

God Within Process by Eulalio R. Baltazar

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Chapter 6: God and Human Freedom

Sartre has expressed the objection of many to the Christian God when he said that God is a threat to man's freedom, for if man is creative of himself, the independent and sovereign creator of his own destiny, then God is not his creator. In other words, if man is absolute freedom as Sartre would define man, then God could not be his lawgiver, for that would restrict human freedom. This implies that God could not be the creator of a human nature in which he imprints a natural law that man must obey. In short, there cannot be true freedom if man's existence is simply the realization of some pre-conceived plan or decree external to man.

Marxism, too, sees the Christian God as a threat to man's freedom. Adam Schaff in "Modern Marxism and the Individual."¹ speaks of "old Jehovah" as cruel and the Christian miserable. Thus he says:

This miserable worm, with such means of knowledge at his command as the Ten Commandments, racks his brains as to what to do in life's conflicting situations and lives in a state of discord and fear, only to earn condemnation at the end. And yet this miserable and helpless creature, worthy of both pity and contempt, is in the light of religion the sovereign individual, God's highest creation! Atheistic and religious Existentialism alike repeat the tale of the cruelty and maliciousness of the old Jehovah. They create their individual as supposedly sovereign in order to make him lonely. They condemn to helplessness and despair the wretched puppets who are the sport of malicious fate while wearing the hollow crown of "sovereignty."

Given this view of God as malicious and cruel and one who makes puppets of men, the Marxists try to do away with God dialectically by showing that God does not create man but that man creates God in his own image.²

Another thinker who proclaims the death of God because he destroys human freedom is Nietzsche. He asks: "What could one create if gods existed? . . . The God who saw everything, even man -- this God had to die."

³ Thus, according to Nietzsche, man's creativity and capacity for dynamic growth are destroyed by the fixed gaze of this eternal look; it freezes the free becoming of the future into a determined dead fate.

And Sigmund Freud adds "some psychological foundation to the criticisms of [his] great predecessors" that God destroyed human creativity and growth by asserting that religion is "the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father. If this view is right, it is to be supposed that a turning away from religion is bound to occur with the fatal inevitability of a process of growth, and that we find ourselves at this very juncture in the middle of that phase of development." ⁴

We can say as a general answer to the above criticisms that what they are actually objecting to is the God of classical theism, the God who is other-worldly, timeless, the God who makes paper plates. But a denial of that God is not necessarily a denial of God.

As a general critique of the existentialism of Nietzsche and Sartre and the psychological analysis of Freud, we might observe that their anthropology is too narrow because it is static and non-evolutionary. To get a proper and adequate understanding of human freedom, one has to see man in the total context of evolution, for freedom did not start with man; it had its evolutionary roots at the infrahuman level. Man is not a Cartesian thinking substance. So against Sartre, we say that man is not merely a self-constituting free (indeterminate) consciousness, the ultimate and sufficient source of creativity. Man also derives his meaning from his pre-historical past, an important source for any adequate and valid anthropology, but which the existentialists do not consider. The Marxists consider man's evolutionary past, but because they are encumbered by the Aristotelian concept of a self-sufficient nature of which they are unconscious heirs, they fail to analyze properly the causality involved in the evolutionary process and as a result arrive at an adequate anthropology.

But the root cause of the opinion that God is a threat to human creativity is due not to a defect in logic but to the false assumptions derived from a static frame of reference that pictures God as a metaphysical and Transcendent Other, and this world as an autonomous natural order. It is static thinking that portrays God as a creator of fixed, static and immutable essences and which is the root cause of modern man's irreligious attitude. Modern non-religious man is rebelling against a false notion of God, but his alternative position, unfortunately enough, still derives from a dualism, only that now he chooses man over God. Mircea Eliade describes very well the position of modern non-religious man as follows:

Modern non-religious man assumes a new existential situation; he regards himself solely as the subject and agent of history, and he refuses all appeal to transcendence. In other words, he accepts no model for humanity outside the human condition as it can be seen in the various historical situations. *Man makes himself*, and he only makes himself completely as he desacralizes himself and the world. The sacred is the prime obstacle to his freedom. He will become himself only when he is totally demysticized. He will not be truly free until he has killed the last god.⁵

Here we have the same old problem of transcendence versus immanence, metaphysical versus the existential-historical -- a problem which cannot be resolved within the hellenic frame of reference, without sacrificing one to the other. A Christian within such a static frame of reference might perhaps argue against the existentialist (who is also in this frame) that the Christian God is not a watchmaker or maker of paper plates, that God does not destroy human creativity. But all such assertions are ineffective in stemming the tide of modern atheism. What is needed is to get out of this frame of reference. Both traditionalists (metaphysicians) and existentialists have to learn to think evolutionarily. We have to situate the problem of God and human creativity within an evolutionary context.

Let us therefore consider the problem of God and human freedom within the evolutionary framework. We will consider first the problem of human creativity, then the relation of human freedom to God's causality, God's foreknowledge, and lastly, God's law.

With regard to human creativity, what we need to derive is a new anthropology. We have to reexamine our traditional view of man as his human nature. The difficulty with the view that man already has a human nature is that man cannot be really creative, since all that man could effect in himself would be merely an accidental change in his being. If man is to be truly creative of himself, he must be able to touch his most profound depths; he must be radically open toward the future.

From the Christian point of view, the attempt to show that man does create himself is not an easy one. For if we allow man to create his own destiny, his own essence, then we would seem to be endangering God's creativity with respect to man. God's creative role would seem to be superfluous. The problem for Christians is to reconcile God's creativity and man's creativity in the creation of man. If we cannot achieve this, then the Christian God will appear tyrannical and therefore unlovable.

Let us begin the delineation of the limits of human creativity by first determining certain common and universal elements in man which man did not create. Thus, the emergence of man, a process which might be called anthropogenesis or hominization, is something that man did not create. As a result of the biological process of hominization or anthropogenesis, man is endowed with a "hominized" body and a hominized consciousness. In other words, his body is not an animal but a human body, and his consciousness is not animal consciousness but human consciousness. Man is therefore an ex-animal. It is possible that in the

future, man's creativity may touch this level of hominization, resulting in more intelligent, taller, individuals with pre-determined temperaments, etc. However, it is not on the level of hominization that man's creativity is most properly exercised but on the level of what we might call humanization. Here, it is not a question of the emergence of man from the animal, but the emergence of a humanized individual from the hominized form.

Let us try to specify more precisely the sphere of humanization. Thus, over and above the biological process of hominization is the process of personalization in which man is no longer a passive product of evolution. Man is now evolution conscious of itself. He is now able to create and to direct evolution itself. This sphere of creativity is the sphere of history and culture. This is what man creates. Teilhard de Chardin calls this level the noosphere, and the process of creativity, that of noogenesis. On this level, man does not have a form yet. Man is not born, at this level, human. He must humanize himself. In contrast, at the lower level of hominization, man is born in hominized form. He does not have to create this form.

The difference between the two levels is that in the hominization process, the evolution is from the pre-historical (animal) to the historical (man as "rational animal"). In the process of humanization, on the other hand, the evolution takes place within the context of the historical, from an uncivilized, impersonal, inhuman historical situation, for example, to a civilized, interpersonal and more human one. This distinction might help us resolve the issue as to whether essence precedes existence or existence precedes essence.

In the traditional view of man, essence precedes existence. In other words, man is endowed with a human nature which then determines the way man is going to act. Man's essence is a given. The level of history becomes purely accidental and secondary. In the historicist and existential view of man, "existence comes before essence."⁶ There is no *a priori* human nature.⁷ Sartre denies the possibility of finding "in each and every man a universal essence that can be called a human nature."⁸ He does not deny that there is a human universality of condition, that is, "all the limitations which *a priori* define man's fundamental situation in the universe," namely, "the necessities of being in the world, of having to labor and to die there."⁹ These situations are not in man, however, as his essence, for to say this is to destroy the radical possibility of man constituting himself. Essence cannot precede existence. Man is unique among realities of the world, for he first exists and make free decisions before he can be defined.¹⁰

The issue just described is unresolvable as long as we stay within a static frame of reference. We cannot say that both sides are correct. We must accept one and deny the other. The current trend has been to accept the existential-historical view with the result that in theology the existential is preferred to the metaphysical, and in morality, the situational to the objective.

Again we run into the basic problem of transcendence vs. immanence. We have to get out of the static framework which forces us to distinguish the metaphysical and the historical spatially or vertically. We have to get into the evolutionary framework where they can be seen horizontally or temporally, to allow for relativity in the concepts. Thus, the notion of "essence" as used by the metaphysical view of man must be historicized, must be seen relatively. It is not timeless. To see this, let us use an illustration we used before:

adult
child /
fetus /

In the illustration, the emergence or development of the child is a permanent achievement in relation to the fetus. The child is essentially a distinct form compared to the more quantitative form of growth of the fetus. But in relation to the adult, the form of the child is relative. It is not an "essence" in the metaphysical sense; it is evolutionary, or historical, if you will. Similarly, by comparing man with an animal, we speak of him as a "rational animal." The difference is not merely one of condition or situation, but an essential difference. If it were merely a difference in condition, then to put an animal in the same condition as man should make him a man, which is patently false. The so-called conditions of man are intrinsic to man; they are non-transferable, which is the same as to say that they are "essential" to man. In relation to the animal then, we can speak of a human nature that is common to every man, but we must be careful to make the qualification that this is a relative "essence." Man is still in process, at the level of noogenesis, so he has a future. In

relation to that future, man does not yet have his essence or nature. Man is much more than a "rational animal." We are not saying that man has two natures; we are saying that the "rational animal" will be transcended, just as the child form is transcended by the adult form. In the metaphysical view, any future form is always accidental, the finished form being the hominized form we get from comparing man to the animal. But from the point of view of the higher stage of noogenesis, the hominized form, "rational animal," is but a provisional form. The final form is still to be achieved and constituted. This is man's true definition and not the so-called metaphysical definition of man as a "rational animal" which upon reflection is quite relative and really biological. The basis of the final definition is in terms of personality, love, regard for others. It is through love that the true and intrinsic nature of man is constituted. In terms of this norm, when we are born we are not yet men. We constitute ourselves men in the moral and human sense of the term. This nature is not accidental to man; if he does not attain it, then he is not truly a man even if biologically he is one. The metaphysical statement that man who changes remains always a man is true biologically, but not at the historical-human level. For example, a man even after committing the most terrible and atrocious of crimes against humanity remains a man biologically; he is still a "rational animal" -- i.e., essentially distinct from an animal -- but within the context of society, he does not belong.

With the evolutionary view and distinction, we are able to accept the biological definition of man as a "rational animal." Without the distinction, the existentialists are forced to deny that essence precedes existence. But in a sense it is true that essence precedes existence in that man is indeed distinct essentially from an animal. In another sense, it is also true to say that existence precedes essence, and the metaphysical view is consequently wrong in denying it, for essence in this case is defined within the world of interpersonal relationships, within the world of history and human society, within the world of reason itself which Teilhard would call the noosphere. Within this world, we do not compare man with an animal; rather, we compare him with what he ought to be in order to be truly human. In this new dimension, man is not born human; he must humanize himself; he is not born rational; there is still much of the irrational and inhuman in him as history -- recent history -- abundantly testifies. Man must therefore create his essence, and it is this essence that counts for man, not the fact that he is distinct from the animal.

The Christian then is not necessarily committed to a metaphysical view of man in which God must appear as a threat to human creativity. In fact, the biblical view of man is not metaphysical at all. It is closer to the existential view than to the traditional one. As exegetes assert, "the likeness of man is not to be drawn from something called 'human nature.'"¹¹ In the New Testament, to know man, "it is not enough to describe him in terms of natural phenomena, biological development or psychological individuality. Man is a person. He must be known in his relations with others and in his particular setting in the history of humanity -- that environment which reacts to his behavior and in which he exercises responsible action. . . . The true perspective of the N.T. always shows man in community and in history."¹²

The metaphysical view of man has clouded the most important task for man -- the search for and the constitution of freedom. Since we have identified man with the definition -- "rational animal" and taken this to be the end point of what

it is to be man, we have also identified freedom in man with the possession of free choice. We conclude that man is free. Again, this is quite true as long as we are distinguishing man from animals. Yes, man is free because he is endowed with free choice. But in terms of the goal of humanization, the constitution of a person, the conquest of tyrannical passions -- fear, hate, prejudice, ignorance -- the internal "I" is not free. Free choice is not the end; it is the beginning of freedom. It is not merely to be used for the actualization of certain accidental perfections which serve as ornament for human nature; it is for the constitution of the very substance, the very meaning of man.

The common man usually identifies freedom with free choice. When teenagers, for example, cry for freedom, they usually mean free choice to be able to do anything they want. This notion of freedom is the freedom of our first definition of man as a "rational animal." But the possession of an intellect and will does not *ipso facto* constitute man free, in the second sense of the term. In this second sense, which is usually unknown to the common man, man is not born free. He must work to become free internally. To use an example, Hitler, insofar as he has free choice, is free, but insofar as he has sunk to the level of the animal by becoming irrational and inhuman, he is not free. Not every free choice results in freedom. One who sinks to the level of the animal, who surrenders himself to every passing whim and fancy, passion and vice, is not free. We must work to become free. The Scriptures also consider man as still unfree; he is still in the state of

internal slavery to sin and to the tyranny of the passions. Man is solemnly warned that his ultimate success and destiny is in fashioning and constituting the new man (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18), in creating a new humanity (1 Cor. 15:20-23; Col. 1:18; Eph 4:15).

Basically, it is this hellenic formulation of man that Sartre, Marx, Feuerbach and Freud were against, not the true biblical view. But even with the biblical view that man must create himself, these critics take issue in the sense that they maintain that man alone makes himself. As Eliade has observed, the modern non-religious man wants complete autonomy and independence in creating and constituting himself, and that therefore God is a threat to this enterprise. God is a threat in three ways: (1) man ceases to be the sole creator of his essence, (2) God's foreknowledge does not really make the future open, and (3) God's laws and commandments preclude human self-determination.

The conclusions of these critics, I believe, are the result of taking a too narrow perspective within which to observe man's creativity. To get an adequate understanding of human creativity, an evolutionary standpoint should be taken. To answer the question whether God is a threat to human freedom, we must first ask the question what it is to be free, what the forces are that we must conquer to attain freedom. It is insufficient to start from a consideration of man alone, using a purely phenomenological or psychoanalytic method, for we are automatically bound by the method with the result that we identify human freedom with psychological maturity from an infantile stage of belief, or with the indeterminism of the self in the constitution and imposition of meaning on the world. Such an analysis becomes anthropomorphic. Human freedom is not man's goal alone, is not man's possession alone, for man is not just his own. Man emerged, thanks to the infrahuman level of evolution. His responsibility is not just to himself but to the whole billions of years of evolution. Human freedom was billions of years in the making. So the infrahuman levels have a say as to what human freedom is.

Human freedom is just the highest point of the evolutionary process. We can justly say that the whole process is the evolution of freedom since the process evolved toward human freedom. Freedom, then, stripped of its human aspects -- free choice, social, political, academic and religious freedoms, etc. -- is basically freedom from entropy. Entropy is the disintegration and the dissolution of what has been evolved or created. It is the enemy of evolution and creativity. It not only destroys what has been created; it also prevents the possibility of creation and evolution. As evolution and creativity evolve, so does entropy. At the lowest level of the evolutionary process, entropy manifests itself in physical form as the loss or disintegration of physical energy. As material evolution becomes living matter, entropy at this level of life becomes death, which is the cessation of life through the dissolution and decomposition of the living parts. The greater the life, the greater the death. The death of a single cell is not as great as the death of an animal. When we come to man, entropy takes on greater power. It does not mean merely physical death or the death of biological man; it means also the death of personality, or spiritual and moral death -- a far greater death, for a life of self-hate is a living death.

Corresponding to the evolution of entropy or the forces of death and enslavement is the evolution of freedom. Thus there is the freedom of the molecule from atomization through the strength derived from union, from more complex arrangement; then there is the freedom of the cell from molecular disintegration by means of nutrition, reproduction, and association with other cells; then there is the greater freedom of more complex living organisms that develop specialized organs to cope with forces of decay and death such as pests, disease, floods, heat, etc. Animals of the more complex type have greater "freedom" compared to plants because they have senses and locomotive powers to sense danger and flee from enemies: floods, heat, drought, etc. Furthermore, by being in groups (herds, colonies) through the gregarious instincts, the animal is better able to preserve its species compared to infra-animal forms of life.

When we come to man, there are evolved greater forces of creativity to cope with the correspondingly greater forces of entropy. For the tyranny of instinct there is the freedom derived from rationality and free choice. With knowledge, man is able to make choices instead of acting from mechanistic and pre-determined instinct or ignorance. With knowledge he can know causes of entropy in himself -- e.g., sickness and disease, either physical or mental -- and take means to prevent or cure them. With memory and foresight he can better understand his past and his present and better direct himself toward his future goals. For the forces of spiritual entropy or moral decay like fear, hate and prejudice, he has the forces of trust, hope, belief, love and understanding. For great physical and moral strength, man bands together to form societies and thus

protect himself by laws and restraints and thus assure his freedom; he pools his knowledge and experience and transmits them to future generations to assure the conquest of ignorance and mistakes.

Freedom then is nothing but the quest for being and life. Now to attain being and life, one has to evolve, for to cease to evolve is the same as to die, which is a loss of freedom, ultimately, for freedom is founded on the possession of being. To evolve is (1) to unite with others and form more complex organization, and (2) to attain full differentiation. What is true of our analysis of the macrocosmic process is also true at the microcosmic or individual level. Thus, in the case of biological man, physical freedom is attained by growing from childhood to adulthood, since freedom of activity is attained by the possession of fully differentiated physical parts. In the case of the fetus, freedom is attained by being freed from the confinement of the womb, achieved through continued union with the womb and growth to fullness. In the case of the seed, freedom is attained by a process of germination. The seed is liberated from its aloneness or existence-toward-death by the ground. The ground gives the seed life and through continued union with the ground, the seed breaks the confinement of the seed coat and is reborn to a new life in the seedling. In the case of the human individual, personality is attained through loving union with others. To build himself up into a person, man must unite and relate himself to others in the community, but at the same time not be swallowed or enslaved by the community which could very well become a power of oppression and enslavement. Before the individual can be properly related to the community and be a force of union and liberation for others, the individual must conquer the forces of moral disintegration in himself; he must be at peace with himself; he must conquer fear, hate suspicion, false judgments, ignorance, prejudice, etc. Without internal freedom man either enslaves others or is enslaved by others.

Freedom then must be seen in the context of life and death. The whole evolutionary process tended toward man in the hope that through human knowledge and free choice man may lead the whole process in the right path that leads to being and life. The question, however, is: Does man have the power to save and liberate the universe from ultimate entropy? Before he can give being and life to the infrahuman levels, man must ask himself whether he can be his own liberator from his own state of slavery and entropy -- slavery from physical death and from the forces of moral and personal evil. Is it the case that man will be able to conserve himself, his civilization, his history and the world not only from the ravages of time and death but also from man's own destructive and demonic tendencies? Or will not all this human effort and creativity crumble to dust and be at the mercy of extrinsic forces?

The evolutionary view of Teilhard is that the evolutionary process needs a Ground evolver, as liberator from entropy, as maturer. There is need of a Fullness of Time that is the ultimate source of time and that therefore can liberate the process from the ravages of decay and death. There is need of an Omega or Center of Attraction that will unite all the personal centers of consciousness through the bond of love and thus be a source of liberation from the forces of hate and the demonic in us. Thus, against the proponents of complete autonomy for man, the evolutionary view of Teilhard asserts that freedom is in union, not isolation. The universe is not an autonomous Aristotelian natural order able to achieve its end by its own natural powers. It is a "covenanted" universe where to be free is to be united. Liberation is in union.

The scriptural view is that freedom for man is in entering the covenant. Man is not his own salvation, for, as Paul says (Rom 7), man is impotent. The inward "I" is incapable of real independence; it has no power to do good; it can conceive, it can will the good, but this process remains at the stage of good intentions, of imagination. The source of freedom is the Lord Christ (1 Cor. 7:22; 12:13; Gal. 3:28). By him all forces of slavery are shaken and vanquished. These forces are forces of internal corruption (2 Pet. 2:19; Rom. 6:18,23). *The Vocabulary of the Bible* summarizes the role, of Christ as savior:

The "Messiah" comes now to attack the roots of evil, which man neither would nor could eliminate, nor even recognize in himself. He comes to liberate man from himself, to reveal to him that his pretended ("internal") freedom is slavery, to give his life in order to purchase forgiveness, and to rise in order that the way of freedom be opened up. Man resists his own liberation; but he who follows Jesus to the end passes into the world of freedom and into life eternal, even though death may still intervene. . . . For faith and for hope the time of freedom has commenced, and sin and death are already vanquished.¹³

It would seem that if God is the liberator and savior of man, human creativity becomes an empty word. The problem in Christian thought is how to distinguish divine causality from the human and give each one its

proper due. In the past we have gone into both extremes: Pelagianism, on the one hand, which overemphasizes human causality and the *ex opere operato* mechanism, on the other, which overemphasizes divine causality to the detriment of human creativity. The difficulty in reconciling the two is that we have no experience of divine causality. In the hellenic framework, the two main theories proposed are those of *pre motio physica* (physical pre-motion) of God, or the divine concursus. We believe that these theories do not properly explain the relation. We prefer to use the analogies furnished by the Scriptures, analogies which are intrinsic to an evolutionary frame of reference. Thus, God's causality or creativity may be compared to the causality of the ground in relation to the seed. The Scriptures compare man to a seed that must die in order to be reborn. Outside the ground, the seed is unable to cause its own growth; it cannot evolve or create itself; it cannot produce its own fruit. Similarly, the Scriptures speak of man outside the covenant (Ground) or outside faith as weak, impotent, fallen (2 Cor. 1:12; Rom. 6:19), carnal as opposed to the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:35-49; Phil. 3:21). Man must "die" to his former state of slavery in order to be born a free son of God, just as the seed must die to its isolation, to its separation from the ground in order to attain the new life of the seedling. The creativity of God is on a totally different plane from that of man, as different as the causality of the ground in relation to that of the seed. God is not like a super-seed that helps an ordinary seed to evolve and attain liberation from its encapsulation, nor is it a plant which, compared to the seed, has attained its freedom. God as Ground does not destroy the causality of man, any more than the ground destroys the causality of the seed. On the contrary, just as the ground liberates the causality of the seed, enabling it to germinate, grow, mature and bear fruit, so God's causality liberates man's causality, makes man to be truly creative and make himself. Just as the seed alone grows, matures and bears fruit, not the ground, so man alone makes himself -- he alone is reborn and achieves freedom.

Another analogy used by the Scriptures to explain divine causality is that between Bridegroom and Bride. Yahweh is the Bridegroom who liberates Israel (humanity) from her barrenness by giving her life, making her fruitful. Yahweh as Bridegroom does not destroy the causality of the Bride; rather, he facilitates the creativity of the Bride; he gives her time. It is the Bride alone who bears the child, who is pregnant, and who gives birth to the child. It is the Bride who has the time, who counts the time of her giving birth; the Bridegroom does not have time in this sense. So it is false to speak of God as History who is present to human history. God as Bridegroom, as Fullness of Time, as Ground, gives time, is the source of time, but this does not make him History as such, for he does not grow, evolve and have a history. Without the analogy we have furnished, if we merely think abstractly, we would easily fall into the fallacy of concluding that God is History because he is the source of time or history. God is the source of history without being historical, much as the Bridegroom is the source of birth for the Bride without himself giving birth or just as the Ground is the source of growth for the seed, without itself growing and bearing fruit. Just as the ground is not growth itself nor the bridegroom a mother, so God is not History, even if he is the source of time. God is the Ground of history. It is man that is historical, constituted by history through his interaction with God as Ground.

The next question with regard to human freedom is God's foreknowledge. It would seem that divine foreknowledge destroys human freedom. For how could man truly create and constitute history if it is necessarily known by God. It would follow that the future is not free, because God's foreknowledge would make it necessary. To answer the question, let us first consider the relation between knowledge and freedom. It is obvious that for there to be free choice there has to be adequate knowledge of the alternatives. Ignorance precludes free choice, and hence freedom. It is true then that, in a sense, knowledge makes us free; knowledge liberates. We can also say that the greater the knowledge, the greater the freedom, and conversely, the less the knowledge, the less the freedom. Knowledge in this case pertains not only to the knowledge of the object but also to knowledge of the self. If I do not know myself completely, then I do not know what is best for myself; my choice is not completely free. In the relation between man and animal, there is freedom in man because there is self-knowledge. Man can deliberate, can direct himself and throw himself into a project freely.

Having seen the relation between knowledge and freedom, let us now present a situation in which, let us say, one is in a large forest and has complete knowledge of all the exits. Then to say that there is someone who foreknows the path we are going to take out of the forest is to say that there is really no indetermination in the will. Free choice is destroyed. It will not do to say that the foreknowledge is not a cause of the choice. How can we affirm seriously that the will is undetermined if one can derive from it a knowledge of what it will do. If the will was not the source of the foreknowledge, where did it come from? From what determination? If the will is undetermined, then we cannot get any foreknowledge from it. Thus, in the way

the question is posed, foreknowledge, if there be such a thing, does destroy freedom. The traditional explanations have not yet given an adequate explanation of how divine foreknowledge does not destroy human freedom. The solution to the problem is to get outside the hellenic framework in which the question is posed. Both the traditional view and the critics like Nietzsche, Sartre, etc., are within the hellenic framework.

It is false to relate divine foreknowledge to free will or free choice; rather, it should be related to man's lack of knowledge, and hence lack of freedom. In other words, we should start with man as unfree, as enslaved, not man as free. In the traditional view which sees man in relation to the animal, man is free, but in relation to his future essence which he must create, man is not yet free. He must liberate himself from entropy: from hate, from prejudice, from ignorance, from demonic forces in him. The presupposition of the Scriptures is that man is unfree; he is lost in the wilderness; he cannot find his way to the Land of Truth and Freedom. So he does not have free choice because he does not know. In this context, the knowledge of an expert guide who knows all the true exits, and dead ends, and the dangers along the way does not destroy the freedom of the lost wayfarer; rather, it liberates him, frees him from his predicament. To start with man as already free, as traditional thought and the existentialists like Sartre do, is to end up either depreciating human freedom as the traditionalists do to save divine foreknowledge, or denying God altogether to save man as the existentialists do. Again, we see here an excellent illustration of how the static pattern of thought has been the source of much of our false philosophic and theological problems, problems that have lasted for centuries and even to our day.

If we disabuse ourselves of such thinking, then we will see the obvious teaching of the Scriptures that man is unfree. He does not have full knowledge which is the foundation of freedom. As St. John says, we do not know yet what we shall be (1 Jn. 3:2). Man is like a child who needs guidance, a wayfarer or pilgrim who has lost his way. God's foreknowledge is there to liberate him. It is in the context of man's ignorance and consequently lack of freedom that Christ was sent as the Way, the Truth and the Life. As Way, he leads us out of the wilderness of sin; as Truth, he liberates us from our untruth; and as Life, he conquers Death, the ultimate enemy of freedom.

Revelation as foreknowledge must be seen in the context of our liberation. Revelation is a light that aids the light of reason. It is a higher form of knowledge, a foreknowledge that tells man the unerring direction to the Land of Truth and Freedom. As the Scriptures say, the Truth (Revelation) shall make us free. Faith is also seen as a higher light than reason; it is the acceptance of Revelation. Now faith is a new dimension of being and of freedom, because in faith we die to sin and error which are portrayed as a state of darkness; we are reborn into the light; we are now sons of light. And having the light we can see our way around; we do not go about in darkness; we are free. The Scriptures also see God as a Father who must provide and foresee eventualities in order that humanity (his children) may be guided properly and helped toward maturity. The Father's experiences, so to speak, and foreknowledge do not destroy the child's freedom and creativity; rather they help the child attain maturity and consequently the exercise of responsible freedom.

The last question with regard to the problem of human creativity and the divine is that of divine laws and commandments which are claimed to restrict man's free constitution and determination of himself. Again, the difficulty here is a false one which arises only because we are trying to relate the divine imperative to a view of man as already free. Let us use our example again of the man in the wilderness who knows all the exits out of the forest. In this situation, for God to tell the man to use a given path rather than another is indeed to destroy the man's freedom of choice. It is in the context of the man lost in the wilderness that the divine imperative is to be properly understood. The commandments are rules of action that help a man who has lost his way, so to speak, to find his way out. In other words, he does not have the free choice of exits because he is ignorant of the exits. A guide then would not destroy his freedom; to tell him to take this way out if he wants to be free rather than that one which leads to a dead end is not to destroy his freedom because he is not free to begin with; rather it is to give him freedom. Or to use another example, a mother's advice or commands to a child are not meant to destroy its freedom but to help the child attain freedom and maturity. Once the child is grown up, and assumes full responsibility, then there would be no need for commandments. Similarly, as long as we are lost, as long as we are growing to maturity and freedom, we need guidance, commandments. But once we have achieved full freedom, it follows that all the forces of hate, the demonic forces of sin and death, are fully vanquished and conquered. Love takes over. Then we have the fullness of freedom. Then, too, there shall be no law, for as Augustine so well expressed it: *Ama et fac quod vis* (Love and do what you will). Then is man fully creative. But right now, man is not fully free.

He needs guidance; else he destroys himself; he is not so much creative as destructive; everything he touches becomes a spoil of death. He is more an ally of death than of life. And yet we have men who think they are grown up, full creators of their own destiny, not needing the humility of childhood, of the ignorant, because man has come of age.

The Scriptures think otherwise. God's laws lead to life, to freedom. Thus, freedom has a structure, and this structure can even take the name of law: the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2), the "law of freedom" (Jas. 1:25; 2:12), "the pattern of teaching" (Rom. 6:17). Without those laws, since man is not fully free, everything he touches turns to chaos, and freedom has nothing in common with chaos (Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:14; 1 Pet. 2:16). In the Christian view, the way to attain freedom is to follow Christ, so that in following his commandments one is "dead with him" (Col. 3:3), "buried with him" (Rom. 6:4), "raised with him" (Col. 2:12), "lives with him" (Rom. 6:8), "to be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17), "reigns with him" (1 Cor. 4:8). The commandments of Christ are summed up in the law of love. The power of love to redeem and to free us comes from the celebration and commemoration of the eucharistic sacrifice which allows us to participate in the Christ events. The power of love allows us to come to know ourselves. It permits us to triumph over the forces of internal corruption, hate, sin and death. The power of love will extend into our bodies so that they too will be free from decay and corruption. And since our bodies are an extension of the material universe, material creation, which is groaning until now from its slavery to sin and corruption, as Paul points out, will also be saved. Man participates in Christ's priesthood in the salvation of the universe.

The Christian experience, then, is that man is in a state of slavery. For the non-Christian, it will have to be his own experience that will tell him whether the observation of Paul about human weakness and impotency is truer than the claim of those who believe that man has come of age and is able to achieve his own freedom. Whatever be the case, we cannot say with certainty that from an analysis of human creativity and freedom, God is a threat to freedom. Nor is psychoanalysis decisive in the matter, for it is not necessarily the case that belief in God is a projection of infantile needs and wishes; it could very well be that the desire to be free of all restraints and bonds is an adolescent and even infantile projection of the destructive forces of pride and hate that threaten to destroy the individual.

Footnotes:

1 See his book, *A Philosophy of Man* (Monthly Review Press, 1963) The above quotation is taken from *Reflections on Man*, ed. Jesse Mann and R. Kreyche (Harcourt Brace, 1966), p. 305.

2 Ibid., p.311.

3 See *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1945), p. 397.

4 See *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 71.

5 See *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1957), p. 203.

6 See "L'existentialisme est un humanisme," trans. in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1957), p. 289.

7 Ibid., p. 295.

8 Ibid., p. 303.

9 Loc. cit.

10 Ibid., p. 290.

11 See *Vocabulary of the Bible*, p. 250.

12 Loc. cit.

13 See pp. 130-31.

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