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# A Statement and Criticism of the Doctrine on Human Freedom Proposed by Some Recent Evolutionists

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A STATEMENT AND CRITICISM OF  
THE DOCTRINE ON HUMAN FREEDOM  
PROPOSED  
BY SOME RECENT EVOLUTIONISTS.

PATRICK EDWARD GRIMMIN, S.J.

JUNE 1937

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of  
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### Vita Auctoris.

Patrick Edward Crimmin, S.J. was born in Chicago, Illinois, August 25, 1910. After attending St. Charles Borromeo's Grammar School he entered St. Ignatius High School in September, 1924. He entered the College of Arts and Sciences of Loyola University in 1928 and Milford Novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1929. He received the degree of Bachelor of Literature from Xavier University, Cincinnati in 1933. After one year's residence at St. Louis University, St. Louis, he transferred to Loyola University on going to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana.

## CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY VIEW OF PHILOSOPHERS DISCUSSED

The question of free will has been called by Herr Du Bois-Reymond, a modern materialist and evolutionist, a riddle which will ever remain insoluble.<sup>1</sup> Science, he felt, had no answer for it. However, he recognized the indisputable fact of free will. Unlike Du Bois-Reymond there are many later evolutionists who avoid the riddle by denying free will, or by proposing an evasive solution which in name maintains freedom but in fact is only a soft determinism.

From among these evolutionary philosophers we have selected three for discussion in this thesis, Engels, Ward and Sellars. Frederick Engels is one of those who dismisses the problem by denying free will. James Ward proposes a teleological view which lapses into a soft determinism. Roy Wood Sellars finds no place in his naturalistic universe for any traditional view of free will.

ENGELS

Frederick Engels, co-founder of Modern Communism and therefore important in modern times, presents a strictly materialistic conception of all being.<sup>2</sup> For him matter is the only reality, and in terms of matter and its motion the world and all that is in it are to be explained. Engels plainly regards his philosophy as strictly materialistic and accepts the name that Marx has

given it, Dialectic Materialism. In presenting the doctrine of this Communist spokesman we are using his work "Herr Eugen Durhing's Revolution in Science", which is a refutation of Durhing's philosophy and at the same time a systematic exposition of the dialectic method and of the Communist world outlook. Also, we will cull from his later work "Ludwig Feuerbach", which is a criticism not only of the works of Feuerbach but also of the classical German Philosophy.

#### WARD

The philosophy of James Ward, a Cambridge psychologist and metaphysician of distinction, is set forth in his Gifford Lectures published under the title, "The Realm of Ends, or Pluralism and Theism".<sup>3</sup> The work presents a criticism of pluralism in favor of a theistic interpretation of the world. Ward sets forth an idealistic philosophy which, to his mind, is grounded on the realities of human experience and the sifted findings of the sciences of nature. Departing from the old absolute idealism and accepting the panpsychist monadology of Leibnitz, Ward takes as his starting point the pluralistic outlook; his preference then is for the many rather than the one. In like manner he rejects the a priori method of the older idealists and through the study of effects proceeds to the causes. The picture of reality thus presented is completed with the theistic view of the truth of a transcendent-immanent God, who is the beginning, becoming and end of the many. Ward maintains that such a view is the only one that can give a satisfactory meaning to what we know of the world.

It is rationally justified though it be not empirically verified; that is, strictly speaking, it is an act of faith. The article "Psychology" in the eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica of which he is the author will also assist much in the presentation of his doctrine.

### SELLARS

Roy Wood Sellars, at present a professor at Michigan University, calls his philosophy Evolutionary Naturalism.<sup>4</sup> It is a modified form of Emergent Evolution as proposed by Lloyd Morgan. For the emergents, evolution is a progressive series of stages of being in which there supervenes at each new level a new form of relatedness to ascending levels.<sup>5</sup> Activity or mind equated with God is said by Morgan to be the agency which lifts the world. Sellars accepts the general theory of emergent development but rejects the notion of God. Nature is the only explanation required. Hence, the title, Evolutionary Naturalism. Sellars defines it as an outlook or attitude toward reality rather than as a fixed and dogmatic set of principles. This naturalism, however, is necessarily materialistic for nature is regarded as a complete and closed system functioning essentially upon the genetic basis of the physical world and needing no power or being outside of this system. The presentation of Evolutionary Naturalism is to be found in a book by Sellars bearing that title. Together with that volume another book by Sellars, "The Principles and Problems of Philosophy" has been used as the source from which the presentation of Sellar's philosophy has been drawn.



In this thesis the doctrines of these three will be proposed in three separate chapters with a view to understanding clearly just what each one holds concerning free will. Thus far the treatment will be merely expository and analytic. A similar presentation of the traditional Scholastic doctrine as found in the writings of its leaders will be given. The evolutionary doctrines will be evaluated then in the light of the Scholastic doctrine and their errors and inadequacies pointed out.

Notes to Chapter I

1. This view was expressed in a lecture before the Berlin Academy of Sciences on July 8, 1880.
2. Engels, 1820 - 1895, was the most intimate friend and inseparable companion of Marx. Together they published a number of books and articles on Socialism. Their inflammatory articles against absolutism caused their expulsion from France. Brussels saw the publication of the handbook of Communism, Manifesto of the Communist Party. This manifesto drawn up at the request of the Communist Union, contains the germ of all the leading ideas developed by Marx later on.
3. Ward, 1843 - 1925, originally studied for the ministry and was minister of Emmanuel Church, Cambridge for one year. Later he devoted himself to psychological research, became fellow of Trinity College in 1875 and university professor of mental philosophy in 1897. He was Gifford lecturer at Aberdeen 1895 - 97 and at St. Andrew's in 1908 - 10. Besides the Realms of Ends other important works touching our subject are Naturalism and Agnosticism, Psychological Principles, and numerous articles in Mind and in the British Journal of Psychology.
4. Roy Wood Sellars is a member of the new school known as Critical Realism, This new school resembles closely the school of English New Realism. Sellars was one of the contributors to the volume, Essays in Critical Realism.
5. C. Lloyd Morgan, Emergent Evolution, p. 35.

## CHAPTER II

ENGELS AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Dialectical Materialism is the title given by Karl Marx to the system of philosophy on which the Communistic revolution is based. In defining the two terms Marx said that the dialectic is the theory of the changes, conflicts and resolutions which we observe and which men in the past have observed going on in the world. The meaning of materialism is clear for it simply means that all reality is explained solely in terms of matter to the exclusion of every immaterial being and concept.

Marx calls his philosophy inverted Hegelianism. He claims to have set the philosophy of Hegel on its feet. The inversion came about in the following manner. Hegel maintained that reality is the working out of the Absolute in the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In this way the Absolute was present in the driving force behind the developing world. Marx maintained that there was only the world present and this world was developing into the Absolute. Engels states the position thus:

"Hegel's dialectics is selfdevelopment of the concept. The absolute concept does not only exist - where unknown - from eternity, it is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world. This ideological reversal had to be done away with. We comprehended the concepts in our heads once more materialistically as images of real things instead of regarding the real things as images of this or that stage of development of the absolute concept. Thus dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion - both of external world and of human thought.- two sets of laws which are identical in substance but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now

for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously in the forms of external necessity in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents. Thereby the dialectic of the concept itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head, or rather turned off its head on which it was standing before, and placed upon its feet again. ---- The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which, in spite of all seeming accidents and of all temporary retrogression, a progressive development asserts itself in the end - this fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated consciousness that in this generality it is scarcely ever contradicted." 1.

Reality viewed from this standpoint demands no final solutions and eternal truths. For true and false become only relative terms. Motion is at the bottom of everything, and only when acknowledging this motion can we view reality as it is. Because of this continuous tide of change all constancy in nature, and therefore every basis for absolute metaphysics, is destroyed. By thus inverting the Hegelian process, the materialists attempted to make matter in motion the sole basis of all reality. All notions of spiritual forces were rejected as unnecessary, as having no foundation in reality.

### Communist Way to Freedom

The history of the world shows us that the path of this development will be revolutionary, but in the end will lead to a perfect Communistic world in which all class distinctions have

been eradicated and the forces of production are controlled by the people and not by the capitalist. Under such conditions the individual will be relieved of all anxiety over the means of subsistence. In this state there can be, for the first time, meaning in our talk of real human freedom and of an existence in harmony with the established laws of nature.<sup>2</sup>

The only freedom considered by Engels is this external freedom which is nothing more than economic freedom based on community of ownership. This might also be taken as his definition of freedom.

Is man a free agent in bringing himself to this millenium of freedom? Marx who is of one mind with Engels would say no. In his 'Critique of Political Economy' we find a fuller answer.

He says:

"It is not the conscious mind of man that determines the form of his being, but, vice versa, the social form of his being that determines the conscious action of his mind."

Thus the nature and content of the Capitalist consciousness is quite different from that of labor. The material conditions of each class are the determinants of both their physical and mental action. And as the material conditions of each class differ, so the determinants of their physical and mental action differ. Thus there is one set of principles and ends for the capitalist, another for the laborer; exploitation of the laborer dictated by greed and lust for power, for the first; hatred of the capitalist and the overthrow of the system by revolution, for the second.

These principles and ends, we note once more, are not the result of the choice of the individuals making up the classes but are the necessary result of the laws of nature working themselves out under the peculiar economic conditions of the present stage of the world's development. The individual is not a free being but merely a cell in the organism of his own class. Thus the environment in which the cell finds itself determines its actions; and while the individual may seem to act freely, yet his actions are determined from within by inner-connections peculiar to the class and unknown to him.<sup>3</sup>

#### Necessity in the Class

In like manner the class itself is pictured as being determined by these two factors, 1) the laws of nature operating the same way throughout the whole of nature, and 2) the peculiar economic conditions surrounding the class. Engels considers that this is a valid conclusion from the history of the world up to his day. For the diversity of philosophies, religions, customs, codes of law and the other fruits of men's theorizing reflect the world's development in the minds of men. And the diversity is due to ignorance of the real inter-connections beneath the process of development and the supplying of other inter-connections in their place.<sup>4</sup> These various interpretations of phenomena contain a grain of truth but, due to ignorance, are for the most part false. Just what the grain of truth is which is to be found in these systems, Engels does not say. However, from his dis-

discussion of the question of morality we might conclude that those elements of the different philosophies which support the rise of the proletariat contain this grain of truth.

### Economic Conditions Determine Morality

From the fact that the different classes of society have their special morality Engels concludes that men consciously or unconsciously derive their moral ideas from the practical relations on which their class position is based; in other words their morality is a system based on the economic relations in which they carry on production and exchange.<sup>5</sup> To the objection that there is much in common between the codes of morality of the capitalist class and laboring class Engels responds that the common element in these codes is due solely to the fact that these different classes represent stages of the same historical development having a common historical background.<sup>6</sup> Not one of these codes is the true one in the sense that it has absolute validity. That morality which, in the present, represents the overthrow of the present, represents the future, and contains the maximum of durable elements. And that morality is the proletariat.<sup>7</sup> The good life, consequently, is the one in which the individual, acting in accordance with the laws of nature, helps to promote the process of historical evolution. And since this process means the rise of the proletariat and the destruction of the capitalist class, the furthering of the cause of the proletariat becomes a sort of norm of morality.

## Forces of Historical Development

In speaking of these various driving forces behind the forward movement of the world Engels acclaims these three great discoveries which present a starting point, for the demonstration of the interconnection between the processes in nature in particular spheres as well as between these various spheres themselves. The first is the discovery of the cell as the unit from whose multiplication and differentiation the whole organism of plant and animal body develops. This relation is applied to the individual in saying that the relation of the individual to the class is the same as that of the cell to the organism. The second discovery is the transformation of energy which has demonstrated that all the so-called forces operative in the first instance in inorganic matter are different forms of manifestation of universal motion. This is a justification of materialism. The third is the discovery of Darwin that the stock of organic products of nature surrounding us today, including mankind, is the result of a long process of evolution from a few original unicellular germs. With the aid of these discoveries it is possible to present in an approximately systematic form a comprehensive view of the interconnections in nature by means of the facts provided by empirical nature itself.<sup>8</sup>

Engels, following Hegel, now indicates the forces which in the present economic conditions are behind the process of world development. The motive force of historical development presents



itself in the form of evil, each new advance necessarily appearing as a sacrilege against things hallowed, as a rebellion against conditions which, however old and moribund, have still been sanctified by custom. Since the emergence of class distinctions it has been precisely the wicked passions of man - greed and lust for power - which serve as the levers of historical development. The history of feudalism and of the bourgeoisie is a single proof.<sup>9</sup>

Engels does not stop with the generalization given above but goes further and shows in just what the good life consists. The urge to happiness is innate in man and therefore must form the basis of all morals. Happiness, then, is the end to be sought in life, and what makes me happy is good, unhappy, evil. The basic laws of Feuerbach's morality, rational self-restraint with regard to ourselves and love in out intercourse with others are rejected by Engels as tenuous and superficial. Preoccupation with the outside world rather than with ourselves is the way to happiness. The urge to happiness thrives only to a trivial extent on ideal rights. The material means to happiness are by far the greater source of this happiness. Engels gives some of these means; - "Means of subsistence, an individual of the opposite sex, books, conversation, argument, activities, articles for use and working up".<sup>10</sup>

The morality of Feuerbach based on mutual love and consideration is rejected for the second reason that it is cut ex-

actly to the pattern of modern capitalistic society. <sup>11</sup> Mutual love? There can be no love between the capitalist and the laborer for their classes are opposed to one another. Furthermore, greed and lust for power are the levers of historical development under presnedt conditions; and in order to fubther this process and thus promote the cause of the proletariat we must follow the course which these evil passions dictate. Engels acknowledges the presence of ecil and seems to regret it for he says that the present evil will bring about the future good. And that future good, as has already been mentioned, is the elimination of all classes from society, and the placing of the productive powers in the hands of the people. The final resutl will be the possibility of leading one's life in accord with so-called established laws of nature. Such a life of economic freedom is the only free life.

What we have seen so far makes up the general setting in which the individual is placed. Man finds himself in a closed system of which he is a very insignificant part. Just as the life of the brute and every inanimate creature is beyond doubt necessitated in every respect by the laws of nature, so is the life of each human being. Human nature is distinguished from the others by this one feature that its conformity is not blind but conscious and intelligent. In this conscious conformity to the laws of evolving history, and in it alone, consists man's freedom, as we shall now proceed to show in Engel's own words.

"To him ( Hegel ) freedom is the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood'. Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence of natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and to those which govern the bodily and mental life of men themselves - two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought but not in reality. Freedom of the will therefore means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject. Therefore the freer a man's judgment is in relation to a definite question, with so much the greater necessity is the content of this judgment determined; while the uncertainty, founded on ignorance, which seems to make an arbitrary choice among many different and conflicting possibilities, shows by this precisely that it is not free, that it is controlled by the very object that it should control itself. Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature which is founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is therefore a product of historical development." 12.

### Internal Freedom

The question of internal freedom apparently never entered the mind of Engels. Of course were he to consider it his opinion would be that such a power was incompatible with the materialistic explanation of human nature which the Communist maintains. Human nature and human behavior will some day be completely explained in terms of scientific laws. At present our limited knowledge of these laws does not permit of such an explanation. All that we can say at present is that the will is determined by deliberation and passion.<sup>13</sup> Man wills what he does, but his will is governed and controlled by the laws of his nature.

According to this view, then, the object of the will is

the economic good. For the individual it means the material means to life. And this good is ordained for a still higher good, the economic independence of the human race, the goal of Communism.

In the mind of Engels the goal is quite definite and certain of attainment. It is the end towards which the human race progresses. Engels attempts to account for the apparent freedom in human actions by saying that ignorance of men retards the progress of the race. However, this ignorance does not and cannot change the course of this progress. For the same reason of explaining away human freedom he says that man's influence at times seems to effect what seem to be fortuitous events. Similarly, men do not succeed in fulfilling their intentions. The results of their actions either fall short of or exceed the desired end. However, under all of these events there work inexorably, to the final end, the inner hidden laws which govern and control all events.

#### Summary

Free will, then, has no place in the Communist outlook, Man is a cog in the class machine, nothing more, nothing less. The forces of historical development which move and determine the class are the ultimate springs and determinants of individual human activity. The ends and aims of the class are the only ends and aims of the individual whether he know it or not. The individual is insignificant, the class is the all-important thing in

history and life. It is therefore an illusion to say that man is free, either as a person or as a member of society. His efforts, consciously posited, are actually functions of the unknown inner-processes which he unwittingly serves. His freedom does not consist in personal autonomy, freedom of selfdetermination, but rather in the power to know the inner laws which govern him and to act in accordance with them. His freedom is economic liberty, and the glory of man is to help the cause of the world revolution and make possible the real freedom of those happy individuals who shall witness its triumph.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Frederick Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, pp. 53, 54.
2. Frederick Engels, Herr Eugen Durhing's Revolution in Science, p. 131
3. Frederick Engels, Ludwin Feuerbach, p. 58.
4. *ibid.* p. 357.
5. Herr Durhing's Revolution in Science, p. 108.
6. *ibid.* p, 109.
7. *ibid.* p. 108.
8. Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 56.
9. *ibid.* p. 56.
10. *ibid.* pp. 48 - 50.
11. *ibid.* p. 50.
12. Herr Eugen Durhing's Revolution in Science, pp. 130, 131.
13. Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 59.

## CHAPTER III

WARD AND PANPSYCHISM

Our first exposition dealt with Dialectic Materialism which, as we saw, denied the existence of free will. From this materialistic philosophy we now turn to James Ward's panpsychistic interpretation of reality in which we shall find the author's answer to Du Bois-Reymond's great riddle.

"All individual things are animated, albeit in diverse degrees. Everything has in itself a striving to preserve its own condition and improve itself." These are the words of Spinoza and they are accepted by Ward as fundamentally correct, though primitive. Such a view is fundamental because it takes account of both factors of experience and because, while it is impossible from the standpoint of nature to reach spirit, it is only from the standpoint of spirit that nature can be understood: in a word, the universe is taken to be spiritual - a realm of ends.

From this standpoint Ward interpretes the constitution of the world strictly in terms of mind.<sup>1</sup> Every existent being has a noumenal side and phenomenal side, a body and a soul. Through the process of creative evolution or 'epigenesis' the lowest being has gradually developed from stage to stage until the highest being, man, was attained. The lowest being, in striving after ends, gradually developed through conflict and cooperation with other beings. At the human level, man, by communicating with other human beings, achieves his own creative synthesis in the

characteristic qualities of self-consciousness and rationality.<sup>2</sup> In this highest creature we find the striving for ends ever going on until the perfection of the realm of ends will be attained. This ideal term of the creative series is that perfect harmony "in the consummation of a perfect commonwealth, wherein all cooperate and none conflict, wherein the many have become one, one realm of ends."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, this perfection of the human race is identified with God who is regarded as the beginning, becoming and end of this perfect harmony.<sup>4</sup> God is not a being remaining aloof from the world and creatures but is with these creatures, immanently present in the advance toward the creative synthesis. God's relation to creatures is not to be compared to that of the potter to the clay but rather to the begetting of life by life. This is a brief sketch of the realm of ends and will suffice as a background for our study of Ward's doctrine on human freedom

#### Freedom in the Universe

Ward finds room in his universe for freedom and presents arguments in its defence; but it is noteworthy that he does not limit freedom to conscious beings only. Unlike Engels, who maintains that all creatures are determined by the laws of nature, Ward maintains that there is freedom even in the lowest forms of being. The spontaneous action of these beings is not determined by laws but rather by the ends which are the object of their striving. The soul, or the entelechy of the body, is not limited



to definite functions, but is capable of almost limitless variety. The end pursued prompts the function, and the function in turn develops and determines the structure. In saying this Ward attempts to explain specific activities in terms of final and efficient causes only and thus would do away with anything like a determining form innate in the being. In this way the genesis of the higher range of beings is explained.

Ward presents his exposition of free will by means of contrast. In the first place, he contrasts self-determination with mechanical determination, efficient and final causation with mechanical uniformity, the historical viewpoint with that of science - in a word, 'the realm of ends' with 'the realm of nature'. In the second place, in truly Kantian fashion, he contrasts the noumenal with the phenomenal, and distinguishes the standpoint of the subject from that of the object.

#### First Contrast

Determination, Ward points out, does not always mean the same thing. The traveler, to use his own example, is determined to continue his journey though the wind be strong and the way dusty. Also, the dust is determined to its movement by the wind. "In the first case determination implies efficient causation, self-determination and purpose; it does not imply any uniformity such that in all like circumstances a like determination has always occurred and always will. In the second case on the other hand this is precisely what is implied; whereas nothing is implied as to efficient causation; also self-determination and purpose are either denied or treated as meaningless." 5

Mechanical causation, devoid of purpose and efficiency, together with the necessity that follows from it are only a methodological postulate set down by the scientists. They are unjustified in making this postulate a tested statement of the fundamental nature of the universe and in attempting on this ground to prove the unreality of efficient and purposive causation.

In the same way the term 'direction' is ambiguous and needs to be clarified. Direction in the physical world is purely spatial and is absolutely determinate; direction in the human realm, on the other hand, represents control, guidance and a relation of wills. Science presents us with a realm of mechanical necessity, void of individuality, novelty, creation and guidance. History, on the other hand, is a report of individual initiative and of the occurrence, through freedom, of new achievements and conquests.

#### Rebuttal to Determinism

To the determinists' claim that the same determination is found in both orders, motives moving the will as physical forces move a body, Ward answers.

"Forces, though distinct, combine their effects only because they converge on one body; motives, though distinct, conflict only because they diverge, so to say, from one subject. The forces, that is, are applied to the body, the motives spring from the subject. The body moves in the one path which the forces collectively determine, the subject moves in the one path which it selectively determines. The magnitude of the force is referred to an objective standard, the strength of a motive depends on its subjective worth; the sufficient reason is in the one case mechanical

in the other it is teleological." <sup>6</sup>

Relation of Motives to Choice

With regard to the relation of motives to choice, Ward believes that both indeterminists and determinists make the mistake of thinking of motives apart from the self. Hence the indeterminist sometimes feels compelled to assert that the self decides without a motive - an assertion<sup>a</sup> flagrantly untrue to experience - while the determinist declares that the action of the self is necessarily determined by the strongest motive and is therefore not free. The truth is that the self does decide in the direction of the strongest motive. This, however, in no wise involves a denial of freedom. As Ward conceives it, the determination of the self by its nature is identical with self-determination, since the nature is one with the self.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, such determination does not imply the necessity of any single act at a given time, for the self is never so fixed and limited in its nature that only one act is possible. Thus, the self may be said to determine its act, yet man is also free since determination and causation do not, in the human realm, imply either necessity or uniformity. The distinction, then, between freedom and necessity becomes the difference between variety in the individual's activity, on the one hand, and uniformity, on the other.

The following excerpt from his work will make clearer Ward's understanding of motives.

"Appetite and aversion, that is to say, conation, implies something that seeks and shuns, a subject that actively strives according as it feels and as long as it lives. Psychologists do not ordinarily talk of motives save in connection with deliberation, which in strictness is an intellectual rather than a conative precess; but for the purpose of our present discussion it will be convenient, and need not mislead, if we regard movtives not as pleas or reasons for acting but as impulses or tendencies to action. So regarded, their characteristic is not, that like external forces they move or tend to move the subject, but that they are themselves the subject moving or tending to move, or more accurately, acting or tending to act." 8

### Second Contrast

In the second contrast, using Lotze's figure of a tapestry as an illustration, Ward shows the relation of the phenomenal order to the noumenal.<sup>9</sup> The laws of causation of the scientist apply only to relations within the phenomenal order, but cannot describe the relation between the phenomenal order and the noumenal order. Being independent of the phenomenal order, noumenal causation is not necessitated by it and is therefore free. This Kantian explanation is germane to our discussion in the application of the subject-object concept to human persons. Since the noumenal self is independent of the phenomenal order, it is in that self that we are to look for freedom. And this freedom consists in the spontaneous, contingent response capable of novelty. However, in any particular act there is a relation between the two selves which has a determining influence on the so-called free act. But before going into the question of internal freedom it will be well to consider Ward's analysis of the

free act as opposed to the necessary act of the scientist and the determinist.

### Analysis of Internal Actions

We do not experience the volition within us as being caused by something other than ourselves. If pleasure and pain are verily subjective feeling or affection ( effects ), conation is verily subjective activity or effectuation ( cause ). A motive implies both; and feeling and activity, though distinct, may both arise together in certain situation. But not even the feeling, still less the conation, can be described as caused by the situation, for the peculiar character which the situation has is a quality given it by the subject. The subject, unlike inanimate things, is not indifferent to circumstances, but has ends and aims to realize; and therefore the subject assumes a different attitude towards its environment according as this helps or hinders it in the pursuit of various purposes, which conform to no general law save to that of self-conservation and betterment. The subject's own character determines the character it gives to objects, and its behavior towards them is so far essentially self-determination.<sup>10</sup>

To sum all this up in a few words, pleasure, pain and conation, viewed as such, are immanent activities of the subject, are the subject's response and not the result of some external force which produces these modifications in the subject. In this analysis the question of subjective activity independent of

external causes has been considered. The further question of internal freedom will now be considered.

The "Realm of Ends", whose contents we have up to now been considering, is a metaphysical consideration of the problems treated and says nothing of the question of internal freedom. Ward does, however, give one section to the question of internal freedom in his article, "Psychology", in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and it will serve our purpose to quote that section as he gives it.

#### Statement of the Question

"The mention of deliberation brings us to the perennial problem of 'the freedom of the will'. But to talk of will is to lapse into the confusions of the old faculty-psychology. As Locke long ago urged; 'The question is not proper whether the will be free, but whether a man be free.' In the absence of restraint from without, when a man does what he likes, we say he is 'externally free'; but he may still be the slave of every momentary impulse, and then it is said that he is not 'internally' free. The existence and nature of this internal freedom is the problem.

#### Analysis of Freedom

But if such freedom is held to imply a certain sovereignty or autonomy of self over against momentary prepossessions and blind desires, there can obviously be no question of its existence till the level of self-consciousness is reached and maxims or principles of action are possible. The young child, the brute and the imbecile, even when they do as the like, have not this freedom, though they may be said to act spontaneously. A resolutely virtuous man will have more of this freedom than the man of good moral disposition who often succumbs to temptation; but it is equally true that the hardened sinner has more of it than one still deterred in his evil way by scruples

of conscience. A man is internally free, then, whenever the ends he pursues have his whole-hearted approval, whether he say with Milton's Satan, 'Evil be thou my good', or with Jesus, 'Thy will be done'. But this freedom is always within our experience a relative freedom: hence at a later time we often declare that in some past act of choice we were not ourselves, not really free. But what is this true self more than our ideal? Or perhaps we prefer to say that we were free and could have acted otherwise; and no doubt we might, if the place of the purely formal and abstract concept of self had been occupied by some other phase of that empirical self which is continuously but at no one moment completely presented. It must be admitted, then, that psychological analysis in this case is not only actually imperfect, but must always remain so - so long, at any rate, as all that we discern by reflection is less than all we are. But this admission does not commit us to allowing the possible existence of a liberum arbitrium indifferentiae, sometimes called 'absolute indeterminism'; for that would seem to differ in no respect from absolute chance or caprice."

Internal freedom, therefore, is nothing more than the absence of inhibition and internal conflict. The essential note of this freedom, then, is self-determination independent of external force and internal restraint. The peculiar disposition of the individual is the actual determinant of the act. The variability of conduct, consequently, is never attributed to the will but is said to lie in the mutability of the various forces within the individual which at any given moment determine the peculiar disposition of the subject. Furthermore, the power of free will is actually denied in Ward's rejection of a 'liberum arbitrium indifferentiae'.

Ward now takes up the discussion of the rigidly determin-

istic position.

"On the other hand, the rigidly deterministic position can only be psychologically justified by ignoring the activity of the experiencing subject altogether. At bottom it treats the analysis of conduct as if it were a dynamical problem pure and simple. But motives are never merely so many quantitative forces playing upon something inert, or interacting entirely by themselves. At the level of self-consciousness especially motives are reasons and reason itself is a motive. In the blind struggle of so-called 'self-regarding' impulses might is the only right; but in the light of principles or practical maxims right is the only right. This superiority in position of principles is only explicable by reference to the inhibitory power of attention which alone makes deliberation possible and is essentially voluntary; that is, subjectively determined. But no, it may be objected, deliberation in such cases is just the result of painful experiences of the evil of hasty action, and only ensues when this motive is strong enough to restrain the impulse that would otherwise prevail. Even if this be granted, it does not prove that subject's action is determined for and not by him; it merely states the obvious fact that prudence and self-control are gradually acquired. Authoritative principles of action, such as self-love and conscience, are no more psychologically on a par with appetites and desires than thought and reason are on a par with the association of ideas." 11.

Thus Ward refutes rigid determinism by asserting the intervention of the self in human acts. Unfortunately, he does no more than assert that attention, principles of action and conscience influence these acts. Nothing is said of the nature of the power in virtue of which the individual is able to control attention, on the one hand, and to follow the guidance of principles and conscience, on the other. Furthermore, 'voluntary', to his mind, is adequately defined in the term 'self-determination' as opposed to determination from without.



### Summary

The external freedom which Ward maintains consists in the subject's spontaneity in responding to, or rather following, motives. The motives, then, do determine the course of action, and are nothing more than the individual's evaluation of the object. And since this subjective evaluation does not constitute a constant element, but is always changing, the response which it effects also changes. In other words, the variability of our subjective state is made to account for the notable difference in our conduct when we are placed in the same objective situations. In saying this, Ward avoids the problem of variability, a stumbling-block to determinists. In the same way the feeling that we could have acted differently on some given occasion is explained, not by our internal freedom, but by our different way of now regarding the situation. While rejecting mechanical determinism, Ward falls into a form of psychological determinism, for according to his view we can, from experience, conclude only to external freedom.

Notes to Chapter III

1. James Ward, Realm of Ends, p. 431.
2. Realm of Ends, p. 120.
3. *ibid.* p. 435.
4. *ibid.* p. 452.
5. *ibid.* p. 278.
6. *ibid.* p. 285.
7. *ibid.* p. 286.
8. *ibid.* p. 283.
9. *ibid.* p. 302.
10. *ibid.* p. 288.
11. James Ward, Psychology, Encyclopaedia Brittanica,  
vol. xx1, 11th. edition, p. 600.

## CHAPTER IV

SELLARS AND EVOLUTIONARY NATURALISM

Dialectic Materialism and Panpsychism have given us two answers to Du Bois-Reymond's riddle. Evolutionary Naturalism will give us a third answer. The interpretation of reality proposed by Sellars is distinguished from Dialectic Materialism and Panpsychism by its rejection of both materialism and vitalism as fundamental tenets. Another noteworthy characteristic is the explicit anti-theological and anti-religious bias which, at the hands of Sellars, becomes a vital element of Evolutionary Naturalism.

Emergent Evolution in Nature

The plan of nature which presents itself to the emergent evolutionist is likened to a pyramid of tier-like construction. A process of creative organization leads at each stage to the advent of gradients or levels above. Each new level depended upon the energies and conditions of the lower level and was adjusted to this wide-spreading foundation. Matter, itself, was evolved. Then came the earth with its waters, its salts and fertile earth, and the sun giving it radiant energy. Then, little by little, came life reaching upward to more complex forms. The story is a long one, not completely deciphered, for whole chapters are missing in the records. Slowly life lifted to mind, the human mind being the latest and highest to appear. Pre-history gave way to

human history; and society with its fruit, civilization, began to dominate the surface of the earth. Something of this sort seems to be the unavoidable reading of the facts which science has collected. The advantage of such a reading is that it explains the co-existence in nature today of things so different as minerals and government, the stormy ocean and the human mind which contemplates it and sees in it beauty and destruction.

The evolutionary theses, in other words, would hold that things of different orders behave differently and that the laws which formulate this behavior are not deducible from one another. This conclusion is frequently expressed by saying that the laws of nature form a hierarchy in which the different levels are discontinuous. This logical, or deductive, continuity, does not conflict with the genetic continuity of orders of things in nature. But it means that there are 'junctures' in nature at which critical arrangements occur with the origination of novel properties. Genetic continuity is not smooth but mutative, as it were. What nature does we must accept. Knowledge is an affair of discovery. For this attitude, S. Alexander and Lloyd Morgan, two very able English thinkers, have an attractive phrase. We must, they say, accept these mutative junctures with 'natural piety'.<sup>1</sup>

#### Evolutionary Naturalism

Sellars rejects the traditional explanations of evolution, the various forms of vitalism, final causality, the dif-

ferent dualistic postulates, because they emphasize external finality or teleological interaction in nature and refuse to admit that the different physical systems, that is, inorganic matter and the different levels of organic matter from the plant to man, contain their own trends. Furthermore, he says that the assumption underlying these different explanations has no justification for the theory of originative evolution. For this reason he calls his own position Evolutionary Naturalism. But just what precisely is meant by that title as contrasted with the rejected theories is not made sufficiently clear. The best characterization of Sellar's naturalism is Ward's creative evolution minus its spiritual element. Consistency would demand that such a system be mechanistic and purely materialistic but here, perhaps, natural piety intervenes and enables the naturalist to cling to evolutionary naturalism.

#### The Nature and Place of Man

In this pyramid of tier-like construction man emerges, just a stage beneath the peak, as a very highly developed organism with a complex nature and a variety of functions, a new level of behavior. The distinctive qualities of this level are mind and self-consciousness.

Mind is the relatively permanent organization of habits and tendencies which enables the animal to react as a whole to the stimuli and to adjust itself intelligently. Mind is something which grows and develops with the organism.<sup>2</sup>

Consciousness, the second distinctive quality of this new level of behavior, is a function of attention, stimuli and associations. It is a continually changing stream. The function of consciousness is guidance. It presents to the mind a sort of survey when the brain-mind is seeking to adjust itself, or to solve a problem.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, according to this view, the higher activities of man, intellection, discriminative choice and aesthetic appreciation are taken to be adequately explained by the complexity and high degree of development of the organism. We find no mention of faculties or powers as such. The self is a very complex kind of reality. It is an organized system of habits, information, aims and sentiments.<sup>4</sup> Let this suffice for the view of man as he is in himself and let us turn our attention to the problem of freedom.

#### The New Setting of the Problem of Freedom

The problem of free will receives much the same treatment from Sellars that the other problems received. Considerable space is given to the rejection of other doctrines but little is said as to a thorough solution of the problem. The question of free will has been cleared up in many respects in the years of controversy which have raged around it. The setting of the debate has shifted from the question predestination to the present problem of the individual's freedom from nature. This modern shift in the state of the question is due, in large part, to an

awakening to the impossibility of the naked-soul conception of personality and self-hood. We must not think of our wills as being free but as ourselves as being free. For what are we? Concrete persons who are agrowths in nature at the social level. Each individual is a distinct growth from the roots of heredity and environment. Yet in appealing to these roots we must be careful not to deny the fact of our sense of internal choice and valuations. Sellars deprecates the description of self as a product for simply to say that the self is a product suggests that it is a sort of impersonal and mechanical resultant of certain forces and that consciousness is an epiphenomenon which contains a helpless spectator who feels himself carried on down the stream of events. Even to speak of the self as a growth is apt to be misleading, for the conscious self is again imagined as a spectator rather than as a participant in the growth. The point to realize is that an individual is his personality and that his will, desires and values are intrinsic to that personality. The relation of this self, or personality, to heredity, the individual's freedom from nature, is evidenced by the rebellion against heredity which at times arises within us. For when we rebel against heredity, that means that we wish that we had better capacities and, perhaps, better health. When we rebel against environment, that means that we wish that we had had better opportunities. And both wishes are at once natural and futile. We are up against what is called our specific fates. But such spe-

cific fate does not rob us of our capacity to select and create along the lines of possibility which our nature and circumstances indicated. It is I who choose to do this rather than that. I choose it because I desire it and believe it desirable. Only external constraint can rob me of this active and courageous choice which gives zest to my life. My conscious self is not something which merely witnesses the play of physical and organic forces as in a dream. Instead, it is felt as a very centre and focus of choice. And I believe that this feeling is valid, I want something intensely and do my best to get it.<sup>5</sup>

### Freedom and Responsibility

In studying the questions of freedom and responsibility we must be careful, Sellars says, first to free them from their theological setting. A soul was thought of as a naked reality having an innate power of decision, or faculty of will, and gifted with the knowledge of right and wrong. Because of these gifts, it was responsible. If it freely, that is, without compulsion from without, chose what was wrong it committed a sin and must expect to be punished by its creator. But such a solution is too abstract and artificial. For, once more, what is the will; what is the nature of a moral judgment? Is there any assured knowledge of right and wrong as commands of a sovereign master? These are the questions which Sellars puts to this "schematic and legalistic" view. The answers which he himself gives to these questions will throw some light on his doctrine of human freedom.



The reply to the first question is that the will is a function of a developing complex of instinct and experience.<sup>6</sup>

The second question is treated at length in the discussion of the nature of a moral situation. A moral situation is one in which matters of importance as regards "ourselves and others are up for decision. As a rule, a moral question does not arise over mere technical questions of the best means, from the standpoint of intelligence and efficiency, to accomplish a desired end, but, is rather concerned about the human effects and relations of those means and ends. The individual is confronted with a situation in which the choice which might be made has good effects and bad, reasons for making it and not making it. It is up to the individual to think the situation through and evaluate the possible acts which he might posit in this situation. Unlike a purely intellectual judgment, the moral judgment is directly connected with choice and possible action. In making a choice, what are called 'self-assertive' or 'determining' tendencies are at work. And these tendencies are a part of the self which, however, is larger and more inclusive than they, taken separately. At certain times some tendencies are more powerful in us than at others. We may be ambitious at one time and inclined to leisure and pleasure at another, sensitive to the presence of people of the other sex or for a time distinctly ascetic. But, at any moment of choice, the self is a fairly dynamic and selective centre of being.

Sellars' meaning in the above is further clarified in a statement he makes concerning the place and effect of deliberation of choice. If we could know exactly the situation confronting an individual, that is, his valuations, desires, his courage, we could foretell his conduct. Or at least we could predict the general line of it. For these psychic dispositions are the actual data of his own decision; and as soon as these became stable in deliberation, the choice would be fixed.<sup>7</sup> The relative force of these assertive and determining tendencies, then, together with the peculiar disposition which happens to be upon the individual at the time are the determinants of choice.

#### Sense of Duty and Responsibility

This question of moral judgment necessitates the study of the sense of duty and 'ought' together with the question of responsibility. This organized, integrated, more or less socialized self - while always more or less fluid - has a momentum and implications which our intelligence shows us is opposed to desires which spring up now and then. The sense of 'ought not' is the feeling which accompanies this conflict in which the organized self senses its incompatibility with a desire. This sense of ought is the basis of the moral categories which are inevitable, Sellars says, to such a real self with choice and valuation intrinsic to its very nature. Here, then, we have his analysis of the sense of duty.

Now let us apply this analysis to the question of responsibility. A person is held to be responsible if he has the capacities and is controlled by the motives which are characteristic of society. It means that he is a certain kind of person, one fit to be a member of society, one who "appreciates human relations. And such a person is one who is regarded as (1) controlled by social sanctions such as public opinion and fear of punishment, and (2) has moral insight and makes personal choices in accordance with the welfare of himself and others. Only such a person should be accredited as a genuine member of society.<sup>8</sup> If his actions conflict with the judgment of society he will be punished. According to what Sellars maintains, then, responsibility simply means that the individual has been born with self-asserting and determining tendencies which move him to act in accord with the laws and customs of society or at least are amenable to correction and adaptable to change when they are found to be violating the laws of society. Sellars concedes a personal corrective power; but as to its ultimate source in the individual, he says nothing.

#### Fate or Freedom

In the same way does Sellars treat human behavior in the vexing question of fate and its bearing on the problem of human freedom. He proposes the following objection which is frequently put to the professor by the student.

"If I am a product of my heredity and environment, how can I be held responsible for my actions?"

His answer, again and yet again, is that the point to realize is that an individual is his personality and that his will, desires and values are intrinsic to that personality.

"Why cannot I be held free? Take me at any moment and I am free in so far as I can carry out my plans. And I am responsible for my actions if they are my actions and chosen by me. In fact, that, as we have tried to show, is all that responsibility means." 8. But just what part does the will play in all of this? Assertions are made but no explanations are given.

Sellars answers the third question by saying that we come to a knowledge of right and wrong through experience in which we gradually come to evaluate things for ourselves and become acquainted with the demands and prohibitions of society. This is all the product of evolution. Laws come from within nature and are not imposed upon it from without.

#### Summary

Thus does Sellars present his views on human freedom. Spiritual powers are rejected, on the one hand as being unnecessary and, on the other, as being mere fictions introduced to satisfy the theological bias of certain philosophers. Furthermore, matter, considered as the sole primary element in the process of emergent evolution, is regarded as the ultimate source, not only of all beings, but of their proper activities as well. The doctrine which follows upon such presuppositions appears to be an effort to explain human freedom without a free human agent. For the source of all activity such as choice and power of control is said to be the highly developed bit of protoplasm known

as man. All that is said could, with but a few exceptions, be said of the brute beast. For the freedom spoken of is nothing more than spontaneity and the possibility of variety in action. Trends and impulses are supplied in the place of free will with the result that responsibility is made impossible. It must be said that there is no real internal freedom of the will in this doctrine, and the best that can be said for it is that it is a very weak form of psychological determinism.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. Roy Wood Sellars, The Principles and Problems of Philosophy, pp. 363 - 365.
2. The Principles and Problems of Philosophy, p. 388
3. *ibid.* pp. 381 - 382.
4. *ibid.* p. 382.
5. *ibid.* p. 488.
6. Roy Wood Sellars, Evolutionary Naturalism, p. 276.
7. Evolutionary Naturalism, p. 275.
8. The Principles and Problems of Philosophy, p. 489.

## CHAPTER V

SCHOLASTIC DOCTRINE OF FREE WILL

In studying the doctrine of free will presented by Scholastic Philosophers we shall proceed in a manner somewhat different from that of the authors we have just seen. Our exposition, in this case, will begin with a definition of the terms with a view to determining at the very beginning just what we are talking about; with a view to understanding thoroughly the explanations and arguments proposed. Freedom in general is the immunity of an agent from some restraining influence. And of this there are three kinds, freedom from external coercion, freedom from necessity and freedom from obligation. Freedom from external coercion, or freedom of spontaneous action as it is also called, means that the action of the agent is not the result of external physical force and that the natural movement of the agent is not impeded by an opposing physical agency. Thus the lion in the jungle is free to roam where he chooses while the caged lion is deprived, to a great extent, of such freedom. Freedom of independence or freedom from obligation, is the immunity of an agent from the moral obligation imposed by a lawful superior. In the strictest sense of the word this freedom is found only in God, the source of all lawful authority. In a wider sense this freedom is enjoyed by men in those acts which are neither commanded nor forbidden by human or divine law. In such acts man is free and independent.

## Analysis of Freedom of Choice

Freedom of choice, freedom in the strictest sense of the term, is the central subject of our controversy. This freedom not only involves the immunity of an agent from external coercion, but the absence of that necessity which governs the activity of all material beings, whether they be inorganic matter, living organisms, or even sensitive beings as such. All these beings are governed in their operations by necessity, that is, left to themselves, they must act as they do and cannot act otherwise. The work of the bird in building its nest and the work of the bee in its hive is governed by necessity as is the ebb and flow of the tide. Without this necessity the natural sciences would lack their basic principle, that is, uniformity of nature. The necessity, then, which governs these agents arises from within their nature.

The sensitive appetite of both brute and man, guided as it is by mere sense knowledge, is restricted to the sphere of sensible and material good. This limited range is the result of the nature of the sensitive faculties. These powers can know and act only upon the concrete individual objects perceived by means of sensible qualities. But the rational appetite or will, guided by the intellect, is not so limited and can extend to things of a higher and the highest order. Because of the higher nature of these faculties they are not restricted to the sphere of sensible objects but can know and act upon immaterial things, abstract



concepts, the moral good, the heroic and the sublime. Consequently there is only one limitation set to the activity of man's will; it can only strive after what is good. Man never has a motiveless volition and everything he chooses has something good in it for him, albeit in some instances out of proportion to the evil accompanying it. The range, then, of man's rational striving is as wide as the range of the transcendental note 'good'.

A definition of freedom of choice as stated by Gruender is 'that endowment in virtue of which an agent, when all the conditions requisite for the performance of an action are given, can perform the action or abstain from it, can perform this action or that' 1 This is nothing but a concise expression of what we know from our own experience, that our will possesses personal dominion over itself in so far as it can actively determine its own line of action. And this dominion is known as active indifference.

#### Freedom of the Other Faculties

Here it will be well to clear up some possible misunderstandings. There is only one human faculty for which freedom of choice is claimed, namely the rational appetite or will. All other faculties of man, cognitive and appetitive, are not free. In the presence of their proper objects and all the conditions requisite for the act they function necessarily unless the will intervenes to redirect their activity. Thus the freedom and control which the other powers seem to have is not their own, but is their response to the power of the will which controls them.

'A thing is said to move in two ways; First, as an end; for instance, when we say that the end moves the agent. In this way the intellect moves

the will, because the good understood is the object of the will, and moves it as an end. Secondly, a thing is said to move as an agent, as what alters moves what is altered, and what impels moves what is impelled. In this way the will moves the intellect, and all the powers of the soul, as Anselm says (Eadmer, De Similitudinibus). The reason is, because wherever we have order among a number of active powers, that power which regards the universal end moves the powers which regard particular ends..... Now the object of the will is good and the end in general, and each power is directed to some suitable good proper to it, as sight is directed to the perception of color, and the intellect to the knowledge of truth. Therefore the will as an agent moves all the powers of the soul to their respective acts, except the natural powers of the vegetative part, which are not subject to our will." 2

The control of this higher faculty or appetite in man is made manifest by the consciousness of struggle which we experience at times, when for reasons apprehended by our intellect we oppose the promptings of our lower appetency. St. Paul gives classical expression to this struggle when he says, "But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

#### Conditions for Free Choice

Another point that must be cleared up here is the extent of this freedom of the will. Not every act of the will is claimed to be free. The claim for freedom is this. When all the conditions for a free volition are given, our will is endowed with the power to elicit the act or abstain from it, to choose among various objects intellectually apprehended as good. The

first of these conditions for free choice is the state of consciousness or attention. That is, we must be aware of what we are doing. Thus when we are asleep or half asleep or in a state of drowsiness there is not that awareness of the act requisite for a fully free choice. In the same way when we are distracted or engrossed in thought we are not fully conscious of our external actions and therefore cannot be said to have the same freedom that we have when we give those acts our full attention. Consequently, when we become aware of what we are doing in such a state we frequently repudiate the act. This immediate repudiation shows that we did not deliberately choose the first course of action, that we did not have full knowledge of what we were doing and therefore were not free.

The second and more important condition for free choice is intellectual deliberation, that is, weighing the motives intellectually apprehended. Every free volition must be preceded by a judgment of the comparative goodness of the various objects of choice. Such a judgment is known as the objectively indifferent judgment.

#### Consideration of the Motives

An objectively indifferent judgment is one in which the reasons for and against a definite line of action are proposed and recognized. In such a judgment the object is proposed as desirable on the one hand and not necessary on the other. There are really two judgments involved in it. The one proposes the

motives for striving for the object, while the other proposes the motives for rejecting the object which has been intellectually apprehended as good. In treating of this matter we must ever keep in mind that every judgment of ours in regard to finite good is always, at least virtually and implicitly, dual in character, expressing motives for and against its choice. No finite good brings unmixed bliss to me; every finite good has some evil connected with it, be it ever so little. Virtue is attractive, but I am also aware of the difficulty of self-control and the demands of sacrifice. Illicit pleasures are very attractive, but there is also the knowledge of the wages of sin. These of course are the extremes but every deliberate consideration of choice will find its place somewhere between the two. Thus it is that man, by means of his intellect, is able to study every aspect of a situation and can find in it reasons for and against a certain course of action. It is, then, in this intellectual faculty with its power of weighing the relative merits and demerits of the object proposed that we find the root of freedom.<sup>3</sup>

### Active Indifference

The next question which presents itself for consideration is that of active indifference. Indifference is opposed to determination; active is opposed to passive. Indifference when predicated of the will may denote that disposition which is called apathy and is that property in virtue of which the faculty is not determined to strive after a certain object in particular. It

might be said here that other faculties are thought to be endowed with this power since they are not determined to one line of action. But the peculiar indifference of the will is expressed and qualified by the term active. The will is actively indifferent while all the other faculties are passively indifferent. The other faculties are determined to a particular line of action by a cause from without. The peculiar stimulus which acts upon the senses at any moment determined the line of action of the senses. But the free will determines itself. When various conflicting motives solicit the will in various directions the will itself can determine its own attitude towards the motives intellectually apprehended. It can choose or refuse to accept pleasure, it can choose or refuse to do its duty, whatever the circumstances of the case propose. The determination, then, to a particular line of action originates in the will and hence its indifference is called active.

In all that has been said so far the one object was to show what was meant by free will. But what are the arguments that can be brought forward for the doctrine of free will? There are three arguments which we shall now consider. The first is an argument from our own experience in conscious deliberate acts. The second is based on the need of free will for true morality. The third is based on the need of free will as a necessary complement to man's nature.

Argument from Consciousness

From introspection I know for a fact that very often it is in my power to choose among various actions which I have motives to perform. An example of an action to, the performance of which we attach very little importance will serve as an example.

After having given, for instance, a few hours to study in my room, I realize it would be good and desirable to interrupt my work for a few moments. I feel sure I shall feel better disposed for work again after a few moments' rest. On the other hand, I realize that this interruption of work is by no means necessary for me, at least not at this precise moment. I may easily put off the interruption for a while longer. Furthermore, I realize that this change, though desirable even at this moment, is not only not necessary, but in a way very undesirable. I am just ready to jot down an argument which at least in its present form may escape me if I divert my mind by an interruption. As a matter of fact, all motives considered, I come to the conclusion that it is preferable to postpone the interruption. Here are clearly all the prerequisites for free choice. The comparative desirability of two courses of action is clearly before me and I am quite conscious of their desirability and pay attention to it. While as a matter of fact the stronger of the two motives was followed, it cannot be said that this motive determined the choice. On the grounds of the same consideration I could have also interrupted my study. In that act and all such acts of the

free will it is impossible to predict with absolute certainty just what is going to be done in given circumstances. In such acts there is an element strictly incalculable, namely, the free choice of the will.

Further evidence for the existence and function of free will can be found in the conduct of any person about to make a great change in life or about to enter on an important enterprise. In such matters people do not as a rule act impulsively but rather give the subject much thought and consult others on it. Now it would be impossible for them to treat the matter in this way if they were not endowed with freedom. If they were always determined by the conditions around them and were not free, how could they put off the decision until after due deliberation? Secondly, what use would there be in studying the situation if eventually the choice did not lie with the individual but must come as the necessary result of attendant circumstances? Evidently, then, there is some power of determination within the individual that is conditioned and influenced by motives but in no way determined by them.

Then, too, such a thing as self-reproach and kindred feelings would be absurd except we be free. We may be sorry for something which we could not help doing but we in no way reproach ourselves for it. The difference in the two feelings is simply that in the one we know that we were free and could have done otherwise while in the other we dislike the result of the act but

feel that there was nothing to be done about it. In the same way we are sometimes disturbed by strong emotions and desires which create a great disturbance within us about at the same time we are conscious of the fact that we need not consent to these feelings, that we must not make them our own by consenting to them. And this is only possible in the event that we are possessed of a power in virtue of which we are able to withhold our assent and combat these feelings. That is to say, the only adequate explanation for these feelings and the only sufficient reason for their existence is the presence within us of a power which is not determined by these feelings but is free to consent to them or combat them. And that power, we say, is free will. Indeed, our own experience gives us no end of evidence for the existence of freedom of the will.

#### Argument from Morality

The second argument for the freedom of will is the argument from morality. One of the most important characteristics of man's superiority over the brute is his morality. But if he has not the power of self-determination or of free will as we have defined it then it is useless to talk of his morality. And that is to be the burden of the subsequent exposition.

Obligation is not a mere conventionality, not a mere name, but a reality. Man is really and truly obliged in conscience to perform certain actions and to avoid others. But this obligation supposes that man is free. Therefore, man is free. Everyone



will admit that debtors must pay their bills, that the parties entering on a bilateral contract must perform their parts of the agreement, that children should honor and respect their parents, and that many other obligations arise from human relationships. No matter how men may try to explain away obligations, they could not reasonably maintain that all such obligations are simply the fictions of old-fashioned medieval moralists, not true for every age. But, as we said above, all this supposes that man is free. If man is not free, he is necessitated in his actions, they are beyond his control. But if he be necessitated, of what good is it to preach to him of obligation and responsibility? You might just as well preach to a machine. And it is equally ineffective to attempt to hold the validity of obligation in the face of psychological determinism as it is to hold it in the face of strict mechanical determinism. For in both cases the control required for morality and obligation is lacking.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Greater Seeming Good

The determinists attempt to hold the validity of obligation and morality along with their doctrine by saying that the will always follows the greater seeming good. But in saying this they prove nothing against free will. The "greater seeming good" may stand for anyone of the following; the more pleasurable; the more rational good; what is more in keeping with our habitual inclination; what is more in accord with our present actual inclination ( and this latter embraces two possibilities ); what is more in

accord with our present actual indeliberate inclination; What is more in accord with our present actual deliberate inclination. Now in all meanings of the term except the last, the statement of the will's submission to the "greater seeming good" is false because it is contradicted by experience. Experience proves that all men are not epicurians; that all men are not saints; that many a sinner has reformed and many a hero has fallen; that men fight valiantly and successfully against temptation. But now let us consider the last meaning of the term: "Men always act in accord with their actual deliberate inclination". This is true and always will be true. It simply means that men always actually incline towards that towards which they actually incline. And that is the same as saying that that motive prevails which the will makes to prevail.

Now the greatest fault in the statement we are considering is its universality. It is true that we sometimes, perhaps often, follow the greater seeming good in the sense that we follow the line of least resistance, whatever that happens to be. However, the point to be stressed here is that even while following the greater attraction we frequently realize most clearly that we do so as a result of our own free choice, fully aware that we can change our resolution without any change in the perception of the greater seeming good. Furthermore, if we did not have the power of free choice we should be unable to act at all in those instances where the motives for and against an act, or the motives for

any one of a number of possible acts were all equally strong. For in such an instance there would be no greater seeming good. However, experience teaches us that this is not the case and that we can and do act in such circumstances. The theory of the "greater seeming good" is only true when understood as the practical judgment which precedes the execution of the choice but which is made consequent upon the choice of the will. <sup>5</sup>

### Effect of Environment on Action

Another favorite claim of the determinist is that men are the result of their environment. Again, the fault lies in making the statement universal in reference to men's actions. Experience can be called upon again to show that this statement is false. History gives us any number of instances of good men coming from a bad environment and bad men coming from a good environment. At the same time it is true that our environment does have some influence on us. But our environment only influences us, it does not determine us. It is also true that there are individuals who are strongly influenced by their environment, who would be good if good influences were brought to bear upon them and bad if bad influences were brought to bear upon them. But this is not due to the fact that they are not free but rather to the fact that, not choosing to exercise the freedom they have, they prefer to act in accord with the people with whom they find themselves. The present crisis in Spain shows clearly that more than environment enters into the determination of men's actions. In the same

location there are to be found Royalists, Socialists and rabid Anarchists. Apparently the environment was not the determining element of the choice of the individual members of these groups. Furthermore, it is quite possible that some individuals had left one party and taken up the cause of one of the others without any noticeable change in the environment. It is clear, then, that the environment does little more than influence the individual by presenting motives for and against possible courses of action. And it is the individual, whether in a favorable or unfavorable environment, that ultimately determines his own course of action. In this way alone can we account for the variety of political parties, not only in Spain, but in practically every country in the world. Finally, the same freedom of choice which individuals enjoy in choosing their political affiliations they likewise enjoy in every deliberate action and can therefore be held responsible for it.

#### Necessary Complement of Man's Nature

Now let us proceed to the third and last proof of free will which is based on the need of free will as the necessary complement of man's nature. Owing to his rational nature, man is capable of objectively indifferent judgments, that is, of judgments which exhibit motives both for striving after and for rejecting any particular line of action. But these objectively indifferent judgments are to no purpose unless man's rational appetency or will is actively indifferent, that is, unless his will

is free. Therefore, man's will is free. The object of the will, as was said above, is the good apprehended by the intellect. In so far as an object is presented to the will as good it is desirable, but in so far as it is presented as evil it is undesirable. Now there is only one object that moves the will necessarily and that is the object which is represented as good or desirable in every respect. There is only one object which fulfills this requisite and that is the Divine Essence, the Summum Bonum. And it must be noted, that in this life, due to imperfect knowledge, concupiscence and the interference of his lower nature, man is unable to apprehend God as the Summum Bonum. So we can say that in every instance of deliberation over choice there are motives for acting and not acting. Similarly, in the case of a desired end man sees that there are various ways of attaining it; the means to the end is not restricted to one course of action. Now all of this would be futile in the event that man was not able to rule his actions in the light of this knowledge but must follow the course of action which his nature and circumstances determine. Not only would this knowledge be futile but also a source of misery instead of a source of happiness. With this knowledge man can determine his actions and use the means which will insure his attainment of the end desired. But if he be not free he must follow, not what he knows to be the surest and best course but that course which the circumstances in the case determine. He would not be master of his fate, but, rather, the victim of his

fate. Virtue and vice both in himself and others would simply be the peculiar fate of the individual, a fate which cannot be avoided or overcome. Ideals would count for nothing and noble desires would be meaningless for they would be powerless in moving the individual to action. Under such conditions man would be not the happiest of creatures but the most miserable. Evidently, a nature endowed with a rational soul but not freedom of choice is a caricature. In conclusion let us consider St. Thomas' teleological argument for the freedom of the will.

"Man has free will; otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards and punishment would be in vain. In order to make this evident, we must observe that some things act without judgment; as a stone moves downwards; and in like manner all things which lack knowledge. And some act from judgment, but not a free judgment; as brute animals. For the sheep, seeing the wolf, judges it a thing to be shunned, from a natural and not a free judgment, because it judges, not from reason, but from natural instinct. And the same thing is to be said of any judgment of brute animals. But man acts from judgment, because by his apprehensive power he judges that something should be avoided or sought. But because this judgment, in the case of some particular act, is not from a natural instinct, but from some act of comparison in the reason, therefore he acts from free judgment and retains the power of being inclined to various things. For reason in contingent matters may follow opposite courses, as we see in dialectic syllogisms and rhetorical arguments. Now particular operations are contingent, and therefore in such matters the judgment of reason may follow opposite courses, and is not determinate to one. And forasmuch as man is rational is it necessary that man have a free will. 6

Having completed our exposition of the traditional Scholastic doctrine of human freedom we may now turn our attention to an analysis of the other doctrines treated in this thesis in the

light of what we have just seen.

Notes to Chapter V

1. Hubert Gruender, S.J., Free Will, p. 10.
2. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, first part, question 82, article 4.
3. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, first part, question 83, article 1.
4. Michael Maher, S.J., Psychology, p. 403.
5. Joseph Froebes, S.J., Psychologia Speculativa, vol. 2, pp. 201, 202.
6. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, first part, question 83, first article.



## CHAPTER VI

CRITICISM OF EVOLUTIONARY VIEWS

The philosophy of Evolution, at least in the instances here being studied, denies the existence of a rational principle, the soul, distinct from and essentially superior to matter. Despite the strong evidence of science to the contrary, despite the incompatibility of identifying spiritual and material functions, our worthy opponents insist upon saying that life, ( and even more than that, intellection ) have matter as their ultimate source. The consequences of such a tenet are evidently false.<sup>1</sup>

The authors agree that the peculiar control found in man is due to his intellectual power of abstraction and relation; in other words, to man's ability to conceive ends as ends and the relation of means to end. At the same time they are unaware of what was pointed out above, that without free will this intellectual power is useless and hurtful. In each instance the intellect is regarded as determining the will. The will, on the evidence of the mind, comes to know the strongest motive and is then moved to act upon this motive. The freedom of such an act lies in the fact that the agent is not moved by a physical force determining it in its act from without. The individual determines the acts but in accord with that which has the strongest appeal at the moment. But this is no more than the freedom of spontaneity which even the animal has when not confined. The indifference lies in the fact that the individual is not determined to act the

same way in every instance. But since this indifference is due to the fact that the subjective state varies from time to time, and to this fact alone, it is not active but only passive indifference.

### Effect of Knowledge on Will

Engels makes clear knowledge the determinant of the will; clear knowledge is also the source of freedom; in ignorance the will must make an arbitrary choice and is not free. This is a misconception of freedom. Knowledge enables the will to act freely by reason of the fact that it presents many courses of action and the reasons for and against each action. But the power of free choice is in the will itself and not in knowledge. Ignorance, particularly if it is inculpable, can make certain unforeseen and unintended effects of a free action involuntary.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge does influence freedom but does not control or overwhelm the will in its choice. Engels here confuses the condition of the choice with the cause of the choice. He neglects the cause entirely and makes the condition the cause. Furthermore, Engels in practice is not consistent with his theory. In theory he maintains that the will is not free. But in his gospel of revolution he implies an internal power that is free to initiate and carry through to completion the various processes that will bring about the economic emancipation of the human race. Here it is well to note that Engels, as well as every other communist, dare not admit the freedom of the will. For to do that would be an admis-

sion that men can freely determine economic conditions and would thus destroy the inevitability of a world revolution founded on universal determinism. To admit free will would also be an admission of the fact that men can combat the evil and hostile elements of their environment, as the Catholics actually do in Mexico today. In brief, to admit the existence of free will is to destroy the very foundations of Communism. Therefore, despite the fact that it contradicts what we know to be true, it must be maintained that there is no such thing as human freedom based on man's power of free choice.

Ward and Sellars make the intellect a motive inasmuch as they consider it as one phase of the moving self. Just as emotions and desires are the moving of the self towards or away from an object, so intellection is a moving of the self towards or away from an object. And just as the stronger emotion prevails so the greater knowledge, that is, of reasons for or against the choice, together with their emotional concomitants, prevails. Intellection, then, becomes just another determining element in an act which the authors call free but which we would call impulsive. And impulsive it is, because feeling and impulse, not intellectual knowledge together with the choice of the will, determine the act.

#### The Nature of a Faculty

The authors take the above view of knowledge because they insist on regarding man as a unit and all his acts as the work-

ings of this unit. Thus they repudiate the faculty explanation because it represents man as being made up, let us say, of a number of little machines each having its proper function and acting independently of the others. Mental faculties, as we explain them, are imagined by the adversaries as peculiar organizations in the soul similar to the physical organs in the body; and they fail to regard the faculties, and the will in particular, as peculiar modes of activity abiding permanently in the soul.<sup>3</sup> They wish to explain faculties as nothing more than the response of the individual to various stimuli, and to account for the power to make these responses by the adaptability of the nature of the individual only. They maintain that we can only classify the different acts and cannot conclude from them to any definite disposition in the soul as their source. There are only functions which man in his development by trial and error has learned to perform; and through the frequent repetition of these functions men have achieved a certain facility in their performance. As this facility of performance increased, men became more disposed to perform these acts when the occasion called for them. Choice, then, becomes nothing more than a peculiar response of the individual's whole nature to a situation. For that reason they maintain that it is incorrect to say that the will chooses, while, as a matter of fact, it is the man who chooses.

The explanation just treated above makes man a mere spectator of the actions which he performs. He has a part in them it

is true but his part consists in following the direction pointed out by the determining factors of the moment. Accordingly, the simple act of choice presents in the psychic realm a phenomenon very much like that of the parallelogram of forces in the physical realm. Forces conflicting with one another are at work and the stronger force prevails. When the individual chooses he is moved to make the choice by the stronger motive. But as we have seen above, the stronger force, a temptation for example, does not always prevail but is combated by another force which is influenced but not determined by it. Furthermore, the opposition set up against the temptation is prompted by a physically and psychically weaker element, that is, knowledge. The will, knowing that the temptation is bad, opposes it. Furthermore, in conflict we are aware, not of two forces acting within us and pulling us in different directions, but rather of a force within us which we actively combat of our own accord. The struggle is internal, but the self takes one side of it.

#### The Basis of Morality and Responsibility

The explanation of the determinists given above, besides contradicting what we know from our own experience, destroys the very foundation of morality and responsibility. In these latter the important element is the knowledge of right and wrong together with the power to act with the guidance of this knowledge against strong opposing forces. But this knowledge in itself is not a force but a mere presentation of facts and influences the

will by reason of the fact that it presents desirable objects to it. Emotions and desires are the spontaneous response of the individual to desirable objects. It is true that there are associated with knowledge definite emotions. Through this association knowledge has a further influence on the will. But in the determinists' explanation it would be not the knowledge but the concomitant emotions which would point out the course which the will should follow. Furthermore, unless the will was endowed with the power of choosing its own course of action it would be forced to follow the dictates of the emotions and desires which were associated with the knowledge. In this view the elements of determination become, first, the spontaneous emotions or reactions of the individual accompanying the perception of the good, and second, the emotions that accompany the knowledge of the object, that knowledge which the individual attains through reflection and a consideration of the object. In such a situation the determining element will be the stronger emotion. And unless there is a power which is capable of acting against this emotion when it is known to represent the less desirable aspect of the object, as for example in sin, the individual must follow it. In such a situation the individual, knowing what is right, is unable to follow this knowledge because the stronger forces of his being are against it. Furthermore, he could only do what he knows to be right when his emotions and desires are in accord with his knowledge or when there is associated with this knowledge an

emotional force strong enough to overcome the emotional forces opposed to this knowledge. Thus man would choose what he does because he must choose it. Consequently, conformity to the moral law would be beyond his own power. And for the same reason he could not be held responsible for what he did because he simply had to do it.

Experience, however, gives us evidence that the actual situation is different from that presented by the determinists. When, for instance, while performing an action or harboring a bad thought indeliberately we immediately stop the action or dispell the thought on becoming aware of what we are doing. In one instance we follow the spontaneous trend of the mind and impulse, but in the other we actively modify both the thought and the action. We could not do this if we did not have freedom of will. Such events certainly show that we have direct control over our actions and that in deliberate acts there is a force at work that is independent of the other powers of our being.

In the light of determinism it would be cruel to hold an individual to the observance of the moral law and punish him if he did not observe it. Each individual, if determinism would be consistent, would know no law nor be capable of observing any law save the law of his own peculiar character. Society could not hope to correct recalcitrant individuals and could only protect itself by segregating them and thus making it impossible for them to harm society. It is very difficult to see just how education

could effect a change in criminals. Pushing determinism\*to its logical conclusion we see that society would not be made up of individuals subject to law but of individuals subject to no law.

### Determinism and Radical Conversions

In the same way the determinists<sup>are</sup> are at a loss to explain the fact of sudden and radical conversions either from a bad life to a good life or vice versa. The first gives compelling evidence of a power capable of acting against the habits and inclinations of the past, which, they all agree, are important elements in the making of character. For in such a conversion the individual turns, not only against his environment, but also against the ingrained habits and dispositions of his whole past life. The second shows that ingrained habits and tendencies alone are not strong enough to keep a person on the path of virtue but may break down and give way to other tendencies in the face of a great crisis or temptation. In the light of determinism a saint should be a saint for all time and the sinner a sinner forever.

It is not to our purpose here to discuss the question of the origin and nature of the moral law. We might just note here that the authors we have treated maintain that the moral law develops with the advance of society. As man grows in knowledge of himself and the world about him, he comes to see what is helpful to him and what is hurtful. On the basis of this knowledge the moral law is built up and maintained. This law, however, embraces



only the social aspect of man's life. Though it is not expressly stated, still, we can conclude from what is said that man is only guilty of wrong-doing when he performs an act that is harmful to society. Personal sin, an offence against God to Whom the individual is in complete submission, is neither mentioned nor considered. A man can do what he likes with himself and in his private life as long as his actions do not have an evil effect on society. Of course, were there such a thing as personal sin recognized by the determinist he would be confronted with the same difficulty of responsibility as pointed out above.

#### Conclusion

As a conclusion to this discussion it can with certainty be said that the doctrine of determinism in rejecting the freedom of active indifference destroys morality and responsibility and thus makes man a brother of the brute. The nobility of the virtuous life as well as the meanness of the evil life is destroyed. Man is fated to become, not what he would have himself to be, but what his nature and environment determine him to be. Surely, these are unhappy conclusions. It is well that our own experience teaches us that they are false.

Notes to Chapter VI

1. Joseph Froebes, S.J., Psychologia Speculativa, vol. 2,  
p. 260.
2. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, first section of  
the second part, question 6, article 8.
3. Michael Maher, S.J., Psychology, pp. 29, 36.

## CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Dr. Samuel Johnson has said,  
"All theory is against freedom of the will,  
all practice for it."

The three non-scholastic philosophers we have studied seem to bear out the truth of Johnson's statement. In theory, each of these men attempted to show that the will is **not** possessed of the freedom of active indifference. At the same time they implied, in their applications of theory to practice that there must be freedom of will. It is interesting to note the attitude of mind which dominated these men in their speculations and brought them to conclusions which, no doubt, they would be unwilling to maintain if they once realized the fatalism and pessimism that necessarily flows from them.

Scientific Attitude of Philosophers

Each of these writers, in discussing and refuting the arguments of the philosophy of the schoolmen, shows clearly that he understands neither the doctrines nor the spirit of this philosophy. Undoubtedly their main objection against this traditional philosophy would be that it is not scientific. To set down general principles and propositions from which the particular instance is explained is, in their narrowly empirical understanding of science, a procedure just the reverse to that of science. Evidently they do not realize that the general statement followed upon the study of particular instances. At the same time these

men are not aware that they themselves are anything but scientific in their methods and procedure. They fail to sense the defect of their own methods and overlook the fact that they may not be open-minded in appraising the methods of others. This is a fair indictment of their own spirit for from the attitude which each has assumed towards the teachings of others, it seems clear that they were more ready to repudiate other doctrines than to understand them. This fact appears in the frequent misstatements of the doctrines and meaning of terms as presented by scholastic philosophers. Having interpreted them in their own way they reject them as untrue and unreasonable. At the same time these men accept theories and propose solutions to problems which demand more faith than reason, which fitted fancies better than they fitted the facts. To mention only one of these, let us take evolution. Darwin, the father of the modern development of the idea of organic evolution, in proposing this theory did not intend that it should be taken as an absolute and demonstrated fact.<sup>1</sup> It was for him just a theory, a purely speculative consideration, suggested by the gradations in nature which seemed to proceed one from another, and the correspondence of the organs and functions of one level with another. But here we have three men who take the theory of evolution as a basic dogma of reality and attempt to build settled systems of philosophy upon it. Whatever one might term such a procedure, it is not scientific thus to turn tenuous hypothesis into iron-clad dogma.

What Science Really Shows

A clever device used by these men in explaining away difficulties was to say that science had not progressed sufficiently as yet to give a complete explanation of the problem at hand. However, there was no doubt in their minds that the day would come when all the necessary facts would be produced and evolution together with all that follows from it would be demonstrated. Unfortunately for these men science has not lived up to their expectations. Rather, science has shown that these theories are untenable, and the more deeply the questions are delved into the more evidence of this fact is brought forth.<sup>2</sup> Along with this evidence there is coming to men of science today the realization that there are many problems which science cannot approach. Surprising to note, the question of free will is one of these, and many of the prominent scientists of today are not only realizing but even openly admitting that the question of free will is beyond the scope of the test tube.<sup>3</sup> It is however not beyond the scope of introspection. And introspection is a true scientific method. However, introspection is not to be classed with those strictly mechanical methods of the physical sciences, the methods referred to by the term 'test tube'. Would the authors, knowing the decisions of modern scientists, still insist that a denial of free will would be in accord with science?

### Free Will a Vital Power

Perhaps we could forgive the determinists if their doctrines concerned only theory and did not affect practical life. For then they could hold to their theories, and no one would be the worse off for the errors. But since free will holds so great a place in the life of every individual, the determinist must be dealt with severely as an enemy to the individual and society. It would not, I think, be wrong to say that, after God, the most important thing in the individual's life is his power of free choice. Endowed with this power, man is the master of his fate, and the ruler of his own life. Without this power, he would become a mere puppet that is ever moved about by the forces of nature within himself and about him. With free will man has the power to control the powers of his being, it is within his power to do good and evil, to make of his life an example of virtue or an exhibition of vice. Because of this power of free will men are held responsible for what they do, and can be trusted to exercise this power in respecting the persons and rights of others and to live according to the dictates of right reason.

In the same way the power of freely following an object of choice enables men to rise above the sordid environment in which they sometimes find themselves and follow the guidance of their higher nature in the way of virtue. Ideals are efficacious in the lives of individuals simply because man is not bound to follow the direction which his innate powers and environment point

out.

Everyone acknowledges the fact of free will when he lauds the bravery of an individual who has overcome the fear that was within him and went undaunted into the dangers that beset him from without. Like witness is given when people look down upon the coward who has followed the feelings that took hold of him and fled when a dangerous situation confronted him. A still greater witness is to be found in any court of law where men are called to account for their actions because they are free; where they are exonerated if it can be shown that the violation of the law was beyond their control. Many other examples could be brought forth showing that men have ever regarded their fellow-men as free beings having the power to control their actions. In fact, so strong is the evidence for the existence of free will that it is nothing but common sense to admit its existence and simply futile to deny it. Even the great human progress which we see going on about us constantly manifests the presence of free will, for all such progress, scientific, economic, individual, social, must be attributed ultimately to the power of man's free will to choose the better course.

#### The Determinist's Sad World

On the other hand, a denial of free will begets a philosophy of fatalism and pessimism as a necessary consequence. It was a wise student who in consternation asked professor Sellars why and how he could be held responsible for his actions if they

were the result of his heredity and environment. For this student had caught the significance of the very point which impressed St. Thomas in his defense of the freedom of the will. Both of them saw clearly that it would be strange and useless and unreasonable to urge people on to the practice of virtue and exhort them to avoid vice if they had not free wills. And as Dr. Johnson maintains, the theory is not consistent with our practical experience. For words of encouragement and assistance in difficult matters would fall on deaf ears if there was not a power capable of overcoming difficulties and holding the struggler to persevere to the end. Ideals would be meaningless and a source of misery instead of a spur to higher things if our inherited powers and environment determined our actions for us.

In brief, life would be worth living only for those who were fortunate enough to receive a finer grade of powers when heredity came round to distribute them. These individuals could look for happiness in a life of goodness and success. But it would be a narrowing and bitter form of goodness and success in which they could not help their less fortunate brothers whose powers did not permit them to do great things but chained them irrevocably to the drab and unhappy life of mediocrity, failure, and evil. In the first class of individuals we should find the paragons of virtue, find them there because heredity pre-ordained that they should be there. In the second class the sinner should find his place and find it easily for heredity had selected and



reserved it for him the day he was born. Who could be happy in this world if such were the case? Who would want to live in such a world? No one who was worthy of the name, 'human being', not even a determinist. But that is what he should have to put up with if what he said were true.

Shakespeare's Iago tells us that our bodies are gardens, to which our wills are gardeners, and it is in our power to beautify these gardens with industry and good works or to let them be over-run with weeds and brambles of idleness and evil deeds. Philosophers, scientists and litterateurs have in these pages said the same thing in less figurative language. All of these men seemed to realize that the knowledge of this fact is the life-spring of hope and self-confidence in the face of great problems and great crises, and that to believe that we had not that great power of free will would rob life of all meaning and destroy completely hope and self-confidence. Though he try with all his might, the determinist can never explain away free will, for his own nature demands this freedom, and in daily life is ever manifesting this great human power.

Notes to Chapter VII

1. Vergilius Ferm, First Adventures in Philosophy, p. 310.
2. Hans Driesch, The Science and Philosophy of the Organism,  
The Principles of Darwinism, p. 169 sq.
3. Edward A. Pace, The Problem of Freedom, in The New  
Scholasticism, July 1936.

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