Christians is that man is partly free and partly determined. Hence, the element of free will is not altogether missing in predestination.

²In the sense of Martin Buber that each individual is capable of a response which reflects a personal freedom which leads to respect for self and others.

between the Creator-God and man, a true and authentic individual comes into being.¹

In this connection, the world is opened up, in ways we shall show, as an actual and possible realm for uniquely free human action. How later thinking goes beyond the Lutheran experience of the world is beyond the scope of this essay; however, how it can go beyond is indicated. The thinking of Luther is a necessary condition for individual freedom as it emerges from the Middle Ages into the Modern period.

C. The Structure of the Present Essay

The present essay is chiefly historical. Since the period of the period of the Renaissance which immediately precedes Luther has a great number of revived schools of philosophy each with their particular variance; it is necessary to go back and discuss the schools in their particular earlier settings and note the limitations of the freedom of the individual in each era. In this way, the uniqueness and significant contribution of Luther can be noted. Each of the "neo" schools added their particular variations. Luther's contribution is considered as providing a radically new context within which the individual might actualize his freedom.

To establish the origins of, and the basis for, Luther's concept of individual liberty, we shall divide up our inquiry as follows:

¹Cf. chap. vi.

In Chapter I, we will deal with the problems of Greek philosophy in regard to the individual and his cosmos. In Chapter II, we will deal with the influence of the Greek philosophy on the early Christian view of the individual and his relation to God. In Chapters III and IV, we will deal with the concept of the Medieval view of man from Augustine through the late Medieval period, including the clash between realism and nominalism. The Renaissance view of man will be considered in Chapter V, and in Chapter VI we will show the particular contribution of Luther to the concept of man, noting especially those points where views were externally quite close but ontologically different as in the case of both Stoicism and Mysticism.

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY IN THE CLASSICAL GREEK WORLD AND ITS CONCEPT OF FATE, COSMOS AND MAN

Greek philosophy, like Greek tragedy and religion, shows the attempt to rise above fate. The highest ideal of the human life is found in the realm of thought, in rising above existence; it is found neither in the realm of action nor in transforming existence. The Greek struggle against fate is accomplished with reason and knowledge which may restrict the power of fate. The success of the Greeks to pit knowledge against fate and thereby achieve a freedom for the individual laid some excellent groundwork for the future. Nevertheless, it concluded its era with man still encased not only in slavery to an ultimate destiny, but almost in daily necessity.

A. Platonic Humanism and the individual considered in the areas of : God and Creation; matter and spirit; Man and his destiny; and Ethics.

1. God and Creation

Plato's Demiurge shapes the world, but does not create it.

God does not create out of nothing.¹ To the Zeus of Plato, it is a matter of indifference whether man recognizes him or not. Unperturbed, he moves on his way in heaven without turning around to see what is happening either behind him or beneath him.² For Plato the world had no beginning and could have no end. The subject of whether the destiny of man, being inevitably bound up with the fortunes of the universe, is in the survival of the soul is debated in Phaedo, but no decision is reached.

Xenocrates, successor as head of the Academy, says explicitly that Plato did not teach the creation of the world "in time" but instead was concerned alone with the study of its phenomena in due and proper order.³

The Platonic concept of God and creation can be illustrated when it stands in contrast with the early Christian tradition.

The truth that God is the One who determines all things and is determined by none, is the precise meaning of the idea of creation as we find it in the early Christian tradition and in Luther. Creation "out of nothing" does not imply, however--as Gnosticism of all ages continually interprets it--that there once was a "Nothing" out of which God created the world, a negative

¹Cf. Timaeus 53. B. 2.

²Plato Phaedrus.

³Virgilus Ferm (ed.), The History of Philosophical Systems (Paterson, N.J.: Littlefield Adams and Co., 1961), p. 102.

primal beginning, a Platonic ME ON, a formlessness, chaos or primal darkness.¹

The idea that there is a "Nothing" alongside of God is a part of all creation myths, and we can trace its influence on the Old Testament story of creation. But the New Testament ideas of Creation absolutely exclude the idea of any other force or substance save God in the Creation. The significance of this in the concept of man will be brought out more fully later on. For the Greek, the idea of creation ex nihilo was unthinkable and, in fact, impossible.

2. Matter and Spirit

When a considerable time had passed, the world ceased from its throes and confusion, and substituted calm for agitation and went on its accustomed course in an orderly way, having the care and control of itself and all that is in it. It remembered as far as it could the teaching of the Father who made it. At first it accomplished this pretty exactly, but in the end only vaguely, the reason for this being the material character of its makeup, innate in its nature from of old, when it had a large element of irregularity before assuming the order which it now has.²

Plato holds that there is a sharply defined dualism between two kinds of beings--the unseen and eternal to which the soul belongs, and the visible and transient to which the body belongs. Body and soul enter into a temporary combination. The

¹ Compare Plato's Timaeus 53 A-B with Luther's interpretation of Gen. 1:1, Luther's Works, American Edition, I,6; and John 1:1-3, A.E., XXII, 6ff.

² Plato Statesman 273 A-E.

body is the vehicle of the soul and actually hinders the free development of its powers.¹ The material world which was structured out of chaotic pre-existent matter by God is held together only by the Demiurge of Plato.² The dualism runs through all creation. Man will escape from the earthly only by keeping his gaze constantly fixed on the transcendental eternal world. This world is a stepping stone to the real world of ideas. The world is a work of reason and a copy of the world of ideas.

3. Man and his Destiny

What then is the role of Man? Since man has a mind he is not just like other parts of the universe but in cosmic piety submits to the ruling principle of the world:

And one of these portions of the universe is thine own, unhappy man, which however little, contributes to the whole; and you do not seem to be aware that this and every other creation is for the sake of the whole, and in order that the life of the whole may be blessed; and that you are created for the sake of the whole, and not the whole for the sake of you.³

4. Ethics

Ethics for Plato are subject to and determined by reason. Justice does not have a sense of equality of man. Rather, each

¹ Phaedo 66 A-E.

² Symposium 202D-203.

³ Laws 903 B-D.

man may fittingly serve in his niche of the ordered cosmos and Plato indicates that an upward transmigration of the soul is the reward of a rational life.¹ Plato, who discovered the Ideas as a philosophical principle of explanation did not find it necessary to deal with the problem of "gods" and "God." The Ideas were more divine than gods and reason sometimes corrected the gods. It remained for Aristotle's prime mover to be the first philosophical concept of a supreme god. The essential humanism in Plato shows up in his encouragement to man to ignore none of his natural faculties but rather to develop them. Temperance and rational harmony of the parts will make the ideal man when reason is in control.²

The next step in the concept of the individual comes through Aristotle.

B. Aristotelian Humanism; Ethics; Creation and God; and Man and His Destiny

1. Ethics

"We must begin with things known to us."³ Aristotle is too good a Greek not to believe that the highest kind of knowledge is conceptual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge must rest not on the

¹Cf. Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy (Cleveland: Meridan Books, 1950), p. 152.

²Cf. Republic 431.

³Nichomachean Ethics 1095.

juggling of universals but on closely observed factual unity.

"It is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject permits."¹

Man must first of all find himself in his own development, not in some abstract concept. "Clearly the virtue we must study is human virtue."² The rational soul has various faculties, but not as Plato thought, parts. Man's functions from nutritive and reproductive to rational thought are all a part of his organic nature, and as a virtuous (i.e., rational) organism he should try to synthesize all the complex functions of his nature.

2. Creation and God

"What significance did the forms of Plato have on sensibles if they neither cause movement nor any change in them?"³ asked Aristotle. There must be a principle of motion whereby sensibles are changed. Reality for Aristotle was in the phenomena of particularity. Generalizations could proceed from a given number of individual instances. From the need for motion to explain the aspect of change in nature, Aristotle reasoned back to a First Cause, an unmoved Mover. This was a tremendous jump in natural theology. The real danger, however, was soon obvious, that the gods would soon lose their divinity.

¹Ibid., 1094.

²Ibid., 1102.

³Metaphysics 980.

The world of Aristotle is there, as something that has always been and always will be. It is an eternally necessary and a necessarily eternal world. The problem for us is therefore not to know how it has come into being, but to understand what happens in it and consequently what it is. At the summit of the Aristotelian universe is not an Idea, but a self-subsisting and eternal Act of thinking. Let us call it Thought: a divine self-thinking Thought.

Below it are the concentric heavenly spheres, each of which is eternally moved by a distinct Intelligence, which itself has a distinct god. From the eternal motion of these spheres, the generation and corruption, that is, the birth and death, of all earthly things are eternally caused.¹

God does not stand apart from his creation, but is captive within the creation. Creation is a necessity, not a contingency. The soul of the human individual is no longer an immortal god like the Platonic soul, but is doomed to perish with the body. The god of Aristotle is not aware of man within the creation. A truly rational system is set up for man in true humanist style, but it would seem that the individual man has lost an immortal destiny.²

3. Man and his Destiny

Moral virtue involves the rational discipline of passion. Both Plato and Aristotle feel that when man approaches God's level of thinking on thinking he will have reached the highest capable state, even though Aristotle has the comment that such a

¹ Etienne Gilson, God and Philosophy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 33.

² Ibid., p. 34.

life "would be too high for man."¹ Aristotle has little respect for either the "communism" of the Republic or the oligarchy of the Laws, for both are impracticable and would lead to dissension.² In the case of both of these, knowledge seems to have ascendance over man as man. Such beings as slaves are of very little interest as human beings; they are to work as creatures to maintain the well-being of the state. One of the most obvious indications of the worth not only of slaves, but of laborers, even merchants, is disclosed by Plato in the Republic where this whole class of people is dealt with in a few pages, the bulk of the Republic being concerned with the class of guardians. Plato seems to assume that this lower substratum of society will achieve its own natural balance and justice. The concern for man as man seems to become a problem only in the Reformation and afterwards.³

C. The Ethics of Stoicism

Two things are usually kept together in considering a concept of man: first, his genealogical descent or ascent; and second, the value of Man in the sight of God, or an absolute, and the place he occupies in the divine plan of the world. Once freed by the philosophers from the care of earthly things as in

¹ Nichomachean Ethics 1117.

² Politics 1261ff.

³ Cf. H. Arendt, The Human Condition, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958).

Aristotle, the Greek gods seem to have renounced, once and for all, their former care and concern for man. To open the books of the great Stoics is to find in almost every chapter a mention of God, but it is a god of fire, an inexorable God-force, a material element out of which the world is made, that directs the universe. "Fluxes and changes perpetually renew the world, just as the unbroken march of time makes ever new the infinity of the ages."¹ In such a universe, an abstraction such as Plato's concept of justice was unthinkable and knowledge could rely upon nothing but the data of sensation. ("Every duty," says Marcus Aurelius [vi 26], "is the sum of separate duties.") The individual then finds his only recourse to withdraw from the world to which Aristotle had tried to adjust man. He must subordinate himself to the natural course of events, for the grumble at anything that happens is a rebellion against nature, in some part of which are bound up the natures of all other things. For the "nature of understanding is to assent to the true, dissent from the false, and remain aloof from the uncertain."²

The Greeks have tried to explain the world and man by means of several conceptual principles which they came to regard as things. The dignity of man at this point comes from the submission to a thing. It marks the last words of Greek wisdom:

¹ Marcus Aurelius vi.15.

² Epictetus Discourses i.28.

What men cannot possibly bring themselves to do is to worship a thing. When Greek philosophy came to an end, what was sorely needed for progress in natural theology was progress in metaphysics. Such progress was to be made as early as the fourth century A.D.; but curiously enough, metaphysics was to make it under the influence of religion.¹

The sage, who is the ideal man, cannot surrender himself to pity nor to any emotional involvement with other individuals. The impossible elevation of the sage has been a problem to human common sense and to benevolence of the Christian concern.

A great influence of Stoicism was its contribution to the development of individualism through the Roman law. The equality of man based on each man's significance in the cosmic order, was insisted on by Epictetus the slave and Marcus Aurelius the emperor. "Slave yourself, will you not bear with your own brother, who has Zeus for his progenitor, and is like a son from the same seeds and of the same descent from above?" asks Epictetus.² The Roman Stoics were overwhelmed by the grandeur of the concept of universal reason grasped rationally by men and working out a justice for all. Thus there would be a basic equality for all. The concept of the Greek city-states was extended to an equalitarian jurisprudence for all men. Zeno himself, according to Plutarch, had argued that "We should not live in cities and demes, each distinguished by separate rules of justice, but should regard all men as fellow-demesmen and

¹Gilson, op. cit., p. 37.

²Discourses 1.13.

fellow-citizens; and there should be one life and order as of a single flock feeding together in a common pasture."¹

There is a sturdy respect for the individual man in this concept which became the basis for Roman law, but as we will indicate later it had a completely different ontological basis than did the Judeo-Christian individuality.² In the later Stoics, there was a crossing and blanding with Christian elements. For that reason it is important to review the differing ontological assumptions. The ethics of later Stoicism seem so near to the Christian ethics that by later tradition Seneca is declared to be a Christian and Augustine holds up the life of the heathen emperor Marcus Aurelius as an example for Christians. Yet, Marcus Aurelius persecutes the Christians, and Christianity declares war to death on the Stoa. This is significant for it has the same basis in part as the much later conflict in the Renaissance and Reformation period--i.e., with the same conflict and ontological difference.

In summary, in Greek Philosophy the individual finds his existence in relation to the World-Soul. Out of the left-over materials, the demiurge formed souls equal in number to the stars. The souls have been incorporated into mortal bodies and shall be released from the turmoils of matter when tested and purified to then rise and be reunited with the World-Soul. What freedom there is, is to be achieved in being released from the world of matter.

¹Cicero De Re Publica 1.32.

²Infra, chap. ii, p. 21.

Individual dignity is a recognition of identity with the Cosmic Reason, Divine Order, or Ideal State.

As for the World in which man finds himself, we can accept the conclusions of Fustel De Coulanges:

The ancients, (therefore,) knew neither liberty in private life, liberty in education, nor religious liberty. The human person counted for very little against that holy and almost divine authority which was called country or state. The state had not only, as we have in our modern societies, a right to administer justice to the citizens; it could strike when one was not guilty, and simply for its own interest. Aristides assuredly had committed no crime, and was not even suspected; but the city had the right to drive him from its territory, for the simple reason that he had acquired by his virtues too much influence, and might become dangerous, if he desired to be. This was called ostracism; this institution was not peculiar to Athens; it was found at Argos, at Megara, at Syracuse, and we may believe that it existed in all the Greek cities.¹

¹Numa Denis Fustel De Coulanges, The Ancient City (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc.), pp.222-223.

CHAPTER II

THE CLASH OF GREEK AND CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW; AND THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY, AND INTERPENETRATION OF IDEAS

A. World View Concepts

The differing ontological basis for the concept of the world and the individual of the Greek and Christian heritage can be noted by first going back to the Hebrew concept of the world and then moving to the Christian concept. In fact, it is necessary to do this to clarify the difference in outlook for later Stoics had already been influenced by the Christian tradition and later Christians showed marked influence from the Greek tradition. Philo of Alexandria had already been working on a reconciliation of Hellenic and Hebrew thought by the beginning of the Christian era. The beginning of the Christian era marks the turning point from the Greek concept of the individual as a part of the structure of a created world to the individual being in relationship to the Creator of a world.

1. Old Testament Concept

In the Hebrew concept, God stands "above" the world, because He is the Lord, because it is only through His Word that it exists at all. This is not a spatial concept because God alone

creates Space. In Hebrew ontology, "before" and "above" are both predicates of His Being as Lord. This is in direct opposition to the view of the Greek philosophy and its later exponents, namely, that there is a correlation between God and the world, just as there is between left and right. That is, that the one cannot be conceived apart from the other. The Hebrew concept is of a God who is "there," apart from the world, who Himself posits the world. The world is not his alter ego, and when we think of the world we must consider it not as something which essentially belongs to God in the sense of naturally or eternally, but as something which only exists because it was created by God. If it were otherwise, God would not be Lord of the world at all, but would rather, in a sense, be its double.

God then, as He is in Himself is the reason that there is a world at all. According to Judeo-Christian thought, God's "as he is in Himself" is also at the same time His will to communicate Himself, His being for us before we come into being. It is because He is "for us" that we have been created and it is because He wills to communicate Himself that the world exists. Thus we speak not only of an eternal Being of God, but also of an eternal Will, which preceded all created being as the ground of its existence.¹

The biblical world viewpoint is that man of himself cannot

¹This is the theme which we will find later in Luther.

understand or even apprehend this "decree of creation." It is the divine self-revelation that makes it available to man.

2. New Testament View

The New Testament continues with the Hebrew thought when it says of God's plan that it contains: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."¹

It is no accident that in the Biblical accounts, Creation and Salvation are mentioned in one breath. The same record of revelation which speaks of the divine plan of Salvation speaks of the plan or decree of Creation; for how could God's purpose for the world not be His plan which precedes it?² The Lord of the world does not reveal his sovereignty without indicating that the world is grounded in His will, and that not only the fact of the existence of the world, but all that included in the fact of creation, manner, and purpose, is based on His Will which precedes and establishes it.³

When the words "Creator" and "Creation" and "creature" are used by Christian thinkers, they mean what the creeds⁴ say in spite of the fact that there are non-Christian or philosophical statements which sound very similar. When the Creeds speak of the Creator, it

¹I Cor. 2:9 R.S.V.; Cf. Isa. 64.4; 65.17..

²Cf. John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15,16; I Cor. 8:6.

³Eph. 1:11.

⁴Apostle, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

means the God of historical revelation, the Father of Jesus Christ, the Triune God, who is revealed in the divine decree of Creation.

We mentioned before that in almost all religions there are creation-myths of all kinds; there is a Creator-Spirit which stands behind and above the gods. The doctrine of "creation" in Plato's Timaeus (cf. 29D-30C) easily lent itself to Christian interpretation as do the writings of the great Stoics: Epictetus, Cicero, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius. The New Testament would suggest that these ideas exist because God does not only reveal Himself through His Word in History, but also through His work in Creation, thus He leaves no man without a witness.¹ But these ideas suggest a different knowledge of God the Creator from that which is seen in historical revelation because sinful man is not capable of grasping what God shows him in His work in Creation without turning it into something else.²

3. New Testament Epistemology

If God reveals Himself fully in the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, then we begin to study the subject of Creation from the first chapter of the Gospel of John, and some other passages in the New Testament, not with the first chapters of Genesis. This is the normal rule for Christian theologians as to all other areas of Biblical concepts though a number of them get led astray in considering the creation concept.

¹Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:19.

²Rom. 1:21.

Creation, then, in the New Testament, is not a theory of the way in which the world came into existence. The belief in Creation arises at the point where all Christian faith arises, namely, in the revelation¹ of God in Jesus Christ. The I-Thou experience of truth-as-encounter with Jesus Christ as Lord absolutely, "above" and "before" all implied "I, thy Lord, the Creator." The idea of Creation in the Judeo-Christian tradition means that the individual together with all of Nature to which the individual belongs is absolutely dependent on God, while He, on the other hand, is dependent neither upon the individual nor upon nature.

Furthermore, Creation is the work of Divine Omnipotence and the work also of His Holy Love. God creates the world in Absolute Freedom, but His Freedom is identical with His love.²

4. Greek and Judeo-Christian Confrontation

Greek philosophy has a Logos which makes the world a cosmos. But this idea of Logos-Cosmos is completely different from that of the Logos of Creation. In Greek thought, God and the world stand as correlative expressions of each other. In Greek thought the world has already reached its goal.³ The Judeo-Christian idea means that the purpose of the world is in God, that

¹The radical historical self-disclosure of God to man.

²A biblical presupposition.

³Cf. Plato's Republic, 380D-381C and Timaeus 92C.

He wills to bring man to relationship with Himself, and thus the world and history has a purpose and meaning.

Gilson puts it this way:

. . . what Plato had said was almost exactly what the Christians themselves were saying, 'saving only the difference of the article. For Moses said: 'He who is,' and Plato: 'That which is.' And it is quite true that "either of the expressions seems to apply to the existence of God." If God is 'He who is,' he also is 'that which is,' because to be somebody is also to be something. Yet the converse is not true, for to be somebody is much more than to be something.

We are here at the dividing line between Greek thought and Christian thought, that is to say, between Greek philosophy and Christian philosophy. Taken in itself, Christianity was not a philosophy. It was essentially the religious doctrine of the salvation of men through Christ. Christian philosophy arose at the juncture of Greek Philosophy and of the Jewish-Christian religious revelation, Greek philosophy providing the technique for a rational explanation of the world, and the Jewish-Christian revelation providing religious beliefs of incalculable philosophical import.¹

As long as the Jewish God was exclusively the property of the Jewish people they could use their own thought-forms. When through the impact of the Gospel the God of the Jews was no longer the private God of an elect race and became increasingly promulgated as the universal God of all men,² new thought forms had to be found. Any Christian convert who understood the Greek thought-forms was bound to sense that his philosophical principle had to be one with his religious first principle. At this point,

¹Gilson, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

²In the book of Jonah God had already been considered as being God of non-Israelites but no major attempt was made to win converts.

so far as the world itself is concerned, an entirely new philo-
sophical problem of existence appears. The Christian revelation was
establishing existence at the deepest layer of reality as well as the
supreme attribute of divinity. It could no longer be a question of
What is nature? but rather What is being? To explain the content of
κeryvma¹ from the second century A.D. on, men have had to use the Greek
philosophical technique to express ideas that were not in the thinking
of any Greek philosopher. The task was by no means easy.

The difference in character between the Apostles' Creed, which
is basically an affirmation of belief, and the Nicene Creed which
enters into the midst of the Arian controversy to discuss the nature
of Christ in such terms as ousia² and homousion,³ shows the radical
change that had taken place. The use of the same words and in some
cases the same thought-forms brought the open and later realized
possibility of supposing that because both Greek and Christian used
the same words, the same meaning was implied.

5. Ontological Difference

The different ontological orientation of the Stoics and the
Christians referred to⁴ can now be shown.

¹The proclamation of the self-revelation of God.

²ousia - same substance

³homousion - like substance

⁴Supra, chap. 1, pp. 18ff.

The Greek Stoic is oriented to an Idea, the rationality of the universe; the Roman Stoic to the World-State; the Christian to the Omnipotent, Loving Creator.

It should be noted that the popular philosophers of Stoicism, such widely read writers as Epictetus, Cicero, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, who actually propounded the idea of the essential equality and unity of men with fervor and clarity had a direct influence on the later development of Roman law. But the concept of "justice" and "equality" is quite different from the Christian concept.

The Christian concept of justice stems from the "image-of-God" which is man's basic dignity and worth. Because God has received man into personal intercourse with Himself, He can give man the commission to rule over creation with divine authority.¹ The ruling position of man does not depend on the technical control over nature of which he is capable nor his dependence on being a "part" of the general creation. God gives to man, with whom He has established this personal relationship, a share of His own dominion over the world. Because God has made man His own companion, it is a sin against God, a blood-guiltiness, a crimen laesae majestatis,² if the life of a man is harmed. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image."³

¹ Supra, p. 24.

² High treason.

³ Gen. 9:6.

As differing from the Stoic notion of equality, the Christian view is not based on an impersonal, spiritual principle -- i.e. on a nous or logos pervading all things, a world of reason in which all human beings substantially participate. It is based instead on the personal will of God. The Christian principle of dignity of the person is unconditionally personal; the personal God creates the personal and individual human being and predestines him to communion with Himself. Thus the origin of human dignity shared equally by all mankind is not to be sought in abstract reason, nor in a general order of being, but in the will of the living God, who addresses each man as "thou" and calls him to responsible being, to a living relationship, in the love (agape) with which He first loved man. The individual's right as a person is not founded on the fact of his humanity as derived from universal reason; every single person is called to a supreme destiny as a human being, that concrete and unique individual.¹

Individual personality is thus determined by the will of God just as much as the general dignity of humanity. Since it is the divine agape which calls him into personal relationship, that which makes man man is not different from individuality, but is one and the same thing. ~~Thus individuality for the Christian is never~~ inessential, but is just as integral a part of man's being as that which is common to all men. God does not love mankind in general but as individuals in His own nature, created by Himself.

¹Cf. Ps. 139:16; Isa. 43:1.

The secret of the Christian concept of justice is thus not an equality but the blend of equality and inequality; the blend having the same origin as the idea of equality. Thus a totally different evaluation of inequality results. God does not create concepts but individuals. There is a sense of inequality inherent in individuality as each man is a "Thou" before God. The inequality springs from the same root and has the same dignity as equality.

In the earliest Biblical story of creation,¹ the story begins with the creation of man and ends with the creation of woman. In the later story (Genesis 1:27), the most cardinal inequality of man and woman is mentioned in the same sentence as the creation in the image of God.²

In Stoicism the difference of sex is like all individuality --inessential or even insignificant. In the Christian concept, it is given ultimate dignity, i.e., the dignity of creation.

Where the dignity of man is attributed to general divine reason instead of God-created personality, as is the case with the Stoics, communion cannot be the goal of existence, but only union, the return of the spark of divine reason to the flaming sea of the ~~all-pervading reason of God. In the same way, the souls trans-~~
ported to the air remain there a while, are then transformed,

¹Gen. 2:4b.

²See infra, p. 30, line 9ff. for responsibility.

stream, purified, absorbed into the substance of the all.¹ Equality in the Stoic sense is an abstract unity of elements.

In the Biblical view, there is an ethos of communion, while in the Stoic view there is an ethos of universality. Man is created by love² and then exists for love. The individual is like God only in so far as he truly loves--"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."³ The ideal society then takes on the aspect of a giving and receiving community, with interchange between concrete, differing individuals. In the uniqueness of the individual is found his limitation and mutual dependence on others. Thus to each man is due not only equality but inequality. Each person is in fact to receive his due, not what is another's.⁴ The individual does not derive his dignity from his service to the whole.⁵ The corporate community does not stand above the individual, and make him a dependent, subordinate part of a higher whole, but it is rather a fellowship of persons-- i.e., a fellowship is only truly personal when it is a community of independent, responsible persons. Equality and equal right of all

¹ Marcus Aurelius, pp. IV, 21.

² Agape (unearned love), not caritas (charity), eros (sexual love), or phileo (friendship).

³ Mat. 5:45.

⁴ Cf. Rom. 12:4ff.

⁵ Cf. Rom. 4:5.

are basic in the Christian concept of justice, while the difference of what is due to each in the fellowship is secondary though not inessential.

B. Greek vs. New Testament Concept of History

The implications of the Idea versus the Person of Creation must be mentioned before leaving this area of interpenetration of Greek and New Testament concepts. We referred to it briefly before,¹ but in this context it should be extended.

The distinctive contribution of Christianity to the idea of history was a flat rejection of the cyclical theory of the Greeks. A Christian who believed in the historical appearance of the Logos, once and for all time,² who was confident of a linear rather than cyclic creation could never have behaved like Scipio Africanus who, when he committed Carthage to the flames, wept not out of pity for the fifty thousand survivors he was about to enslave but only from the reflection that the revolving wheel of time would at long last bring the same fate to Rome.³ The New Testament could never say of Christ what Aristotle said of Plato: that in another age there might be another Plato; nor think of himself as living prior to the incarnation of God in Christ, as Aristotle said that he was living prior to the fall of Troy quite as much as afterward, since

¹Supra, chap. 1, p. 17.

²Infra, pp. 33, 114.

³Polybius, History vi.

in the recurrent cycle Troy would fall again.¹ "Once and for all Christ died unto sin."²

C. The Metamorphosis of the Christian Kerygma

While the ontological basis for understanding being was thus far apart, nevertheless the content of the Christian kerygma was explained in Greek terms; and this will be later demonstrated, in some cases with Greek rather than New Testament epistemology.

The affirmations of the Christian kerygma were met with denial by some and skepticism by others. The task of Christian apologetics was forced upon the church from two directions, both from the desire to communicate the kerygma and the need to defend its own position against the Greek view. And in addition, there were those such as Augustine, who upon reading Plotinus, felt that there were two things to be learned from the Greeks.

As we have indicated already,³ one of the features of the Greek culture was its outstanding concern, willingness, and ability to generalize and form abstract ideas. Their elaboration of one class of ideas such as form and quantity led to the formation of the early sciences. Probably the earliest and most typical of these is Geometry. The forms were regarded as having

¹Roland Bainton, Early and Medieval Christianity (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), p. 8. Cf. also Aristotle's Physics Bk VIII, Chap. 8. 264b ff.

²Rom. 6:10; cf. also Heb. 9:12 and 10:12.

³Supra, pp. 13ff.

existence in themselves. The process of abstraction reached its limit when, making a new departure it begins the process of construction or synthesis. Complex ideas were formed by the addition of one simple idea to another, and having been so formed, could be precisely defined. The ideas could then be distinguished from each other, and the boundaries sharply and clearly defined. In this fashion, the ideas could be communicated as axioms and postulates which could be readily considered in dialogue without difficulty of discernment.

When the Greeks approached another class of abstract ideas (those of quality), there were similarities with the above. But when they passed from these qualities, approached by different minds, to generalizations and to such ideas as law, justice, courage, not all men would apply the same words to the same actions. Strong thinkers or leaders would find a following of those who agreed with them in their particular distinctions. The assertions of qualities must originally have had the character of "It seems to me," but they took on the nature of affirmation without the sense of personal conviction.

The beginnings of this same trend are seen in the Christian tradition by the third and fourth centuries A.D., and it flowered in the late Medieval period under the Scholastics. What had happened at the end of the Greek period was re-enacted in the Church of a later date, as we will note in chapter IV. In the process, the concept of individual liberty based on the agape of God became all but smothered.

1. Augustine and Plotinus

When Augustine, already a convert to Christianity, began to read the works of some of the Neo-Platonists, particularly the Enneads of Plotinus, he found an original synthesis of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics.¹ Plotinus had identified the Idea of the Good, as described in the Republic, with that other puzzling principle, the One, which makes its late appearance in Plato's Parmenides (135-136). From the One, a second principle is born, inferior to the first and yet eternally subsisting like the One. Its name is Intellect, which Plotinus calls Nous and considers it to be the source of Plato's ideas.² In the Christian God of Augustine, there is on the one side God, one in the Trinity of a single self-existing substance; on the other side, there is all that which because it has but a received existence is not God. In Plotinus the Nous, as differing from the eternal Word of the Gospel of John, is of a lower order than the One. The soul, next linked to the Nous is a corporeal bridging of the abyss between Form and the world of sense. All creation is a hierarchy of emanations, each giving origin to the next. That which lies outside of the radius of such emanation is unshaped matter, negative, meaningless, and bad because it is merely "not."³ From this point, Plotinus develops an ethics which abhors the sensate and

¹Cf. Windelband, I, History of Philosophy, p. 235ff.

²Cf. Gilson, op. cit., p. 44f.

³Enneads iii 6.7.

exalts the spirit. The closer the individual approaches pure spirituality, the more virtuous he is.¹

When Plotinus and the Gospel of John met in the mind of Augustine, he attempted to put the combination together, but he found difficulties in working it out. The God of Augustine is the true Christian God, apart from, but creating ex nihilo, the world. When, however, he tries to explain the world, he does so in Greek terms of concept and Roman Stoic terms of State. Matter is degraded and the spirit is elevated.² Having picked up the Platonic world, Augustine finds himself having picked up Platonic man, and though he works to keep the Hebrew concept of body-soul as one and does conclude with this thought, there are difficulties. The witness of Augustine himself in the seventh book of Confessions shows the bond between Neo-Platonism and himself.³ Other Greek concepts were adopted also.

The Roman Stoic concept of the State became a model for the hierarchical construction and administration of the Church. The loss of individuality by immersion into the Church, as not only the invisible but visible Body of Christ was significant. The individual was subjected now to the conceptual Ideas or Ideal-State, but to the Absolute visible Church.

This was a different relationship from the Jewish concept

¹Enneads iv 8.2.

²Infra, p. 45.

³Infra, chap. iii.

of the relationship of the individual to the absolute.

2. Development of Creeds and Canon

The words which designate belief or faith from the Old Testament are words which carry the sense of trust in a person. They express confidence in personal goodness, veracity and uprightness. They are as moral as they are intellectual. Their use in application to God was not different from their use in application to men. Abraham trusted God. The Israelites trusted God when they saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. The analysis of belief led to the construction of other propositions about God. God is wise, good, just. Then belief in God came to mean agreement with certain propositions about God.

Philo, blending the Old Testament concept with the Greek words of intellectual conviction rather than moral trust, says that to believe in God is to trust also His prophets--that is, to confide in what is recorded in the Holy Scriptures.¹

From the conviction that God being of a certain nature has certain attributes, we find a basis for the Creeds.² From the conviction that God being true, the statements which He makes through His prophets as true, we get the Canon of the New Testament. ("For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.")

¹Cf. Philo's de Abraham ii.39.

²Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

Hebrews 11:6; and "He who is of God hears the Words of God,"
John 8:47.)

3. Summary of Chapters I and II

The Creeds and the Canon became authoritative when there was apostolic consensus through a tribunal. This means that the concept of "belief" has now left philosophy as it formerly left theology and entered into the field of politics. The change of the Christian Kerygma and the resulting loss of the unique Judeo-Christian individuality can be shown quite simply. The individual dignity of man began by being: (1) a simple trust in God; then (2) a simple expansion of that trust into an assent to the proposition that God is good; (3) a simple acceptance of the proposition that Jesus Christ was His Son; (4) the definition of terms, and each definition of terms involved a new theory; and finally, (5) the theories were gathered together into systems, and the martyrs and witnesses of Christ died for their faith, not outside but inside the Christian sphere; and instead of a world of religious belief, which might resemble the world of actual fact in the sublime equality before God while unequal in creation,¹ there prevailed the fatal assumption that the symmetry of a system is the test of its truth and a proof of it. Individual human liberty was losing a battle to what would soon become a structured hierarchical system. It was a short step from required conformity

¹Supra, pp. 29ff.

of conduct which found fruition in the monastic system.

Agreement in opinion, which had been the basis of union in the Greek philosophical schools, now came to form a new element in the bond of union within and between the churches.

It was in this setting that Augustine attempted to systematize and yet still retain the concept of individual human liberty. That he had difficulties is not surprising. More amazing is the tremendous scope of his interests and the appearance of synthesis that was achieved.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS ARRIVED

AT IN AUGUSTINE AND AQUINAS

To approach the Medieval view of man, the next step in our historical concept of human freedom, it is necessary to make peace with Augustine's thought. It would be absurdly over simplifying things to say that Augustine's view of man is itself the Medieval view. Yet there is some truth in the statement, for all Medieval concepts of the individual use Augustine for a point of reference, if not for agreement. And the concepts around which the Medieval Church constructed its dogma and its institutions were those which Augustine defended. He is one of those three or four figures of the last twenty centuries who seems to be a hinge between epochs. In Augustine's case, one book out of his great literary production is significant in displaying his concepts, specifically, The City of God. It was written as a rebuttal to those who blamed the Christians for the ~~fall of Rome (410 A.D.)~~ because of the abolition of pagan worship. Its chief theme is the relation of the Church to the world.

Augustine's thinking was influenced by the traditions of Latin oratory and his theology by Neo-Platonism. More than a

link between paganism and Christianity, he dominated the concepts of God and man for the next six centuries, for his position was not really challenged until the time of Aquinas.

Augustine's view of the individual is conditioned by his view of God. He says:

The true God, from whom is all being, beauty, form and number, weight and measure; He from Whom all nature, mean and excellent, all seeds of forms, all forms of seeds, all motions both of forms and seeds, derive and have being . . . it is in no way credible that He would leave the kingdoms of men and their bondages and freedoms loose and uncompromised in the Laws of His eternal providence.¹

Within a century after his death the Athanasian Creed was adopted as the statement of the Church. Its statement is based on the omnipotence of God and the depravity of man. From it, we obtain a view of the Medieval mind:

1. Whoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith;
2. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity;
29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
32. Perfect God: and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
34. Who although he be God and Man; yet he is not two but one Christ;

37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ;
38. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell: rose again the third day from the dead.

¹De Civitate Dei, in the translation by J. Healy, V, 1.

- 41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
- 42. And shall give account for their own works.
- 43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.
- 44. This is the Catholic Faith: Which except a man believe faithfully, he can not be saved.¹

Explicit in the creed is that which is implicit in Augustine's philosophy:

(1) A highly systematized and structured concept of the world with rational overtones, and (2) the mysteries of a God who cannot be approached rationally in the Trinity, Incarnation, and Resurrection.

A. God and Creation

The two fundamental views from Augustine which were the basis for Medieval thought were: the Omnipotence of God and the weakness of man.

Upon the first he built a theocentric universe in which everything was dependent upon God's Will for its existence. In contrast with the Greek view which regarded history as a series of cycles, endlessly repeating itself, Augustine, in accordance with the Biblical view, maintained that it had a beginning and a culmination. As Augustine saw it, from its very beginning all history has been directed and governed by God and moves to a climax in a society in which God's Will is to be perfectly

¹Phillip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, as quoted in George Forell, The Protestant Faith (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1960), pp. 254-255.

accomplished. Augustine held that in the beginning angels and men were created rational and free; furthermore, there was no evil anywhere--quite in keeping with his Neo-Platonic background.

When Plato speaks of creation, he conceives of a primitive matter to which the Demiurge gives form. God is craftsman rather than Creator. The primitive matter is "eternal" and uncreated, the Demiurges being responsible for the world only as efficient cause. In contrast to this, Augustine holds that the world was created ex-nihilo. God creates not only the order and arrangement, but also the primitive matter. God must therefore be responsible for all that is, and if God is "good" and "one," the basis for a monistic view is established.

B. Dualism

The Greeks had argued the problem of evil in terms of permanence and change. Matter, which is unstable, is evil, and reason, which enjoys permanence, is good. In contrast, the City of God is the illustration par excellence of God's good and abiding will. It is a picture of God working out His will in a linear history. Evil is permitted by God for the sake of a larger good. ~~Plotinus would say, evil is of no consequence~~

because it has no metaphysical existence: "For in matter we have destitution--of sense, of virtue, of beauty, of pattern, of Ideal principle, of quality. This is surely ugliness, utter

disgracefulness, unredeemed evil."¹

According to Augustine, Adam creates evil when he fails to make a better choice in Eden, and this evil then becomes a thing of permanence. Evil therefore is not of God's creation, for that would be unthinkable. Rather it is of man's perverted will. Evil thus becomes the object of God's grace. Where God is, evil is not. Where God is not, evil is. God cannot be held responsible for evil's origin.² That which really exists must exist in relation to the center of existence, namely God. God and "being," true "being" can be almost interchanged. There is then no actual, but only a seeming, dualism.

All which is corrupted is deprived of good. But if they be deprived of all good, they will cease to be. For if they be, and cannot be at all corrupted, they will become better, because they shall remain incorruptible. And what more monstrous than to assert that those things which have lost all their goodness are made better? Therefore, if they shall be deprived of all good they shall no longer be. So long, therefore, as they are, they are good; therefore whatsoever is, is good. That evil, then, which I sought whence it was, is not any substance; for were it a substance, it would be good. For either it would be an incorruptible substance, which unless it were good it could not be corrupted. I perceived, therefore, and it was made clear to me, that Thou didst make all things good, nor is there any substance at all that was not made by Thee; and because all that Thou hast made are not equal, therefore all things are; because individually they are good, and altogether very good, because our God made all things very good.³

¹Enneads ii 4.16.

²Augustine does not deal with this as a causal situation.

³Confessions vii 11.18.

C. Man and His Destiny

The falling away of man from his God-given status of possessing initially a perfectly free-will and holy inclination results in his becoming a lower-level being, unable by any means to raise himself to his former status. He now has an inheritance of corruption and shares this with nature as well.

It is certainly significant that in the City of God there is a basic concern not only for God's dealings with man, but for what happens to man. This in itself was a major contribution to the history of Western Thought. Man, since Adam's fall, has no freedom to do good; he only has the permissive freedom to do evil. He has permissive freedom in relation to the good, but he cannot accomplish any good. Man, since Adam's fall, still rightly belongs to God, and finds no rest until he finds rest in God. But because of his sinful condition, he is unable to achieve union with God by himself. He is unable to accomplish the true fulfillment of his nature. He is slave to a depraved will--a defiant will. In this sense, he has lost his right to please God, for he has lost his God-given freedom since he misused it.

Each soul is a unique spiritual entity and a thinking being. But man cannot by his rationality approach God.¹ Man (similar to the Neo-Platonic principle of illumination) finds God through mystic means. All men are perverted of will and deserve

¹Cf., p. 46.

to be left to their own misery. God will call some (the elect) to full realization of themselves and they will be "saved"-- i.e., spared this damnation. God has predetermined the number who will be saved, and eventually they will not be able to sin. The culminating blessing is one exceeding that of Adam--i.e., to not be able to forsake the good or to die. This, according to Augustine, was the highest freedom of all.

A number of these views were sharpened in controversy with the Pelagians, who felt that each man at birth has the ability to choose the good.

D. Ethics

Augustine's idea of the City of God was in effect a Medieval papacy without the name of Rome, although it was Roman. While it is not completely clear that Augustine equated the visible Church with the reign and rule of God, it was similar enough for the Medieval authorities to assume this. The Church is not the transcendent Heavenly City in any full sense, but it represents that city before men. Augustine wanted secular power used against the Donatist heretics, not because the state had the right to ecclesiastical concerns, but because the Church had the right to use earthly power to its ends. Augustine was Roman in this sense, for he was both official of the Empire and priest of the Church. It is apparent that in such a view the idea or function of an autonomous state is severely limited.

Ethics and the development of self were related to the

Church because the Church alone had the sacraments which were the mediating instruments of God's will. Through the Church also came the institutionalized expression of man's reaction to his worthlessness.

While the body was not irrevocably evil to Augustine, yet it was the means through which he had fallen. He had fallen from his pristine state from misuse of will expressed through bodily appetite. The carnal nature of man was distrusted by Augustine and typically with the mystery religions and Neo-Platonism in flight from the world, man's body and bodily needs were viewed with abhorrence. The institutionalized asceticism or monasticism thus became one of the better means of self-development.

The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in effect denied three of man's main obligations -- (1) to his physical welfare, (2) to his family, and (3) to his political group. As a repudiation of all secular and social responsibilities, monasticism was to be the Church's answer to the humanism of Greece.

Augustine's radical departure from the humanistic tradition is apparent in his substitution of will for reason. For God and man, will, not knowledge, became the key to the dominant forces of the universe, and sovereignty of the will supplants intelligence.

He rejects the apathy of the Stoics and says: "In our ethics we do not so much inquire whether a pious soul is angry as

why he is angry."¹ He recognizes the fact that Christ was properly angry when He drove the traders out of the temple, and concludes that if the will is proper, the passions "will be not merely blameless, but even praiseworthy."² Adam's sin was not one of judgment but of error of the will. His evil was "not a substance, but a perversion of the will, bent aside from Thee, O God, the Supreme Substance, towards these lower things, and casting out its bowels, and swelling outwardly."³ Here Augustine has broken sharply from Greece where virtue is a form of knowledge and the universe is essentially rational. The superrational evidence of God's inscrutable will and man's chief claim to fulfillment is to bow to this sovereign will, according to Augustine, a benevolent will, even in damning determinism.⁴

In spite of all the latent individualism which might be expected from his epistemological approach because of his insistence on an intuitive and superrational apprehension of God, the Church and the State became coercive institutions which limited individualism. Salvation became a matter of doctrine instead of personal intuition. The individual was, in effect, asked to submit his faith to the Church and institutionalized

¹The City of God ix. 5.

²Ibid., xiv. 6.

³Confessions vii. 16. 22.

⁴Cf. Vergilius Ferm (ed.), History of Philosophical Systems (Paterson, N.J.: Littlefield & Adams, 1961), pp. 153-154; and also: Windelband, A History of Philosophy (New York: Harper and Row Torchbook 38), I, 284f.; where he points out Augustine's Predestination as a concept involving basic blessedness.

faith resulted in institutionalized ethics with its resultant loss of individualism. The Medieval Church, basing its premise on the fact that it would do for man what he could not do for himself, strengthened its hold on the individual under the claim of uniquely mediating man's relationship to God.

Augustine held that the visible Catholic Church is the body of Christ, even though it is impure. In his reply to the Donatists, who were thoroughly "orthodox" in doctrine and organization, and yet rejected the Catholic Church as impure (because it allowed the sacraments to be administered by men who may have been guilty of "deadly" sins), Augustine said:

Those are wanting in God's love who do not care for the unity of the Church; and consequently we are right in understanding that the Holy Spirit may be said not to be received except in the Catholic Church . . . whatever, therefore, may be received by heretics and schismatics, the charity which covereth the multitude of sins is the special gift of Catholic unity.¹

Authority becomes the norm of faith. Sacraments are the work of God, not of men. They do not depend upon the character of the administrator. Those outside the Catholic Church need not to be rebaptized on entering it, but it is only in the Catholic Church that the sacraments attain their appropriate fruition, for there alone can be found that love to which they witness, and in which constitutes the essence of the Christian life.

Furthermore, the sacraments are necessary for salvation.

¹Baptism iii.16.21.

"The churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the Supper of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and everlasting life."¹

It is evident that there are many profound contradictions in Augustine's system. He taught a predestination in which God sends grace to whomever He will, yet He confined salvation to the visible Church endowed with a sacramental ecclesiasticism. He approached the distinction made at the Reformation between the visible and the invisible Church without clearly reaching it. He saw the Christian life as one of personal relation to God in faith and love, yet he taught no less positively a legalistic and monastic asceticism. He was the father of the tremendous structure of the Medieval Church which suppressed individuality, and a pious individualist from whom later reformers could draw inspiration. "Therefore the church even now is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet though the tares grow in the church along with the wheat, they do not reign with Him."²

¹Forgiveness of Sins, 1.34.

²City of God, xx.9

CHAPTER IV

REALISM AND NOMINALISM--THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS FOUND IN THOMISM AND "NATURAL" THEOLOGY

If, as Augustine indicated, will was more important than reason, if God possessed all will, and if the only thing of value was the "soul," then, not only all things material were suspect, but reason also. The individual was submerged, and by predestination in a Platonic sense, only the universal was significant, and not the individual. Even though the Middle Ages knew no Greek, it learned its Platonism from Augustine, and realism was considered its orthodoxy. When the Scholastics began struggling with the problem of reconciling faith and reason, some of the basic doctrines of Christendom were forced out into the arena of philosophic scrutiny. There seems to be little doubt that had Augustine lived in the 11th Century he would have argued that universals exist apart from and transcendent to the individual objects of sense.

A number of the Scholastics felt that in Augustine's realism, the particular was denied existence. But the day of the nominalists was coming. Arab philosophers introduced Aristotelian concepts into Spain in the 9th Century, while Abelard began to assert that particulars, the things of this world, have a substantial

reality of their own. He followed it up with the contention that man's chief moral weapon is his rational intellect, that God Himself is the supremely rational. This was a long way toward the individual from Augustine. In Augustine the function of intelligence is used to demonstrate the truth of a revealed knowledge acquired by faith. Aquinas took as his task the work of reconciling faith and rational knowledge which would restore man to a cherished "self-respect" and revise the Augustinian estimate of human nature.

A. God and Creation

Aquinas starts with a concept of the universe as seen by man. Immediately his relation to Aristotle is seen.¹ Medieval Aristotelians began from the thesis that the real world is the world of the senses.

From this position, Aquinas found the Platonic-Augustinian dualism of body and soul unsatisfactory. He held that each individual receives from God an active intellect which can be understood only as the Aristotelian form of body.

For Aquinas, all knowledge begins with sense perception. From the data of sense, the intellect abstracts the universals and on the basis of these it proceeds from deduction and induction to causality and ultimate causality.² On the basis of discovering

¹Cf. De Anima, Book III, chap. 8.

²Cf. Being and Essence, trans. Arma (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), chap. II, p. 42.

law, order, and causality in nature, it is concluded that the universe is the creation of a single uncreated infinite Being.¹

But, should there exist some being which is simply the act of existing, so that the act of existing be itself subsistent, a difference could not be added to this act of existing. Otherwise, it would not be purely and simply the act of existing but the act of existing plus a certain form. . .

Everything, then, which is such that its act of existing is other than its nature must needs have its act of existing from something else. And since every being which exists through another is reduced, as to its first cause, to one existing in virtue of itself, there must be some being which is the cause of the existing of all things because it itself is the act of existing alone. . . .

Evidently, then, an intelligence is form and act of existing, and it has its act of existing from the First Being which is simply the act of existing. This is the First Cause, God.²

God plays the role of the prime mover in the fact of causation and appears as a necessary being to establish the contingencies of sensate creation. Everywhere the universe appears as a hierarchy of lower and higher forms. The world presents to man the spectacle of incalculable order and harmony, but a harmony of imperfect beings. The implication thus is that there is a perfect being who controls all the visible universe.

B. Dualism

Aquinas then runs into some difficulties in his conception of God and of necessity. Aquinas is said to have studied Aristotle

¹Cf. Summa Theologica i.44,1.

²Aquinas, Being and Essence, Chap. IV, pp. 46, 47.

by day and meditated on him by night, and from the Master the student received some problems.

One of the problems of Aristotelian philosophy is that it set up organic growth as the model of everything which happens in nature. The most it could do was to describe forms and qualities without offering any real suggestion as to their genesis. Hoffding points out the problem:

He [Aristotle] regarded Nature as a great process of development, within which the higher grades were related to the lower as form to matter or actuality to potentiality. What on the lower stages is only possible (potential) becomes real (actual) on the higher. Aristotle himself was not able to work out this significant conception. But there can be no doubt as to the direction in which these consequences tend. As an ecclesiastical thinker, however, Thomas Aquinas had to effect an entire break with these consequences; to suppress the monism to which they led; and to set up a dualism in its stead. This is shown characteristically in his psychology and ethics. According to the Aristotelian psychology the soul is the "form" of the body; that which exists in the body as mere possibility appears in the life of the soul in full activity and reality. But such an intimate relation between the soul and body conflicts with the pre-suppositions of the Church, and although Thomas follows Aristotle to the letter and calls the soul the "form" of the body, yet, in reality, he treats the soul as an altogether different being from the body, as also he has no scruple in assuming "forms" without matter--in order to make room for the angels! A similar dualism appears in his ethics. He borrows from the Greeks a number of natural cardinal virtues, e.g. wisdom, justice, courage, and self-mastery; but while, with the Greeks, these constitute the whole of virtue, he introduces as a higher grade, the three "theological" virtues: faith, hope, and love, which arise only by supernatural means.¹

¹Harald Hoffding, The Renaissance And The Middle Ages (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), p. 7.

Avicenna had come across this same problem, and following strict Aristotelian forms, had concluded that God was not only a necessary being but that Creation was a necessity. Prime matter alone was eternal, and the successive emanation of the ten intelligences each brings into being the soul and body of a distinct cosmic sphere. The concept of Neo-platonic intermediaries, plus the concept of Creation as a necessary process was rejected by Aquinas. Both Avicenna and Averroes were interested in the concept of a separate active intellect. This is possible to construe from an interpretation of Aristotle's De Anima (iii. 5). It is difficult to determine whether Aristotle in speaking of "an intellect fit to become all things and an intellect capable of producing all things" left room in the second of these for a supersensible being inferior to God.

In Averroes, it seems quite reprehensible to Aquinas that there is no individual immortality. Instead, there is the immortality of a substance outside of the individual. Whether or not this may be established from Aristotle, Aquinas still has the problem of the natural development of nature in sharp contrast to the dogma of creation and the possibility of miracles.

Aquinas thus reveals a dualism at one point after another when he faces the fact that thought has to agree with dogma, and yet dogma cannot be fitted into his "natural" world. A dualism of reason and faith are created for the world and for the individual. While he heightened the status of reason and the distinction between reason and faith, he removed many areas of

thought from the realm of reason. When in doubt, Aquinas bowed to the authority of the Church. "The weightiest authority is the Church's custom. It should be constantly and punctiliously observed. Ecclesiastical writings draw their warrant from the Church's authority. We should take our stand on the Church's traditional teaching, rather than on the pronouncements of Augustine or Jerome or any other doctor."¹ His faithfulness to the Medieval ideal is consistent and clear: reason has its place, but the Apostolic tradition is in no danger. It is inviolable and the Church has its custodian.

To the supreme Pontiff, who has this authority, major difficulties are submitted . . . One faith should be held by the whole Church, THAT YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, AND THAT THERE BE NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU, cannot be ensured unless doubts about the faith be decided by him who presides over the whole Church, and whose decision will be accepted by all. The publication of articles of belief is like the convocation of a General Council or any other commitment affecting the Universal Church: no other power is competent but that of the Pope.²

He reacts to Augustine's emphasis on faith and attempts to build a rational world somewhere between realism and nominalism.

Good and Evil in a naturalistic system are found in the use or abuse of faculties according to natural law. Evil is not an essence but comes through second causes, as in the case of a good artist with bad tools.

¹III Quodlibets, iv, 7.

²Summa Theologica, i, 10, 2a-ae.

C. Man and His Destiny

Man, because of his rational nature, is compelled by necessity to seek the highest good. Through obedience to the dictates of reason he can obtain a high degree of moral rectitude, but obedience to divine law and acceptance of the Divinely given means of salvation are also essential to the highest perfection which is spiritual and to the attainment of the supreme good, which is union with God. Moral evil and good are directly related to the intellect and will of man. It is the province of the intellect to apprehend that which is good and true, and the province of the will to seek that which is so apprehended. God is rational, and He rationally orders the universe with regard "not only to species, but also to the individual"--which delicate and double obligation He codifies in natural law. In spite of his rational system, Aquinas seems to hold with Augustine that there is some predestination, with no reason given as to why some are elected to go to heaven and some are left reprobate to go to hell.¹ The ultimate end of man is only to be attained in the future life and will consist entirely in contemplation.²

D. Ethics

For the development of self, man must then apprehend as

¹Summa Contra Gentiles II.ii-iii.

²Summa Contra Gentiles I.iii.

much truth as is possible through rational means. He may know God also by means of revelation, but in the IVth book of Summa Theologica, Aquinas even agrees that man may have some knowledge of God by intuition, yet says no more of it. His basic contribution to man's individuality comes as a hesitant and partially committed appeal to use his mind.

The doctrine of natural law is basic for the Thomist philosophy. The law which has eternally existed in the mind of God is reflected in the law of nature or natural law. Man can conform to the law of nature through his will, but partly through ignorance and partly through the misuse of his will he has failed to do so. Although marred by sin, man can still cultivate the four natural virtues--prudence, justice, courage, and self-control. However, it is only through God's grace that the distinctively Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love can come to man.

Man's best development is found in the integration of the individual with community life: "So all men being a part of the city, they cannot be truly good unless they adapt themselves to the common good."¹ The integration of the individual in the whole must be thought of as an enlargement and enrichment of his personality, and not as a degradation to the mere function of a part without an intrinsic value. But there was no room for religious freedom in the Aquinas concepts of the orthodox State.²

¹Summa Theologica 11.6 Art. 1.

²Summa Theologica 11.14 Qu 11, Art. 3.

While there are some obvious difficulties in attempting to synthesize reason and faith, yet the attempt is made to encourage man to consider himself a rational being. A part of Christ's restatement of the commandment was considered--i.e., "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind" was rediscovered.

CHAPTER V

THE RENAISSANCE CONCEPT OF MAN

If Aquinas' effort to give both reason and faith an honorable place in the mind of medieval man was not completely satisfactory to all, it did at least lay some of the groundwork for the Renaissance. His use of reason up to the point of abandoning it in each case when necessary still gave the use of reason and confidence in an orderly universe a hearing which would be influential later on. Nominalism, humanism, mysticism, naturalism each contributed their part to the breakdown of the institutional Church and paved the way for the Reformation.

A. The Renaissance Divorce of Faith and Reason; Scotus and Occam; and Nominalism

Opposing the elements of realism in Aquinas were some moderate realists and nominalists who first opened the wedge and then split wide open the synthesis between reason and faith. Duns Scotus considered that Aquinas has not given enough concern to the will of God and man. In his arguments on the Existence of God, he stresses the role of the will.¹ In his arguments on the

¹Article II, Absolute Properties of God, Part I, p. 52f.

unicity of God, he says in the second proof that "Any will that is infinite wills things the way they should be willed."¹

God's will is primary and autonomous, contingent on nothing save itself. What God wills is good not because it is rational, but because He wills it. God's will, not His reason, is the highest law, and it is man's function to submit to God's will rather than to attempt to uphold it by human rationality. God does not appear at the end of a logical syllogism. According to Scotus, this was not an anti-rationalist approach; it simply made clear the view that the rationality of man deals with the finite only and that it is theology which deals with the infinite.

To Aquinas, there could be no real disagreement between theology and philosophy, however inadequate the latter is in reaching all the truths of the former. To Duns Scotus, much in theology was philosophically improbable, yet must be accepted on the authority of the Church. This is significant for the breakdown of Scholasticism, for its purpose had been to show the rationality of Christian truth. The difference in attitude was important. Though he was a moderate realist like Aquinas, he laid the emphasis on the individual rather than on the universal.

The voluntarism of Scotus was significantly different from that of Augustine, for with his emphasis on the individual,

1

Allan Walter (ed. and trans.), Duns Scotus (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), p. 86.

he held that man has considerably more freedom of will than either Augustine or Aquinas believed. He believed in original sin, but held that man has not lost the power of free decision. While Aquinas could still go along with Augustine in the concept of "irresistible grace," Scotus would be forced to choose against his voluntaristic predecessor and hold a synergistic view of man's salvation.

A more radical divorce of faith and reason was insisted on by William of Occam. Only the particulars exist, and men do not have actual knowledge of things in themselves; rather mental concepts. Thus, theological doctrines are not philosophically demonstrable; they must be accepted alone on the authority of the Church and of the Scriptures. The idea of God, though not irrational, is one whose truth cannot be demonstrated.¹ It is a composite idea whose parts have been abstracted from the various aspects of normal experience, and universals are artificial products of our mental activity--although indispensable to mental discourse.² The results of Occam's concepts were found in both theological scepticism and mysticism. The Augustinian "moment" of feeling, tied in with the anti-Platonic tendency of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge, make up part of the strange combination found in Occam.³ In denying the possibility of

¹Occam, The Seven Quodlibetas, Quodlibet 1, Ques. 15.

²Cf. Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XI, 246.

³Cf. Windelband, op. cit., p. 342.

"proving" God's existence, or of uncovering His characteristics by means of reason, he held forth an empiricism that was embarrassing to the Thomists and the institutional Church as a whole. He spoke on the other hand of the need of faith by claiming Scriptures as a single source and norm of teaching of the Church, and by even attacking transubstantiation as being in conflict with the Pope. Occam was still a long way from the impetus that brought on the Reformation a couple of centuries later, but he was spelling out the limitations of philosophical thought in rejecting universals and pointing out individual things as the only knowables.

The force of nominalism in leading to the dissolution of institutionalized society was effective. For nominalism, only the individual was real, and reality could not now be characterized by structure and order. God, in the nominalist's view as sheer will, was completely free from humanly conceivable structure or consistency. As a result, His declared intent to save sinners could not be taken too seriously, since God might act in different ways from His previously declared purpose.

Nominalism also had implications for society. One no longer belonged to a social body. The body now referred to a group of individuals. The concept of contract between individuals rather than that of organism was new. While the Medieval community hardly gave man his due as a unique individual, under the impact of nominalism the sense of belonging together and participating in life on the basis of certain natural bonds had disappeared.

And while it temporarily strengthened institutional authority to keep some cohesion in society, it was an explosive community maintained not by natural bonds but by force.

B. Christian Humanism in the Renaissance

Christian Humanism; Scholasticism; and Valle,
Pomponazzi, Petrarca, Ficino, Boethius, Dante

When in the Renaissance that which was Greek came back again, it was not in reality Greek, for the foundation was no longer the same. What had become fundamental for the character of the occidental mentality was not the idea of becoming and passing away but rather that of the divine creations of the world and the belief in a divine providence (a divine purpose) working toward salvation in time and through history.

There is to this extent then only Christian humanism in the Renaissance period. Actually the word "humanism" itself is not very old. It was coined by historical scholars of the 19th Century who were interested in the so-called "humanists" of the 15th and 16th Centuries. The latter had received their title from their learned efforts to revitalize the re-discovered literature and culture of Greece and Rome. In this sense,

Classical humanism might be generally described as having 'something' to do with human nature, and with reason as the supreme force of human nature and as representing the Greek ideal of man.

During the revival of learning in the Renaissance, it was

not Hellenism which was revived, but Hellenism as now understood from the standpoint of a thousand years of Christianity.

Christian humanism, even in its most anti-religious and anti-Christian forms, is still Christian in substance. In Christian humanism, the fate of Christianity and the fate of philosophy are bound together.

Christianity had provided a world-view in which there was not the recurring cycles of fate but rather a purposive creation.¹ It had also spoken of human individuality as the direct I-Thou relationship with the Creator-God, and in the light of this relationship as having an eternal destiny apart from the natural world.²

The attempts of the late Ancient and early Medieval period to synthesize the Hellenistic culture with the Christian faith had resulted in internal tensions within a Medieval system which denigrated both the individual and reason (or the natural world). With the first stirrings of the Renaissance, the Scholastics set out to redefine the heritage of classical humanism.

For the Scholastics, scholarship was a Christian calling. For Abelard as for Aquinas, dialectics was queen of the liberal arts, and grammar and rhetoric were her handmaidens. Truth was a structure of true propositions about God, man, and nature. To

¹Supra, pp. 9-10.

²Supra, p. 24.

arrive at one of these propositions, Abelard's first step was to pose a problem, and then to assemble all the statements he could find on it from the Bible, the Fathers, or the ancient philosophers which referred to it. The second step was relatively simple and unimportant: to determine by the use of grammar just what each statement meant. The final step was all-important, especially in Aquinas: to examine the conflicts, to winnow the true from the false, and to sift out the truth in propositional form through careful use of dialectic as developed by ancient philosophers, particularly Aristotle, and as recommended by the Christian fathers, such as Augustine. Abelard began, and Aquinas completed the subordination of exegesis to theology. The result was that in the late Medieval teaching and writing, the Bible became buried fathoms deep under layer after layer of exegetical comment. The Old and New Testaments were fragmentized and treated as an arsenal of texts or a collection of propositions whose logical implications were to be elicited and reconciled into self-consistent dogma. Aquinas maintained that the literal sense must always be the basis of all exegesis, but that early Medieval scholars were always fascinated by the allegorical and anagogical meanings of scriptures.

As Scholasticism developed, the Bible came to be looked upon more and more as merely grist for the dialecticians' mill. Yet the scholastics prepared the way for that which was to come by their emphasis on scholarship, books and learning. Augustine, Abelard, and

Aquinas each felt called in a different way to one or more of the major tasks of the Christian scholar: to restudy the Hebraic-Christian tradition itself; to relate this tradition to secular culture; and to relate this tradition to scientific discovery.

The revival of classical Latin begun in the fourteenth century, the revival of Greek begun in the early fifteenth, and the revival of Hebrew begun in the late fifteenth century brought the full flowering of the Renaissance of which it was a precursor.

The revival of Classical literature with the concern for the Greek ideal of man and the development of reason as a supreme force in human nature would now challenge the Medieval structure of the institutional Church and its enslavement of the individual. The concept of the ideal State of the Roman Stoics which had been implemented by Augustine and interpreted by later medievalists to build the monolithic structure of the medieval Church could be questioned from prior sources.

Medieval asceticism and scholarship had strengthened man's spiritual forces but had prevented their free participation in the work of a creative culture. To the merchant, banker, lawyer, civil servant of cities like Venice, Florence, and Milan, the scholastic learning of the clergy was something alien; yet Cicero and Virgil, Plato and Aristotle had written for an urban society not unlike their own. Moreover, it had become clear that a compulsory fulfillment of the Kingdom of God was impossible. Few,

if any, of the early humanists openly repudiated the Church and its faith, but they were scornful of scholastic philosophy and contemptuous of monasticism.

Lorenzo Valla (1405-1457) was fairly typical of the prevailing critical attitude of the humanists. The critical method developed by the humanists for the writing of Ancient and Medieval history on the basis of authentic contemporary documents were first applied to church history by Valla in his famous attack on the Donation of Constantine, in which it was shown to be a forgery. Valla questioned the authority of the pseudo-Dionysius, and to Leo X he explained his textual revision of the Vulgate (which seemed impious to many): "By this labor we do not intend to tear up the old and commonly accepted edition, but to amend it in some places where it is corrupt and to make clear where it is obscure." He defended hedonism in De Voluptate (1431) against the Stoa: "The rights of nature must prevail," he said; "man cannot help seeking pleasure. Indeed, what is Christianity itself but a sublimated form of hedonism." He said that the prostitute is better than the nun; she makes men happy while the nun lives in shameful and futile celibacy. In De Professione religiosorum, he denied all value to asceticism and holiness. The high regard that Erasmus held for Valla can well be understood, and echoes of Valla seem to walk the pages of The Praise of Folly.

Pietro Pomponazzi (1462-1525) boldly argued that a reading of the original texts quite disproved the assertion of Aquinas and the other scholastics that Aristotle's teaching supported the immortality of the soul. Moreover, he held that virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment. There is then no moral need of heaven and hell; in fact, such ideas are detrimental to true morality, since to be virtuous from fear of hell or hope of heaven is not to be truly virtuous. Turning again to Aristotle, he found there no warrant for the idea that there can be interferences in the natural order; in other words, no miracles. In spite of the fact that by the bald statement of a "double truth" he saved himself when hauled before the Pope, his ideas continued to be held; and they further established the humanist tradition that man's dignity was his capacity for rational conduct.

Other humanists, like Petrarca, Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, were going back to Augustine, Plato, and the Neo-Platonists for a concept of individuality. The model for Petrarca (1304-1374) was Augustine. He is traditionally called ~~the first of modern men, though his subjectivism seems to lie~~ closer to Augustine than the emerging men of "science." Yet he was the first Western scholar who owned a Greek manuscript of Plato; and in his attack on the Aristotelian authorities of his time and the scholastics, he reacted like a true Neo-platonist

favoring a subjective, rather than a rational, approach to God. He has a sort of bifurcated ethics in which the sovereignty of reason is used to consider nature and a subjective individualism to approach God. His concept of striving seems as modern as Goethe's Faust. Petrarca says:

The life we call blessed is located on a high peak. A narrow way, they say, leads up to it. Many hilltops intervene, and we must proceed from virtue to virtue with exalted steps. On the highest summit is set the end of all, the goal toward which our pilgrimage is directed. Every man wants to arrive there. However, as Naso says: "Wanting is not enough; long and you attain it." Having strayed far in error, you must either ascend to the summit of the blessed life under the heavy burden of hard striving, ill deferred, or lie prostrate in the slothfulness in the valleys of your sins.¹

And Goethe says in Faust: "He only earns his freedom and existence / Who daily conquers them anew."² Petrarca finds the dignity and worth of human life in the world through the possibilities of self-fulfillment that lay hidden in the "natural" man, beneath the medieval deposit of supernaturalism.

Ficino contributed by giving the Western world the first Latin translations of Plato and Plotinus and accompanied them with commentaries. Paul Kristeller says (in Fern's History of Philosophical Systems):

¹Ernest Cassirer, et al, The Renaissance Philosophy of Man. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 39.

²Petrarca however envisions an end to striving. In Faust the striving itself seems to be an end.

His Platonic Theology provided an authoritative summary of Platonic doctrine in which Plato's own teachings are blended with Neoplatonic, Christian and original elements. The major concern of his philosophy is the contemplative life which he interprets as an inner ascent, through various degrees, of the human intellect and will toward the ultimate vision and enjoyment of God. Since this goal cannot be fully attained during the present life, Ficino is prompted to postulate the immortality of the soul. . . . Ficino linked the spiritual love between two human beings to the inner quest of the soul for God, and coined the term "Platonic love" for this relationship. (p. 233)

Gilson has some reservations about his "Platonism" when he says: "We fully agree that Ficino intended to be a Platonist; our only point is that, in trying to make Plato 'Christiane veritati simillimum,' he was simply continuing the history of Christian thought in the Middle Ages."¹ Pico, thirty years younger and a student of Ficino, embarked upon Christian mysticism. But like Ficino, he managed to confine his speculations within the limit of orthodoxy. Reason is divine and a gift of God.

Ficino, however, even though he was a great Platonist, identifies the realm of the elect not with God but with man. This was a rather significant change in the status of the individual, and indicates quite sharply the "Christian" humanism, and also Christian "humanism"! He stated that Plato was inspired, and Plato must be studied in order to make Christianity rational and acceptable to those who are still skeptics. The highest good is not dependent

¹Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 804.

upon the Church, but upon an impulse universal to man. All souls by an inner urge seek truth and goodness (God). Ficino places the soul which is the attribute of man centrally in the five orders of existence. Of all the wonders of nature, man is the greatest.

All other things under God are always in themselves of one certain kind of being; this essence is at once all of them . . . the center of nature, the middle point of all that is, the chain of the world, the face of all, and the knot and bond of the universe.

If man uses his native gifts properly, man is Godlike in the possession of a rational soul. As God is above all things, so man seeks to conquer the universe. Man can imitate God's function in the universe by imposing beauty and form on the lower orders of creation. Finally, since the soul cannot attain its goal here, there must be a hereafter; and a resurrection of the body is necessary. Man has obviously far more significance than Plato had given him.² It is not surprising to know that Ficino had planned to achieve a harmony between Plato and Aristotle.

Almost a thousand years earlier, Boethius had made the "first" attempt to combine Plato (neo-Platonically understood) and Aristotle, plus a neo-Platonic Augustine in a philosophical framework. Boethius had dealt with the problem of the freedom of the individual by first offering in his *Consolation of Philosophy* the Stoic resignation:

¹ Ficino *Theologica Platonica* iii. 2.

² *Supra*, pp. 10, 11.

Thinkest thou that this world is governed by haphazard and chance? Or rather does thou believe that it is ruled by reason? "I can," quoth I, "in no manner imagine that such motions are caused by rash chance. And I know that God the Creator doth govern His work, neither will I ever think otherwise."
(Ek. 1.6)

Secondly, Boethius contends that man must be free to act or not to act if he is to be morally responsible, for no one is responsible for what he does under restraint. But if God foresees the future, how can man be free? He then says that God's "pre-destination" consists not in foreordaining actions but in foreknowledge only. To God, there is neither past nor future but only present. To us, things are in time; there is an unrecoverable past and an unforeseeable future. To us, the future is contingent on many things, and from our view point, we are free. The things which are contingent to us are necessary to God.

In this sense, Boethius personifies law and determinism; and the old Greek nemesis seems apparent as in Augustine. The divine reason even controls fate: "For Providence is the very Divine reason itself, seated in the highest Prince, which disposeth all things. But Fate is a disposition inherent in changeable things, by which Providence connecteth all things in their due order."¹

The freedom of man was severely limited, but an attempt had been made to free man from the world through Stoic resignation; and to limit the fates to foreknowledge only rather than to make

¹Boethius Consolation of Philosophy iv. 6.

the individual subject to both foreknowledge and predestination. Ficino had given man much greater freedom.

Dante, too, had attempted to combine philosophies--i.e., an Aristotelianism with a "Platonic" man.

Dante draws on Aristotle (via Aquinas) for his rationality of man, and on Plato for the function of man. The proper function of man is to utilize his intellect to its fullest capacity either in speculation or in rational conduct. In the Inferno and Purgatory, rational knowledge is consumed in the ecstasy of mystical union. In the theocratic state given by Augustine to the Middle Ages, there was a place for everything. All that remained for man was to determine the symbolic correspondence between the lower and higher forms of reality, and God's wisdom will be revealed in an orderly universe. In Canto 1. 128 of Purgatory, Dante is not prepared by the grace of God for atonement but by the command of the intellectual virtues.

Whereas for Duns Scotus, primitive man lived in accordance with his own caprices; for Aristotle, Aquinas, and Dante, man is essentially a social animal, and has never lived in isolation. Aristotle had suggested that societies might be governed by one man,
by a small group, or by the people as a whole, but in nature, all things are governed by one. Art and human institutions should imitate nature and have one ruler.

According to Aquinas, the way to avoid the possible tyranny

of one man which Aristotle had considered possible, the temporal power should be subject to the spiritual, and the king to the Pope. Then, because of the pressure of God's vicar, the king will govern for his people's sake and not for his own.

The theory of this as expressed in Dante's de Monarchia, is similar to that of Aquinas, though Dante says that the authority of Church and State are each derived from God--not from each other. Christ and Augustus are two suns, not the moon and the sun, which rule in de Monarchia (Book III, chap. 4). Dante uses this concept against the Church. The metaphor comes up in the concept of a world-monarch to rule the Terrestrial paradise.¹ Significantly, when Dante crowns himself,² he is crowned through the words of Virgil, not the Pope.

It is said that Dante ends with a new man in an old society. This is quite true. Actually hierarchical the organic concept of society which Dante pictures was rather fully actualized in the time of Dante and had been quite so for some time. The hierarchical Church was as Dante boasted Christ's "Spouse and Secretary," and it was as essential to salvation as was the Bible. As a redemptive agency, it was indispensable to man,³ therefore,

it could exact its tribute of faith and submission.

¹Purgatory xvi. 94f.

²Purgatory, Canto xxvii, line 126f.

³Paradise v. 76-78.

The medieval Church had extended its functions and achieved its importance on the premise that Augustine's view of man was accurate. Its strength lay in its unique function of mediating between man and God, and it undertook to do for man what he could not do for himself.

This was the "old" society of Dante. Much more significant for the emerging Renaissance was the concept of the "new" man.

While Dante did not feel that we should be concerned about our inability to understand all of God's ways and purposes, "we should rather marvel greatly if at any time the process by which the eternal counsels are fulfilled is so manifest as to be discerned by our reason."¹ Nevertheless, the proper function of man is to utilize his intellect to its fullest capacity, either in speculation or in rational conduct.² The rebirth of the 2nd Adam in Purgatory is to be accomplished by the innate desire for good in the intellectual virtues. Dante implies that the only way of achieving the terrestrial paradise is through the intellectual virtues.³ This, in spite of the fact that he separates the Soul from the intellect in encountering the great "beyondness" of the celestial.

¹Convivio iv. 4.

²De Monarchia i. 4.

³Cf. Purgatory i. 62-63.

paradise.¹ Man does achieve further perfection by the soul,² but only when this has been preceded by intellectual perfection. The gate of purgatory is opened by the golden key of power and the silver key of discernment. The surrender of reason to faith is only the culmination of his poem (Paradiso). In most of the poem, the human will to understand is the most significant aspect. The real if evil heroes of the Inferno are the great rebels from the highest (Capaneus) to the lowest. This is the new man of will and intellect which Dante contributes to the Renaissance.

Dante represents both the humanistic meaning of the philosophy of Aquinas and the revival of Aristotelianism. The particular kind of reconciliation between classicism and Christianity which was represented by Aquinas in philosophy and Dante in poetry could not last because it was based on vague and inaccurate notions of the past, both classical and Christian traditions. The rise of history and philology as scholarly disciplines was bound to sharpen the differences between Athens and Jerusalem, and reveal the shaky historical foundations of the so-called Medieval synthesis of Greek reason and Christian faith. The triple-pronged attack of humanism, mysticism, and nominalism contributed to the dissolution of the Medieval synthesis.

¹ Purgatory xviii. 55f.

² Cf. Paradise xxxiii. 130f.

C. Renaissance Mysticism Influence on Disestablishment of the Institutional Church; and the Negative Epistemology of Cusanus.

Mysticism has a long history from the time of Apostle Paul and his Damascus vision through the dubious Christian orientation of Dionysius the Areopagite to the classical figures of the Medieval mystical tradition including Bernard, and Meister Eckhart. Common to the mystics was the conviction that God could be directly experienced, though in essence He remained incomprehensible.

1. Influence on disestablishment of the institutional Church

Although the Church insisted that God was known and mediated through the sacramental system, mysticism was not initially considered a serious threat. Mystics were incorporated into the fold and they comprised one component, though a subordinate one in the medieval synthesis. Even Dionysius the Areopagite, who was more Greek than Christian, was incorporated into the fold because of his alleged connection with St. Paul (Aquinas quotes him extensively).¹

Only when the individual mystics were supplemented by the ~~communities of mystical orientation did the difficulty appear.~~ Neither the individual mystic nor the mystical group wanted to undermine the witness of the Church which was the Medieval institution. But they

¹Cf. Latourette, History of Christianity, (New York: Harpers & Bros., 1953), pp. 210-211.

did indeed undermine the institution by the emphasis of a direct personal experience of God which contradicted the notion that God was mediated exclusively or primarily through the Church as a sacramental agent.

Individuals and groups which stressed the direct experience of God helped to prepare the soil on which the Reformation grew, just as the revival of Neo-Platonism prepared the way for the Renaissance. Luther, for instance, was quick to see that the gospel which he proclaimed spoke to these people. A revived Augustinian mysticism with the rigors of its sense of sin found a hearing, and even those who had no particular interest in a mystical relationship to God could note that there were those who need not be as dependent on the institution. Most mystics and naturalists alike reversed the Nicene formula. They approached God through nature rather than nature through God with an optimism in which everything was construed as good and man as being potentially divine.

2. The Negative Epistemology of Cusanus

Nicholas Cusanus stands at the boundary line between ~~the Middle Ages and the Renaissance~~ and represents the influence of the Neo-Platonic mysticism. For him, the great problem to be solved was that of the Trinity. While considering this problem, he worked out thoughts of epistemology and natural philosophy.

Cusanus conceives of knowledge as the activity which combines and unites. Thought can only approach the absolute unity by means of a mystical intuition in which all the radii of existence come together in a single center. The consummation of thought also procures its cessation. But, thought must proceed from plurality and difference--an idea quite probably received from Eckhart.¹

He believed that man cannot transcend finite determinations, and thus he eventually concluded that God is incomprehensible. Philosophically considered, God is known by negation. God can be thought of by the abolition of all created characteristics which he does not possess.²

Human nature, Cusanus thinks, is in itself made neither more nor less by the birth and death of individual human beings. The final implication is that everything has its basic reality in the supreme truth which is God. God is thus the supreme universal.³ The Holy Spirit is the bond of Nature, and is one with Nature as the sum of all that motion brings about. Cusanus makes no distinction between coincidence (*coincidentia*), comprehension (*completio*), and union (*conmixtio*) of opposites, though the three terms denote very different relations.

¹Germain Beron (trans.), *Nicholas Cusanus, Of Learned Ignorance* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1954), p. xiv.

²*Ibid.*, i. 24-26.

³*Ibid.*, ii. 2-3.

His concept of the dignity of the individual is that when the inhabitants of the earth are more perfect, the closer they approach the ideal which is in harmony with their nature. But it does not follow that this ideal must be the same as that of the inhabitants of other heavenly bodies or the same as other creatures. This is significant. This, as it was earlier pointed out (pp. 23-25), is the limitation of the Stoic individual. That is, man in Stoicism is not free to be a "different" individual.

Cusanus notes this and brings into the Renaissance period this Judeo-Christian concept of individual liberty:

Every creature, as such, is perfect, though by comparison with others it may seem imperfect. God in His infinite goodness gives being to all in the way in which each can receive it. With Him there is no jealousy; He communicates being without distinction; and, since all receive being in accord with the demands of their contingent nature, every creature rests content in its own perfection, which God has freely bestowed upon it. None desires the greater perfection of any other; each loves by preference that perfection which God has given it and strives to develop and preserve it intact.

Two other areas of his thought should be cited that will show up in contra-distinction to Luther's mysticism as contributions to individuality. The first can be noted as a unio-
mystical experience:

Let us brace ourselves that each one aspire by daily mortification to rise by steps to union with Christ, even, as far as may be, to the deep union of absorption in him. Such a one, leaping above all visible and

¹Ibid., p. 75.

mundane things, reaches the complete perfection of his nature.¹

Secondly, the relation of body-soul stands closer to the Greek concept of duality than the Christian concept of body-soul monism, in comparing Cusanus with Luther. Cusanus seems to find immortality in the individual soul rather than in a "relationship" to the Creator.²

Cusanus seemed to have few followers; the uniqueness of his contribution earns him a significant place in the contribution to the concept of individual liberty. We will consider some of the problems of his epistemology and its limitations in the next chapter.

In general, the expression of Renaissance mysticism was a part of an anti-rational approach to philosophy-theology which took its place alongside the emphasis on rationality. As we noted in Dante, the celestial paradise was reached by a combination of intellectualism and Soul. In the late Renaissance, the mystical approach to reality (God) became a chief alternative to the Scholastic tradition which the reformers held in such contempt.

Luther wrote from Wittenberg in 1517:

Our theology and St. Augustine are progressing happily and prevail at our University. Aristotle is at a discount and is hurrying to everlasting destruction. People are quite disgusted with the lectures on the Sentences (of Peter Lombard), and no one can be sure of an audience unless he expounds this theology, i.e.,

¹Ibid., p. 165.

²Ibid., p. 158.

the Bible or St. Augustine, or some other teacher of note in the Church.¹

Adolf Harnack has said that without a revival of Augustinianism, the Reformation would have been impossible.² Luther's cardinal doctrine of justification by faith alone and Calvin's restatement of the doctrines of original sin and predestination reach back through the rational theology of Aquinas to the Bishop of Hippo. This is noted by Augustine's own testimony in the seventh book of the Confessions, to a close bond with Neo-Platonism and its accompanying mysticism. The mystical traditions, as we have indicated, carried its own unique witness to man's individuality.

D. The Renaissance and Erasmus; Reaction to Humanism; Man Subservient to Hubris; Reason to be a Guide; and a Mixed Contribution

The humanists stressed the greatness and nobility of man. The impact of this concept on the Medieval Community was greater than the attacks which some of the scholars made upon specific documents and claims of the institutions. It represented an outlook on life which was one of reform and change. And, in that connection, the nobility of man was found in Cicero and Plato rather than in scholastic theology.

¹ Quoted by Hartman Grisar, Luther (trans. by E.M. Lamond, 1913-17), I, 305.

² Adolph Harnack, The History of Dogma (New York: Dover Publications, 1961), p. 17.

Thus, in the Renaissance, a decentralization took place suddenly liberating man's creative forces. The Middle Ages had concentrated and disciplined man's spiritual forces, but at the same time had curbed them. Under the impact of humanism, there was also spiritual decentralization, and man's life became secular, and even religion was secularized.

The prince of the northern humanists, Erasmus, played a large part in aiding the Renaissance, not as a particularly original thinker but by his scholarly work of translation of the Bible and numerous tracts and writings espousing the humanist cause.

1. Reaction to Humanism

Erasmus was convinced that Classical studies were the cure-all of the civilized world. However, there were periods towards the latter part of his life when he would, if necessary, join in battle against those humanists who would become purists. In 1528 (eight years before he died), Erasmus published two dialogues in one volume--one about the correct pronunciation of Latin and Greek, and one entitled Ciceronianus. The first was philological, and the last was satirical as well. In them, he ridicules the purists among the humanist camp. He had earlier discussed what he considered the excesses of the classical humanists "among all sorts of authors none are so insufferable to me as those apes of Cicero."¹ Huizinga suggests that this may be the aged

¹Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of Reformation, p. 170.

Erasmus in a path of reaction which might have eventually led him far from humanism, possibly even down the path to Christian puritanism.¹ But certainly in his Letter to Luther in May of 1519, he was a long way from it.

As for me, I keep myself as far as possible neutral, the better to assist the new flowering of good learning; . . . As for the schools, who should not so much reject them as recall them to more reasonable studies. Where things are too generally accepted to be suddenly eradicated from men's minds, we must argue with repeated and efficacious proofs and not make positive assertions.²

2. Man Subservient to Hubris

The Greek principle of moderation in all things must be followed even in a revival of learning and in study.

Studying must not be carried to an extreme, says Erasmus. He writes to a young man, Charles Elount, saying that he will dedicate some writings to him:

. . . bearing in mind what an insatiable glutton, so to speak, your father has always been for history (and not that you resemble him in this also): . . . I should not wish you to resemble your father too closely. He is in the way of pouring over his books every day from dinner until midnight, which is wearisome to his wife and attendants and a cause of much grumbling among the servants; so far he has been able to do this without loss of health; still I do not think it wise for you to take the same risk.

¹Ibid., p. 173.

²Ibid., pp. 230-231.

³Ibid., p. 251.

Of Thomas Moore he said:

It is all too true that Thomas Moore has been long in prison and his fortune confiscated. It was being said that he too had been executed, but I have no certain news as yet. Would that he had never embroiled himself in this perilous business and had left the theological cause to the theologians.¹

Since man must do all things in moderation, an ideal society will show the marks of temperate individuals who make up that society. Disturbance and controversy are to be avoided, even at the cost of the loss of an idea or honors.

Erasmus is therefore most concerned at the disruptive effect of Luther's work. He writes to Luther in April of 1526, after Bondage of the Will and his own rebuttal entitled Distrib had been published:

But it does not matter what happens to us two, least of all to myself who must shortly go hence, even if the whole world were applauding us: it is this that distresses me, and all the best spirits with me, that with that arrogant, impudent, seditious temperament of yours you are shattering the whole globe in ruinous discord, exposing good men and lovers of good learning to certain frenzied Pharisees, arming for revolt the wicked and the revolutionary, and in short so carrying on. . . .²

. . . it is the public disaster which distresses me, and the irremediable confusion of everything.³

In a letter to Marin Bucer from Basle in November of 1527, Erasmus

¹From a Letter to Latomus, 1535, Ibid., p. 252.

²Ibid., p. 241.

³Ibid., p. 242.

continues in the same vein:

You assemble a number of conjectures as to why I have not joined your church. . . . The third thing which deterred me is the intense discord between the leaders of the movement. . . I have never approved the ferocity of leaders, but it is provoked by the behavior of certain persons.¹

Erasmus so hated disturbance and controversy that he would not openly admit to the authorship of The Praise of Folly. Any kind of disruption including war he abhorred. In Julius Exclusis, he pours out his hatred of war. All things should be decided by reason and dialogue. He may have criticized the Church and said that the Pope was deluded, but would do so only if such criticism could be accomplished without furor.

Erasmus defended his criticism of the ecclesiastical institution which was considered to have been effective:

Certain rascals say that my writings are to blame for the fact that scholastic theologians and monks are in several places becoming less esteemed than they would like, that ceremonies are neglected, and that the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff is disregarded; when it is quite clear from what source this evil has sprung. They were stretching too tight the rope which is now breaking. They almost set the Pope's authority above Christ's, they measured all piety by ceremonies, and tightened the hold of the confession to an enormous extent, while the monks lorded it without fear of punishment, by now instigating open tyranny. As a result 'the stretched string snapped,' as the proverb has it; it could not be otherwise.²

¹Ibid., p. 244.

²Ibid., Letter to Martin Bucer, p. 245.

I have approved of the abolition of the Mass, even though I have always disliked these mean and money-grabbing mass-priests. There were other things also which could have been altered without causing riots (underlining is mine).¹

But Erasmus always exhibits caution: "You will have the good sense not to circulate this letter, lest it cause any disturbance."²

3. Reason to be a Guide

The use of reason and the calm discussion of scholars in search for truth is one of the expected occupations of man. Man must be not only trained but able to ascertain truth for himself. Uneducated, man is a wild beast, but properly trained, he is a divinity. Thus it would naturally follow that Erasmus detested the Augustinian doctrine of total depravity. Emotionally, he was the heir of Aquinas, who had been unable to accept the notion that God imposed punishment for sins beyond man's control. Providence, Aquinas argues, produces every grade of being: some things are strictly determined by "necessary causes," but others, such as man, react to "contingent causes." Thus guilt proceeds from the free will of the person who is reprobated and deserted by grace. Erasmus seeks rational grounds for an intuitive attitude, since at the core of his faith, ignorance is

¹Ibid., p. 246.

²Ibid., p. 240.

vice, and knowledge is virtue. The alleged "bondage of the will" is merely bondage to ignorant opinion which may be rectified by "diligent instruction and wise counsel." The wisdom and goodness of God are manifest in man's ability to choose rationally between Alternatives. Grace is indispensable, but a free will is too.

It was on the basis of his emphasis on reason and freedom of will that he effectively criticized the institutional church, and a highly structured society.

4. A Mixed Contribution

Was Erasmus a reformer, a conservative humanist, a professional aesthete, or a heretic?

He upheld man's native depravity as a Church position in the Enchiridion. Erasmus seems to be the prince of the northern humanists--but clearly shows his orthodoxy and conservatism.

The Rock on which Erasmus and Luther split was the question of free-will. Luther (and Calvin) could be satisfied only with a complete refusal of Thomistic rationalism: that man should presume to know God through his puny reason was to them as abhorrent as that God Himself was circumscribed by reason.

Erasmus cannot think of God save as essentially rational, or of man as essentially good if he only used his God-given reason in the service of piety. The whole of man's excellence was epitomized in his faculty of reason, and to think of him as congenitally depraved and therefore unable to use his reason in

choosing the good was a libel against human dignity.

E. Naturalism in the Renaissance

1. General Naturalism General: Stoics and Neo-Stoics

Burkardt says that the Renaissance discovered man and the individual.¹ It may be more correct to say that it re-discovered the natural man. Medieval asceticism had bound man hand and foot aesthetically and intellectually. In so doing, it had divorced man both from the nature within and of his world without. In the Middle Ages, nature was a closed book. Communion with nature had been one of the basic aspects of ancient life whose associations had been deep-rooted. The Renaissance then represented the re-discovery both of nature and of antiquity. When, under the aegis of humanist consciousness, man was diverted from consideration of a spiritual image to a natural image, at the same time that it released man's natural forces, it cut his connection with the spiritual authority. The Renaissance is deeply marked by that dualism of consciousness which it inherited from the Middle Ages with its antithesis between God and the devil, heaven and earth, body and soul.²

Renaissance thought has no origin of its own; it simply releases the ancient pagan dualism and Christian principles. The

¹Jacob Burkardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (New York: Harber & Row Torchbook 40, 1958), I, 143ff.

²Cf. Windelband, op. cit., pp. 318ff.

dichotomies implicit or explicit during the previous centuries were released to enable the struggle to carry on in open conflict. The Christian spirit which had transcended the limits of the world and discovered heaven could not conceive of life as closed and immanent as had the Classical world. The humanist spirit denotes the elevation and setting up of man in the center of the universe with no enabling power except as apart of nature. If man derives his dignity from nature, the human spirit then is transferred from the center of the world to the periphery. Paul Tillich, in a discussion of supranaturalism and naturalism, says:

An idea of God which overcomes the conflict of naturalism and supranaturalism could be called "self-transcendent" or "ecstatic." In order to make this (tentative and preliminary) choice of words understandable, we may distinguish three ways of interpreting the meaning of the term "God."

The first one separates God as a being, the highest being, from all other beings, alongside and above which he has his existence. In this framework he has brought the universe into being . . . governs it . . . interferes in its ordinary processes in order to overcome resistance and to fulfill his purpose, and will bring it to consummation in a final catastrophe . . . this is a primitive form of supranaturalism. . . .

The second way of interpreting the meaning of the term "God" identifies God with the universe, with its essence or with special powers within it. God is the name for power and meaning of reality. He is not identified with the totality of things . . . but he is a symbol of the unity, harmony, and power of being; he is the dynamic and creative center of reality.¹

¹Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), II, 6ff.

This latter describes a type of naturalism which could be acceptable to Platonism, Aristotelianism, and humanism. Each could agree that man's rational soul was his crown and his beatitude, and as such, has a royal dignity. Through his reason, i.e., the faculty of his highest level of soul, man may attain genuine knowledge, or life. He may achieve a life of temperance and rational well-being, or may become like the God whose divine attribute of reason he alone among animals shares. Reason employs the service of the will which then puts the body in motion. Only a few iconoclasts like Scotus and others (men like Machiavelli and Calvin) would make the will supreme.

Naturalism contributed to both individuality and collectivism. The individual was free from the societal structures of man, unless he re-subjected himself to their dictums by understanding the human institutions as truly symbolic of nature. Yet, man as in the Platonic scheme becomes a part, not a center of creation except by use of his reason. Reason, then, not man, is the center of the world. This was substantially the position of the Stoics.¹

The paradox of Neo-Stoicism is that while they advocated ruthless individualism, they pre-supposed an immutable law of providence. It is an optimistic deism--but remains deism.

¹Cf. Supra, pp. 14ff.

As we have seen in the case of Stoicism,¹ the individual remains a part of and is not free to be "different" even though under the Christian influence God is considered now to be providential.

The man who mirrors God illustrates the limitations of both God and man. The wise man, says Lipsius, will permit himself to have a rational concern for the sorrows of others but "with discretion and care, that he may not infect himself with other men's contagion; and that (as fenceers use to say) hee bears not others blowes upon his owne ribbes."²

It was this "inhuman" (from the Christian point of view) passivity that brought forth anti-Stoic comments from Erasmus. The limitation of the individual's freedom to relate fully to another individual was decried by many as too acquistively egoistic for Sixteenth Century thought.

2. Stoic Naturalism

Stoicism and Renaissance Ethics

Like other post-Aristotelians, the Stoics were philosophically eclectic. Their physics, derived from Heraclitus, is a materialistic monism that construes all phenomena as body acting upon body.³ In

¹Cf. Supra, pp. 24f.

²The Two Booke of Constancie 1. xii.

³Cf. Windelband, op. cit. p. 80.

such a universe, "Abstractions" like Platonic Justice are unthinkable, and knowledge (as Hobbes was to argue many centuries later) could rely upon nothing but the data of sensation. What we know of the world we know alone through sensation. When our knowledge is wrong it is so because we have misinterpreted the data of sense. Greek ethics were derived from a rationalistic metaphysics and held the good life to be one of rational fulfillment for man, the microcosm who, like the macrocosm, had many parts. Ethics were thus, immanent: man had within him a rational faculty that, if he allowed it to do so, would guide him always upward to the good life.¹

3. Neo-Stoical Naturalism

The rise of Neo-Stoicism in the late Renaissance is an example of recurrence of ideas with variations--i.e., as Augustine attempted to synthesize Platonism and New Testament thought, Lipsius tried to merge Stoicism and Christianity. Justus Lipsius and Guillame Du Vair revived the Stoic catchwords about fortitude and self-reliance. Lipsius tries very seriously to escape the charge of mechanistic determinism by listing four different kinds of destiny.²

As a Christian, Lipsius admits the pagan Stoics were not too careful in discussing fate, but that they had the best concept

¹ Ibid., II, 394.

² Cf. Two Bookes of Constancie i. xx.

of the majesty of God existent among the Ancients.¹ It remains for Luther to revive the truly Hebraic concept of a God of majesty and basic concern for each particular individual.

Summary

Generally speaking the essay has contended two things:

1. With the Greeks, Romans, and Christians from Augustine to Aquinas, we have developed a sort of ontological morphology in which we noted that if creation or fabrication of a world is made the central concept in a cosmology, then individual freedom in the world is, correlatively severely limited or altogether eliminated.

2. In our discussion of Valla, et al, we have shown that immediately preceding, and during Luther's time, there is a new experience of man in the world incompatible with the cosmological causal view. The Augustinian formula of "go within yourself, for there the truth lies" is translated into "go out into the world, for that is man's destiny and freedom."

On the basis of a new religious experience, Luther (in his mysticism) reconciles these two contrary tendencies, preserving both. In doing so, he transforms the concept of individual freedom, by making central not God as Cause, but God as "self-giving." With his concept of servo arbitrio, Luther reverses neo-Stoicism.

¹Cf. Ibid., i. xviii.

CHAPTER VI

MARTIN LUTHER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALITY

Now, having traced the various thought-contributions to the problem of liberty, let us conclude this endeavor by probing how Martin Luther contributed to this problem in terms of the development of a Christian individual. But before preceding to the heart of the matter, at the outset, we should be reminded that:

The Humanism of Italy bore the stamp of an intellectual aristocracy. Its great significance lay in the founding of a free intellectual life. But as to how it was faring with human life in wider circles, it did not concern itself particularly. /underlining mine/ It left the Church, the State, and the life of the community to look after themselves, while it occupied itself almost entirely with intellectual and aesthetic problems. Even Machiavelli himself, in spite of his great interest in national and political affairs, forms no exception in this respect, for that which fascinates him most is the development of the power of the Prince, and he did not trouble himself as to the more hidden powers and conditions of social life. . . . The Reformation is the application of the thought of the Renaissance to religion, by which I do not mean that Luther and Zwingli first adopted these ideas, and then applied them. The greatness of their personality consists precisely in this: that they discovered these thoughts anew in their own experience of life, and clothed them in an entirely original form. They maintained that direct personal experience of life is the real foundation of religion, and taking their stand on this, they

fought against the Church and the theology of the Middle ages. Man's inner powers were freed from artificial forms. Christianity was here really brought back--to use Machiavelli's expression--to the original principle from which it had sprung.

. . . By means of a close personal union with Christ, men are raised above all external circumstances. . . . If Personality is thus to be freed in those innermost relations on which its eternal fate depends from all external authority, a similar freedom can hardly fail /underlining mine/ to be effected in other spheres.¹

The interrelatedness of Philosophy and Theology, and the contribution of Luther can then be shown first in his concepts of God and Creation in contrast with Christian humanism.

Ernest Cassirer says:

In the Renaissance the philosophical and religious issues were combined:

It was precisely the Scholastic character of Renaissance philosophy that made it impossible to distinguish between philosophical and religious issues. The most significant and far-reaching works of philosophy in the Quattrocento are and remain essentially theology. Their entire content is concentrated in three great problems: God, freedom, and immortality.²

* Luther's Unique Contribution to the Context of the Individual

Luther's concept of God is not derived from creation or from knowledge about creation either negatively or positively. There is

¹Harald Hoffding, A History of Modern Philosophy (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), I, 38-39.

²Ernest Cassirer, Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 4.

in Medieval thought a striving after the great and infinite, combined with an endeavor to introduce into its great thought-construction all the elements of world knowledge which it possessed. First, the world of nature as depicted by Aristotle; second, the world of grace which Christ had revealed to the world; and third and highest of all, the prospect of the eternal world of glory. The ideal was a harmonious, ascending series of natura, gratia, gloria, such that the higher spheres did not interrupt, but rather completed the lower spheres.

It would seem, however, that the real Aristotle, not the one of the Thomist interpretation, represents an idea of God which, though it may possess certain theistic features, is not only very different from the Christian doctrine but also incompatible with it. The God of Aristotle is neither a "Lord-God" nor a Creator; God is not even the One who freely elects, nor the one who stoops down to man.

According to Aristotle, the Deity stands in lonely self-contemplation outside the world; for man He is an object of awe and wonder, to know Him is the highest task of man's intellect; this divinity is the goal towards which all that is finite aspires, whose perfection evokes man's love; but just as he cannot expect to receive love in return, he cannot receive from this divinity any effect at all that differs from that of nature, and his intellect is the sole means by which he enters into contact with Him.¹

¹Zeller, Die Philosophie der Griechen, II, I, p. 791 as quoted by Emil Brunner in The Christian Doctrine of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 152.

It is also true that in Aristotle the relation of man to the deity does not play any role in the ethical sphere, as for instance, in the case of the divine law. As the Medieval thinkers had done, the "Christian-Humanism" of the Renaissance under Erasmus attempted to hold together both the naturalistic-intellectual system of Aristotle and Aquinas in addition to Christian Theism. The problem of Aristotelian philosophy was that it set up organic growth as the type of everything which happens in nature.¹ The most it could do, therefore, if carried to its logical conclusion was to describe forms and qualities, while offering no real explanation for their beginnings. Under the aegis of the Christian tradition, this difficulty of an artificial synthesis was ignored. Later humanists followed this pattern to its logical conclusion. Humanism, as its name suggests, places man at the center of creation, and in this sense, it signifies his rebellion, affirmation, and discovery. It has been credited with aiding the individual to find self-expression, self-affirmation, and creativity.

But humanism also contains a diametrically opposed principle, namely, that of man's debasement and the denigration of his person. By regarding man as part of nature (as opposed to the Christian concept of man as divine nature), humanism affirms that man is not in the image of God but of nature. Thus, while it affirmed his self-confidence and exalted him, it also debased him by . . .

¹Cf. Supra, p. 14.

ceasing to regard him as a being of a higher and divine nature. It separated the natural and spiritual man.¹

For the Christian-humanists, God is apprehended by our "proofs" for existence. God is the First Cause and the Unmoved Mover by which understanding is reached by travelling backward from the knowledge that we have of creation. God does not stand apart from His Creation in an I-Thou relationship, but is rather a part of the world of nature.² An understanding of nature and the use of deductive logic were then the key to the understanding of God.

In his book, The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, Cassirer indicates that for the Renaissance era, nature was the "book of God."³ The concept of the homogeneity of nature and the basic similarity of historical phenomena made it possible to move toward either a new metaphysics or an exact science of nature.

Cassirer defines the Renaissance period as an era during which the unity of the cosmos is understood as a unity of direction, but not of actualization. Particular individuals belong together, not because they are alike or resemble each other, but because

¹Pico della Mirandola, Erasmus, and More were not, as early humanists, in this tradition.

²Infra, pp. 105.

³Supra, p. 55.

they are working together in a common task.¹

Furthermore, he divided the Medieval and Renaissance eras by an intellectual demarcation. The Socratic and Platonic concept of the Cosmos was one in which Reason had independence and autonomy. Medieval thought, Cassirer says, is dominated by a concept of a universal hierarchy leading up to God who is transcendent and is reached by man only after passing the upper limits of his consciousness. The Renaissance era is characterized instead by the scientific world of immanence in which we reach the intelligible through the sensible and the universal through the particular.

A form of Neo-platonism appeared in the Renaissance era with Cusanus, as other forms had appeared in Plotino and Augustine. Cusanus had faced the problem of going from the finite to the infinite, and he concluded that achieving knowledge of an infinite God is impossible by this means. He states that God is beyond the necessary limitations of finite reason. Then, by a peculiar reversal, he held that the inability to know, "learned ignorance," becomes a type of cognitive knowledge. In the cosmology of Cusanus, the universe is created by God and consists of particulars, each of which has a different manifestation or "contraction" of the one infinite that is their model and ideal and each circles around its own little center with all held together by their

¹Zeller as quoted by Brunner, op. cit., "Translators Introduction," p. viii.

relationship to the common "Idea."

Approaching the problem of the universe epistemologically, Cusanus discarded the form of Scholastic logic and finally Scholastic ontology. It is said that he stood on the boundary line between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

In this setting, Cusanus is Renaissance, Medieval, and post-Renaissance. By discounting the ability of Reason to approach God, he is Medieval. By leaving the concept of a symbolic hierarchy and adopting a single universe, he is a man of the Renaissance. By having a concept of the relativity of knowledge, he is post-Renaissance.

Cusanus's concept of the possibility of individuality, not as a limitation but as a particular value that may not be eliminated, is a significant step towards individual freedom. It is an individuality; yet it is an individuality that does not go back to the pre-Hellenic chaos or into the nominalist atomism; there is a freedom to be related to other individuals in a significant way. In Cusanus, there is the freedom to be different (inequal), not only distinct individuals which the Stoics had not sensed.¹

Nevertheless, in Cusanus, the Neo-Platonic emphasis is seen with the dualism of matter and spirit. God is the supreme universal,² and mental existence is higher than, and logically prior to, existence

¹Supra, p. 90.

²Cusanus, op. cit., li. 6.

in things. As in Ficino's thought, the full realization of the individual comes only in the deliverance from the things of sense and the union of the soul with God.

But, while Cusanus takes the Platonic dictum that the Good lies "beyond being," and cannot be reached by any series of inferences from empirically given data, the God of Cusanus never quite seems to become a free entity. He is infinite in the comparison to the finitude of creation; he is not to be logically understood, though "learned ignorance" is a way of approach; God is the "other" of Creation, but seems to have an "otherness" derived from Creation, not only in the sense of his negative epistemology, but ontologically.¹ The individual is created by God and sustained along with all nature by the Holy Spirit. Man becomes the center of creation and the universe and becomes a human god. God creates man and then seems to become almost subject to man. This can be probably better illustrated from Ficino who develops his thoughts in a more structured fashion than Cusanus.

Man as a divine being is nothing new. This is found in Plato and Neo-Platonism. Yet, as Nygren points out,² in Ficino the old idea takes on new form and significance. In Plato and Neo-Platonism, man may be fundamentally a divine being, yet

¹ Infra, pp. 117.

² Philip Watson (trans.), Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 672^{id.}.

in his human situation, he is a prisoner. The thought of what he lacks is predominant; he does not possess a high estate himself, but derives his dignity from his participation in the Ideas or Divine world. Man's acquisitive love leads him towards the objectivity of the Divine.

In Ficino, there is a different ontology: Man becomes his own God, which is a typically Renaissance view. The emphasis shifts from the objective to the subjective, from transcendence to immanence. Of the five stages which compose the universe, man occupies the middle one, with material things and "qualities" below, with angels and God above--but he comprises all this in his own person. Man rules the four elements, and is not only God's representative on earth but is himself "God upon the earth."¹ In fact, Ficino thinks that man could make the heavens, if only he had the necessary tools and had access to heavenly material. Man is content with nothing less than becoming God himself.² The egocentricity of Plato and Neo-platonism becomes anthropocentricity in Ficino.

Augustine had stated that love for God and true self-love coincide, but he thinks of a God-orientated love and the man who humbles himself before God finds in God his bonum. Using the same

¹Ibid., p. 675.

²Theological Platonica xiii. 3.

concept of love which is found in the Pseudo-Dionysius, Ficino says that God is the cause of all love but that He loves Himself. God is Eros and loves us only because we are His work. We are then to love God as a means towards loving ourselves.¹

The implications of this man-centered relation to God can be seen in Cusanus, in spite of his comments that Christ alone is our relation to God.² The religious destiny of the cosmos is decided in man;³ any form of relationship to God including polytheism is authentic.

God and creation are seen in the Classical humanist view as Divine ideas within which man finds himself, but they are basically unaware or unconcerned about man as an individual. Man's dignity as an individual is from being a part of a grand but impersonal schemata of existence.⁴ The whole existence itself is cyclic and in this sense without direction.

In Augustine, the cosmos has a linear direction evidenced through the once-for-all appearance of the God-man, Jesus Christ. The God-Creator stands apart from Creation, having given it being, ex nihilo, loving it and maintaining a predestination for all

¹Cf. Nygren, op. cit., pp.678f.

²Ibid., III, 12.

³Cf. Cassirer, The Individual and the Cosmos, p. 64.

⁴Supra, p. 14.

creation; the will of the Creator has taken the place of the Divine Reason. Augustine implies that the Church fulfills the intermediary relationship formerly held by the schemata of reason or even of state.¹

Boethius attempts to free man from the structure by replacing predestination with foreknowledge.² Aquinas indicated that the dignity of man is derived from natural law. The Renaissance structures man as the center of Creation, with an unconcerned, cognitively irrelevant, self-centered, or ethically irrelevant God as the first cause of Creation.

Luther, on the other hand, is willing to discuss Aristotle's notion that the Prime Mover is the cause of Creation and to consider Averroes' causes of motion.³ But having stated that, Luther indicates that he considers Ambrose and Augustine to have given some rather childish ideas on the topics; he expresses preference for Jerome who maintains a complete silence on the subject,⁴ because: "This work belongs to God Himself. . . . It is God who has separated these bodies in this manner and who governs and preserves them." Such a creation is beyond our understanding,⁵ and is

¹ Supra, p. 31.

² Supra, p. 65.

³ Luther's Works, I, A.E., 29-30.

⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

governed simply by His Word and by Him alone. "He spoke and it was done." It is here that we have a radical turn in Luther on the basis of which responsibility in and for the world will be assigned a new place.¹

In a sermon on Romans 11:33-36, Luther agrees that knowledge of God can be derived from observation and experience, but we cannot thereby understand God's essence:

For the reason and wisdom of man may indeed, by the exercise of their own powers, arrive at the conclusion, although feebly that there must be only one eternal, divine Essence, which has created, which sustains and governs, all things . . . This is a knowledge a posteriori, which looks at God from without, seeing Him in His works and government, just as we look at the exterior of a castle or house and from this form an opinion about the character of the lord or householder. But a priori human wisdom has never yet been able to conceive what God is within Himself, and what the nature of His internal essence is.

Nor can anyone, besides those to whom it has been revealed by the Holy Spirit, know or say anything definitive about the Nature of the divine Essence. St. Paul says (I Cor. 2:11): "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." Outwardly I may, of course, see what you are doing; but I cannot see your intentions or thoughts. On the other hand, you cannot know what I am thinking unless, by word or sign, I enable you to understand it.

Much less can we see and know what God is in His own secret Essence until the Holy Spirit, who, as St. Paul says at the same place, "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" reveals it to us.²

¹ Infra, pp. 108ff.

² Quoted in What Luther Says, an anthology, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), II, 539-540.

God guides and controls his physical Creation and is timeless. In contrast, in Christian humanism, God is at the beginning but is not timeless. He is at the beginning of finite things, not infinite. Hence, human activities in the world are a necessary predestined cooperation in the world with God.

Luther brings forward an even more significant concept when he recalls the purposive notion of all creation from New Testament thought.

Luther provides the Copernican revolution in the Reformation by restating the Agape motif. He feels called upon to renew the initial Christian concept of the cosmos. As we have indicated, this supposes a "free" God of Creation who created the world is theo-centric, not egocentric or anthropocentric. It is a self-giving, not self-loving God who creates and controls the world.

This concept, as we shall indicate in a moment, becomes central, taking the place of the concept of the creator God and his "causal" manifestation in the world. On the basis of this religious experience, the "hidden" of God is postulated² which in turn, gives rise to a new experience of human and divine realms as utterly heterogeneous.

"God creates the world out of nothing through the Son, whom

¹Supra, pp. 18ff.

²Infra, pp. 114ff.

Moses calls the Word.¹ Luther renews the concept of the world as a purposive creation of God. He reaches this conclusion from the givenness of the revelation by the "Holy Spirit," and not by reason. God, he says, is manifested through His Works and His Word. Whatever else belongs essentially to the Divinity cannot be grasped and understood, such as being outside time, before the world, etc.²

Luther maintains that God was incomprehensible before the creation of the world, and now after creation, He is within, without, and above all creatures--and is still incomprehensible.

Man is the outstanding creature of creation:

The difference between the origin of man and that of cattle also points to the immortality of the soul, of which we have previously spoken. Although the remaining works of God are perfect objects of wonder and are very sublime, this nevertheless proves conclusively that man is the most outstanding creature: when God creates him, He takes counsel and employs a new procedure. He does not leave it to the earth to produce him, like the animals and the trees. But He Himself shapes him according to His image as if he were God's partner and one who would enjoy God's rest. And so Adam is a dead and inactive clod before he is formed by the Lord. God takes that clod and forms from it a most beautiful creature which has a share in immortality.³

God plans to control man, and man by divine commission is to control the rest of creation. Throughout man's entire life, he

¹Luther's Works, A.E., I, 9.

²Ibid., p. 11. We will at a later point consider his concept of revealed knowledge.

³Ibid., p. 84.

remains in the "hand of God" by destiny. Here, a clarification of "predestination" should be made since the whole notion of predestination is transformed in such a way that a new concept of individual freedom arises.

Luther stands midway between the long Medieval discussions of predestination and those which were uppermost in Protestant controversies for the next number of years. He owes a debt to Augustine, and to the Nominalists as well. With Augustine, he stressed the grace and glory of God and the bondage of the human will apart from God's action in regard to relationship with his Creator. Along with the nominalists, he emphasizes the individual will.

Luther says that in relation to the things below man, he has freedom of will. But in the matters that pertain to God and are above man, no human being has a free will; he is "indeed like clay in the hand of a potter, in a state of merely passive potentiality, not active potentiality."¹

Luther is here concerned with the later schoolman for the "debtor to nobody."² (A scholastic phrase which he quotes twice in the sermons on Romans.) He has the Occamist's distrust of secondary causes, and is above all concerned about the unchangeableness of God in relation to His divine promises. Any real act

¹ Ibid., p. 85.

² Cf. Supra, p. 60.

of love man does for God must be free and uncontrained, and this is possible as Luther sees it only when the will has been set free by God's action. By "passive potentiality," he apparently means that the only possibility of upward movement of man lies in what can be done to him rather than anything that can be done by him.¹

Emil Brunner has observed that in his younger days Luther taught double predestination (man is predestined to be either "saved" or "damned"), later giving it up.² We will consider the setting for this concept in the next section of this chapter under the title "Luther and Mysticism." Let us first summarize Luther's contribution to the Renaissance concept of the "world" or "God and Creation."

The "world" in which the individual was set as conceived by Luther was a world created as a voluntary act of will by a God with a loving purpose:

I should believe that I am God's creature that he has given to me body, soul, good eyes, reason, a good wife, children, fields . . . he has given to me the four elements . . . my life, my five senses . . .³

Created by God, according to Luther, the entire world is therefore responsible to Him. As a consequence, the individual is

¹ Duns Scotus 85f.

² Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God (Westminster Press, 1950), p. 168.

³ John Dillinger, Martin Luther (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1961), pp. 208f.

free to accept all creation as his rightful domain to rule, including many areas previously considered inferior, and therefore unavailable for use or development by man. Matter, sex, and reason are quite proper for man's use. The metaphysical monism or a cosmos which is either God or created by God finds the entire "world" of the individual larger than that of the Hellenists who deprecated matter; and is more inclusive than Augustine, along with the monastics who considered the body and sex, as under suspicion; likewise more intellectual freedom than the Medieval world tendency which did not encourage the full use of reason.¹ Luther is arguing as follows:

By assigning responsibility to God for the way in which the world is constituted in and for man, a freedom accrues to man. In the first place, he is freed from the burden of responsibility for how and why the world is the way it is. In the second place, removal of this responsibility discloses a whole realm, a field in which he can act. That is, by shifting responsibility to God, Luther affirms the theoretical necessity of predestination, the full sense of which is only acknowledged and actualizable at the level of divine thinking and action--a level which totally escapes man so far as he conceives "Being in the world" as the fundamental sense determining his existence as an individual. Luther thus shifts the responsibility for the manner in which (or how) the

¹Cf. Supra, p. 49, lines 13ff.

world is to God and thus alleviates, as it were, the burden of the presence of God in the world.

One of the consequences of this shift in responsibility is that Divine and human orders become radically heterogeneous--a fact we shall consider later on in discussing Luther's rejection of the "causal reference" to God implicit in the human domain.¹ Here, let us observe that once the heterogeneity of the two orders is established between predestination and human freedom, the Divine order remains a mystery, while the human order remains intelligible and subject to the workings of man. In this sense, God, as it were, has left the world to man, and so far as the individual is concerned, God's plan cannot be superimposed on the human domain--i.e., there is no longer that (theological) causal isomorphism necessary for such superimposition, for the world is no longer apprehended as "effect" of a "cause" which transcends it. Freedom of the concrete, mundane individual does not encounter predestination, since it is of a totally different order.

To be sure, predestination is a theological construct which is unavoidable on the basis of a certain religious (mystical) experience, namely, the experience of God's responsibility for the world. Yet, it has as a consequence, individual freedom in the world. The tension between the two experiences--predestination,

¹Cf. Supra, pp. 92f., 106, 107 and see Infra, pp. 120f.

freedom--is resolved by Luther in an ingenious way. He introduces a "non-causal" concept of a "self-giving" God--i.e., a radically transformed notion of Grace, an "existential," not "causal," reference to the presence of God among the faithful.¹

From the view just stated, it follows that since all of the properties of the world are created by, and retain their dependence on, the loving "Creator-God," none of them limit the individual. Man's dignity or individuality is not dependent upon the acuteness of his senses, the amount of his rationality, his personal limitations, nor the authority of other individuals. His unique freedom is to be subject alone to the loving Creator.

The "world" or context of Luther's individual, so far as he is one of the faithful, extends beyond the limits of this life into full realization in relationship to God:

I believe that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God has become my Lord. . . . For after we had been created, the devil deceived us and became our Lord. But now Christ frees us from death, the devil, and sin, and gives us righteousness, life, faith, power, salvation, and wisdom.²

Luther contended that this relationship was a completely free gift given by the God who had first created men.

For Luther, the entire cosmos including access to the Creator Himself was available to the claims of man. The way in

¹A similar, but by no means identical, view is discussed by George Gusdorf, la signification humaine de la liberte, Puejot, Pous, 1962, pp. 92ff.

²Dillinger, op. cit., p. 210.

which this was to be realized by the individual was through means which were similar and yet quite different from the Neo-platonist and Aristotelian methods, or even a combination of the two. Luther's ultimate epistemology depends on a unique Mysticism, which fully actualizes the self-giving of God. We shall examine this in its historical context in the next section.

~~Of Luther and Mysticism: Neo-Platonic, Augustinian, and~~
Luther's Mysticism.

1. Neo-platonic Mysticism

The constitutive element in mysticism is the immediacy of contact with deity, through inner experience, without the mediation of reasoning. The mysticism of Plotinus has three significant characteristics: (1) it is an ascending acquisitive mysticism; (2) it is an intellectual mysticism; and (3) it is a personality absorbing mysticism.

In answer to the old problem, "how from the One, being such as we have described Him, anything whatever has substance, instead of the One abiding by Himself," Plotinus replies:

Let us call upon God Himself before we thus answer--not with uttered words, but stretching forth our souls in prayer to Him for this is the only way in which we can pray, alone to Him who is alone. We must, then, gaze upon Him in the inner part of us, as in a temple, being as He is by Himself, abiding still and beyond all things. Everything that moves must have an object toward which it moves. But the one has no such object; consequently ~~we must not assert movement of Him. . . .~~ Let us not

think of production in time, when we speak of things eternal . . . it had its being without His assenting or willing or being moved in anywise . . .¹

In the mysticism of Plotinus, there is an attempt to achieve intuitive knowledge by a mystical union with the One. This is typically Hellenic with the acquisitive individual seeking knowledge of the Divine idea in an egocentric "world." It is what is called "acting" mysticism, wherein the individual seeks contact with the deity in spontaneous performance. This is different from a "reacting" mysticism, in which the action of the individual is an action in response. In the mysticism of Plotinus, we have acting mysticism.

Plotinus states that the One has no object, and we must not assert movement of the One. He also states that the only object of the Nous is the One. It is an ascending mysticism based on the acquisitiveness of the "lower" form. The motive is egocentric, and is to be fulfilled in a higher form.

There are illustrations of this in the magical mysticism in the Greek Mystery religions. The believer attains, by means of initiation, union with divinity, and thereby becomes a partaker in the immortality for which he yearns. Through these sacraments, he ceases to be a natural man and is born again into a higher state of being. When the conception of the universal is reached, the resultant mysticism becomes widened, deepened, and purified.

¹ Enneades 5. 1. 6.

The entrance into the super-earthly and eternal takes place through the act of thinking. Nous raises itself above the illusion of the senses which makes it regard itself as in bondage to the present life--to the earthly and temporal. The individual becomes absorbed into the one in mystical union. The result is that, while the individual is freed from transience, it is destroyed as an individual.

2. Augustinian Mysticism

The Nominalists carried the union with God back to the concept of a personality destroying mysticism with the union of the individual will with God as a goal and accomplishment of the mystical experience. While this was an attempt to liberate the individual from the limits of reason, it ends in the complete loss of individuality as in the Neo-platonist mysticism.

It is not hard then to understand the sense in which Cusanus speaks of the absorption of the individual.¹ If Cusanus means by this what he literally says, then, he ends with the loss of individuality.

Augustine was familiar with both the Neo-platonist mysticism and the Pauline mysticism. He finds the same concept of self-love which Ficino found in Neo-Platonism, and he joins the Eros of the Neo-platonists with the Agape motif of Paul to create the Caritas

¹Supra, p. 90.

concept which became the basis of Medieval thought. In the De civitate Dei, when tracing the opposition between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of men, Augustine stresses emphatically that self-love is the root of all evil. But he then notes that this refers only to a "false" self-love seeking its satisfaction in something other than God, in things temporal and transient. Thus Augustine accepts self-love when fulfilled in God, rather than in things of the world.¹

According to Augustine (and Aquinas also), man has the possibility of "love to God" and can ascend to the presence of God.² The Areopagite went so far as to say that the Eros was more divine than the Agape.³ Neo-platonism seems to be the one philosophic school which Augustine does not leave behind. Augustine's mysticism is one in which the efforts of the individual bring him into relationship with the deity.⁴ Augustine's mysticism then has the elements of an ascending anabatic mysticism, as was true of Plotinus.

In contradiction to Plotinus, Augustine holds that individuality is not lost in the mystical experience, for the distinction between God and man remains.⁵

¹Cf. Nygren, op. cit., pp. 709ff.

²Ibid., p. 705.

³Ibid., p. 413.

⁴Ibid., V, 106.

⁵Harnack, op. cit., p. 106.

3. Luther's Mysticism

Luther's mysticism is in contrast to Medieval Neo-platonized tradition a descending, self-giving, personality-affirming mysticism. To understand Luther's mysticism and its uniqueness in the Medieval period as well as the resulting contribution to individuality is to first discover his concept of God.

As we have indicated above (pp. 112ff.), As He is in His own nature and majesty, God is not knowable to man. God as shown in His Word (in which He chooses to reveal Himself) and God as He is in His Majesty are two quite different things. God has an inscrutable will which is not known to man:

The Diatribe is deceived by its own ignorance in that it makes no distinction between God preached and God hidden, that is, between the Word of God and God Himself . . . we must keep in view His Word and leave alone His inscrutable will; for it is by His Word, and not by His inscrutable will that we must be guided.

In any case who can direct himself according to a will that is inscrutable and incomprehensible? It is enough to know that there is in God an inscrutable will; what, why, and within what limits it wills, it is wholly unlawful to inquire, or wish to know or be concerned about, or touch upon; we may only fear and adore!¹

Luther then says that God is unknowable except through His Word, by which he means His Agape, shown in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Thus in Luther as in Paul, there is no God-mysticism, only Christ-mysticism. God is both deus revelatus² and deus.

¹Cf. Dillenberger, op. cit., p. 191.

²God known as he reveals himself.

absconditus.¹ The concept was not new.

It was not a novel doctrine in Luther's day that there was an incomprehensible residue of mystery in God. Aquinas recognized it. He can speak with some confidence concerning what cannot be said of God, but can give little positive content to the God-picture. Nominalism denies even this negative description and asserts the total incomprehensibility of God's nature and will. Mysticism claims an independent knowledge of God, but derives its knowledge at a level where all definitions dissolve.²

The notion of Deus absconditus, the essence of the utter heterogeneity of the Divine and human realms, the logical consequences of shifting responsibility for the world to God, has a four-fold implication:³

a. There is a boundary line between the view of faith and the rational world-view. Man cannot presume to arrange events from God's point of view. The ultimate relation of man to Reality and Being belongs to the sphere of faith, not to the sphere of knowledge.

God is the absolute point of reference. "God is He for Whose Will no cause or ground may be laid down as its rule and standard; for nothing is on a level with it or above it, but it is itself the rule for all things."⁴

¹God who remains hidden.

²Edgar M. Carlson, The Reinterpretation of Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 146.

³Cf. Carlson, op. cit., pp. 147f.

⁴Dillenberger, op. cit., p. 199.

b. The Deus absconditus guards against every anthropo-centric-eudaemonistic way of thinking. It does not allow man to seek to interpret the ways of God from the viewpoint of his own interest. To arrive at this view would be satisfying to man, but it would mean that human standards had been applied to God. Luther is quoted as saying that if the divine character could justify itself before human standards, it would no longer be divine.¹ God's responsibility and justification are inherent to an order-form of reality utterly heterogeneous to the human domain.

c. The Deus absconditus of the complete righteousness of God, even when His dealings with man offer no grounds for the assertion. We may not be able to discern this in the light of nature or in the light of grace, but will find it clear in the light of glory:

By the light of nature, it is inexplicable that it should be just for the good to be afflicted and the bad to prosper; but the light of grace explains it. By the light of grace it is inexplicable . . . Both the light of nature and the light of grace here insist that the fault lies not in the wretchedness of man, but in the injustice of God: . . . But the light of glory insists otherwise, and will one day reveal God, to whom alone belongs a judgment whose justice is incomprehensible, as a God whose justice is most righteous and evident.²

Luther's recourse to the "light of glory" seems to indicate

¹Luther's Works W.A. XVIII, p. 645.14.

²Dillienberger, op. cit., p. 202.

how firmly he is trying to hold to a qualitatively defined picture of God. This is in direct antithesis to nominalism at this point. God is not a naked power. Luther is holding fast to the faith that God is love, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary that human experience and world history offer.

The sovereignty and self-determined righteousness of God as Deus absconditus must be seen in the framework of Luther's crucial theological framework: it is to be a comfort to the believer. It is a confession that God can be trusted, that He has a sure and safe destiny for man.¹ As it were, even though man cannot judge God, man can judge social institutions including the Church; indeed, he can reform them since they are no longer conceived simply as an imitating of the workings of God, as a cooperating with God's plan intelligible to man. The tension of this manifestation of individual freedom and God's predestination is alleviated precisely in and through the comfort of confession.

d. In the final analysis, the unfathomableness of God is not a residue left unrevealed. It is the revelation itself which is unfathomable. The real mystery is that God extends Himself to man. Luther does not doubt that God is Agape, but the fact that He is Agape is itself incomprehensible. Faith in the revealed God and the hidden God does not stand in opposition to one another. The mystery does not recede as the revelation becomes clearer.

¹Cf. Ibid., p. xxviii.

Contrarily, the more God reveals His love, the more incomprehensible it is seen to be, the more intense the correlative experience of human freedom.

The fact is that the God who is the Deus absconditus does choose to reveal Himself in love to the individual:

Furthermore, I have the comfortable certainty that I please God, not by reason of the merit of my works, but by reason of His merciful favour promised to me; so that if I work too little, or badly, He does not impute it to me, but with fatherly compassion pardons me and makes me better.¹

The mystical experience of Luther is thus a descending mysticism, in which the One comes down to show Himself. Luther speaks of his mystical experience on which he bases this concept.

God took pity on me and I saw the inner connection between the two phrases, "The justice of God is revealed in the Gospel" and "The just shall live by faith." Then I began to understand that this "justice of God's is the righteousness by which the just man lives through the free gift of God, that is "by faith"; and that the justice "revealed in the Gospel" is the passive justice of God by which he takes pity on us and justifies us by our faith, as it is written "the just shall live by faith."

Thereupon I felt as if I had been born again and had entered paradise through wide-open gates. Immediately the whole scripture took on a new meaning for me. . . . Whereas the expression "justice of God" had filled me with all the more love. And so this verse of Paul's became in truth the gate of Paradise for me.²

¹ ibid., pp. 199ff.

² Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 111.

It is important to note that it is a descending mysticism and also a personality-affirming mysticism. The individual is not absorbed or united with the One. Rather the individual is "born again" with new understanding and, as Luther later points out, this is communion with God, not union with God.

It is the Deus revelatus that solves for Luther the tension between nearness and distance, between predestination and freedom.

Classical and Medieval mysticism speak of the nearness of God and regard the absence of receptivity on the part of man as the only hindrance to a complete union between man and God. In that union the individual is absorbed into the All of divine Being. There is little room for divine transcendence. Realism and nominalism stress the distance between man and God. They meet only through the Church and the means of grace over which the Church rules.

Luther as did Paul preserves both the immanence and transcendence of God, antithetically to the nominalists. Man does not experience the naked power of God but God's love. Luther stresses the nearness of God at least as much as the mystics: "If I have sinned, and all his is mine and all mine is his,"¹ and "Hence all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in Christ."² Luther continues speaking of this relationship in

¹Dillenberger, op. cit., p. 61.

²Ibid., p. 63.

Freedom of a Christian:

We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor. Yet he always remains in God and in his love, as Christ says in John I (1:51), "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."¹

In spite of this stress on the oneness of man and God in and through Christ, the human and the divine are never allowed to melt together as in union-mysticism. The fellowship is one in which individuality is affirmed. In other words, according to Luther, the religious experience, and its inevitable positing of predestination, entails the correlative experience of individual freedom in the world.

The notion of a "hidden God" guarantees human freedom; human freedom, in turn guarantees the mystery of predestination. For the faithful, human freedom points to the mystery so far as faith experiences Grace. The consciousness of the difference between man and God is sharpened by the mystical experience. Luther asserts both the nearness of God and the distance from Him without any sense of conflict between the two.

This is possible for Luther because he stresses the aspect

¹Ibid., p. 80.

of a God in terms of metaphysics, finite and infinite. In this situation, either contact between them becomes impossible, or the infinite swallows up the finite. When the distance is conceived qualitatively in terms of love (Agape), the same quality which lifts God far above man and creates distance between them is also the quality which accounts for God's communico-creating activity. The individual is reached through Agape, and finds himself through the Christ-mysticism participating in the God-mysticism.

It is not an acting mysticism as we find it in Plotinus, but a re-acting mysticism in which the One initiates action and the individual reacts.

The individual finds that he is free in relation to God and a world purposefully created for him. While the Stoic is free "from" the world, Luther maintains that the individual is free "for" the world--i.e., to the world. The concept was Pauline, but the presentation of the concept in the Reformation was Luther's. Here the pure idea of the Agape breaks through the Eros and Caritas of the Hellenic and Medieval thought.

This has significant implications concerning the nature and destiny of man.

Q. Martin Luther and the concept of the individual: as seen in relationship to his "world"; as a rational being; and as having corporeal existence.

At the very beginning, it was stated that any inquiry into human liberty is, in effect, at the same time an inquiry into the nature of the context in which it occurs--i.e., into the meaning of the world. Human freedom and the world are strictly correlative inquiries. With respect to the former, it is important to consider, first, man's genealogical descent or ascent, and second, his value in the sight of God--i.e., the place he occupies in the divine plan of the world.¹

The history of this correlative problem shows successive transformations, and nevertheless, continuations of the problems of man and the world. In the body of the thesis, a systematic attempt is made to show this.

One of the basic transformations can be formulated as follows: The question of nature becomes a question of being.² The continuation of this transformation from Medievalists into Luther is carried out by a triple-pronged attack on the synthesis by humanism, mysticism, and nominalism.³

In a word, in what does this transformation and continuation consist? Formulating it from the side of Luther, we can say the following: Previous accounts refer the world back to production

¹ Supra, pp. 14f.

² Supra, pp. 27f.

³ The continuation into Luther is itself discussed expressly, pp. 107, 132ff.

(e.g., to a demiurge) or even to creation ex nihilo--and the world is the context in which human liberty is to be studied. With Luther, this whole structure of referral is radically changed. The referral back to an artisan, producer or creator is, taking the term widely, a "causal" referral--i.e., a "causal" relation of some kind or other. Thus, man, the individual, is linked to the world and its origin in a "causal" way--e.g., a case in point being Augustinian predestination, or even neo-Platonic absorption into the One, just to mention only two facets of this "causal" referral.

As a consequence, the origin possesses a perfection lack to the world, subordinated to it. This subordination takes many forms, but essentially it consists of: (1) total dependence of the world on God, or a cosmic force and, (2) the workings of the world as cooperative imitation of the workings of a divine realm.. The various attempts to understand individual freedom have been understood in this framework. A good case is Cusanus¹ who goes about as far as one can within this framework in affirming individual freedom while still postulating a creator-God, who is the Cause of everything.

In contradistinction, Luther significantly and radically overcomes this "causality" with his concept of a "self-giving" world.

¹
Supra, p. 101.

disregarding the producer or creator-God by focusing attention on Agape and the like; and here God becomes "hidden," the world devolving on man as for him.

It is here that Luther contributes to a new concept of the world, disregarding, even overcoming the "causal" referral to a producer or creator.¹ Correlatively, we have a new concept of the individual; man acquires a new functional significance within the whole. Indeed, the very elimination of "causal" referral demands that the individual be conceived in a functional, rather than "causal" relation to the world and God. The old relation of part (man, individual, effect) to the whole (world, producer or creator-God, cause) falls apart. The functional significance transforms and bestows on man a new freedom.

The Gestalt theory may be suggestive in illustrating Luther's notion of man. Gestalt's theory rejects traditional attempts to "reduce" the whole to its parts, nor does it advocate that the whole is prior in regard to the parts:

Gestalt theory replaces the traditional conception of parts and wholes in terms of elements by a functionalistic conception. Parts are defined as constituents or "whole-parts." They are conceived of as essentially determined and qualified by functional significance which they have with respect to each other and, hence, for the whole of the Gestalt-cotexture into which they are integrated. The whole is accordingly considered as the equilibrated and balanced coexistence of its functional

¹
Infra, pp. 132ff.

parts in their thoroughgoing interdependence.¹

As a consequence also of the functional concept of the world, or the contexture as a whole, each human is "conceived of as essentially determined and qualified by the functional significance which they have with respect to each other, and hence, for the whole of the Gestalt-contexture into which they are integrated," which we call, with Luther, a "self-giving" world.

As indicated above, person, love, body, soul, etc., all become form qualities--i.e., all the contexture of this self-giving world. This "self-giving" world is the key concept to Luther's contribution to the freedom of the individual. Gathering up all the anthropological statements and setting them in order to construct an anthropology according to Luther is therefore misleading, if this basic premise is missing, namely, that man can be understood only in respect to a self-giving world (for Luther, this was God).

As this point, the difference between the Renaissance and the Reformation is evident. Hoffding has maintained that the Reformation is the application of the thought of the Renaissance to religion.² He indicates that in the process man's inner powers were freed from artificial forms, and all other areas of

¹Aron Gurwitsch, The Field of Consciousness (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 148ff.

²

Supra, p. 96f.

human life became affected.

Cassirer cites Warburg in his work on Luther to indicate the astrological ideas in the Renaissance:

We are in the age of Faust. The modern scientist tries to carve out an intellectual realm for reflection between himself and the object--a realm located somewhere between magical practice and cosmological mathematics. Athens once again wants to be free like Alexandria.¹

The natural philosophy of the Renaissance had tried to find an epistemological foundation and justification of magic. Magic, he explains, assumes that subject and object were originally one, and that on the basis of the identity of subject and object, the Ego subjects nature not only to its intellect but also to its will.²

Subject and object exist in a spatial relationship with mutual and continuous interaction. Man, the Ego, appears to the world at once as the enclosing and the enclosed with both aspects expressing his relationship to the cosmos. According to Cassirer, the predicates formerly applying to Augustine's God are now equally assignable to the human soul.³

The Reformation restated the Augustinian proposition that not "nature" but God was the center of existence. Man, as the

¹ Individual and Cosmos 169.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 191.

Renaissance had said, was the center of the focus in the Created world. But this was true, not because of a God who was for him.

Man was the center of the sensate world according to the Reformation, but he could not be the center to himself, as an ego.

The ontological principle might be stated. Man is immediately aware of something unconditional which is the prius of the separation and interaction of subject and object, not only theoretically, but actually. This prius or other does not appear as a "gestalt" to be intuited but rather as a dynamic demand. The prius for Luther is God's Agape.

Luther goes back to the Augustinian concept again in a Creation ex nihilo, purposive, and loving by a Sovereign God. The subject-object relationship is not spatial but ontological, for God has created space and time along with the rest of His creation. God knows kairos, or event-time, while man is limited to chronos, or the time-of-created-things, except as he is in relation to the Sovereign God.

It is in this sense that man, body, soul, and spirit belong in relation to God, and the various aspects or members perform a functional role in appreciating and fulfilling the relationship to the Sovereign and the rest of creation.

Thus, Luther goes beyond the subject-object approach of both the nominalists and realists. Being is in neither the individual nor the universal as sensate or logically derived; it is the

essence and existence of both.

Luther begins his ontology with God as does Augustine, but in an ontology free from predestination.¹ The God who initiates the World, Time, and relationship, also is a loving God (Agape).

The individual in relationship to this agape world then is free to use each of these created and given aspects of existence. He does not need to use them even for self-fulfillment, for this too has been a gift (justification by faith).

What was required for self-realization in Augustine's Caritas of effort and abilities can now be used freely toward the service of fellow men. H. Richard Niebuhr says that:

Luther understood that the self could not conquer self-love, but that it was conquered when the self found its security in God, was delivered from anxiety and thus set free to serve the neighbor self-forgetfully.²

The dynamic-self-giving-world of Luther posits an individual with the final freedom, namely, freedom from himself. The "Person" of God gives Luther's individual relationship not to a scheme or hierarchy but another Person. This provides the possibility of personality.

¹Supra, p. 104.

²H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Row Torchbook 3, 1956), pp. 174ff.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

As we have indicated in the introduction and later demonstrated, any inquiry into the freedom of the individual is at the same time an inquiry into the nature of the context in which the freedom occurs. Luther's contribution to the concept of individual liberty is found in his presentation of the nature of the context.

In chapter I through V, we noted in detail the ways in which the individual was placed or considered in a cosmological causal view that severely or altogether limited individual liberty.¹

Luther's contributions which are significant may be summarily formulated in three constructs of context which he introduces to the Renaissance world.

1. The individual is freed from the cosmological causal context by introducing the individual not as a creation of the cosmos but rather of a "Free" or Creator-God. In re-introducing the concept of an ex nihilo creation Luther has presented the possibility of an individual with freedom. An individual who is subject to a higher power which is not itself free cannot have freedom regardless of the relationship between the two entities.

¹Supra, pp. 19-20; 38-39; 50, 55, 57-58; 61, 62, 69, 73, 81, 92, 94-95.

Thus the Aristotelian God who is Himself the end result of a system of natural law finds it impossible to grant a freedom which is not His to give. Luther's construct of a God who is prior to creation and not a subject provides the initial premise for the free individual.¹

2. The individual is at liberty within the context of the Creator-God by the establishment of the two realms of the human and the Divine. The two orders are utterly heterogeneous, and therefore the individual is not bound within a theological-causal isomorphism by the Creator God. This provides an individual freedom which does not demand that the individual actualize his context.

Luther's demand for the utter heterogeneity between the divine and human real is the next significant construct of freedom of the individual for it asserts that the individual is not only free from the cosmological causal context but is also free from demanding other than human freedom.²

3. Finally, the individual according to Luther actualizes his freedom in such a way that he becomes more truly free.

Luther's epistemological approach to the liberty of the individual is through the framework of a mysticism in which

¹Supra, pp. 127f.

²Supra, pp. 112f.

individuality is maintained through a communio-mystical rather than a unio-mystical experience.

The individual is free not only to be "not God" but to be in relation to God and all creation without loss of individuality. The radical nature of Luther's crucial theological framework is that the heterogeneity indicated in the second construct is a comfort rather than a threat to individuality.¹

This is possible because the mystical relationship is a descending rather than an ascending mysticism. As Luther would see it, it is not the individual which conforms to the Creator-God, thereby losing individuality in the mystical experience; but the Creator-God who evidences Agape or self-giving acceptance of the individual. The respect for individuality thus shown is a reinforcement of individual freedom not a curtailment of it.

According to the first two constructs, the Creator-God is the ultimate context of the individual, of all intermediate contexts of the individual, and remains so. Since the prius for Luther is God's Agape which by definition shows much respect for individuality that even the relationship is a gift, a radically significant contribution to individual freedom is presented in Luther's three constructs of the context of the individual. The image of Homo cum Deo suggests the highest conceivable freedom, the freedom to relate to the very fabric of existence and yet by virtue of the Agape to be free within the relationship.

¹Supra, pp. 108ff., 123ff.

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