

# Usurpations of Religious Feeling

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*Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 2, No. 2. (Spring, 1968) © World Wisdom, Inc.

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ONE of the abuses indirectly bequeathed to us by the Renaissance is the confusion, in one and the same sentimental cult or in one and the same "humanism," of religion and fatherland: this amalgam is all the more deplorable in that it occurs in men who profess to represent traditional values and who thus compromise what by rights they should defend. Doubtless a believer does not always have the direct duty to preach about the truth that gives meaning to life, but he certainly never has the right to adulterate it for entirely human reasons which cease to be valid a few miles away; by seeking to justify passions of this sort in the name of religion, one merely succeeds in rendering the latter unintelligible if not odious, a result which proves that the cause behind this attitude is anything but harmless, and far from meriting—instead of blame—simply an unconcerned and compliant indulgence.

It is quite obvious that in order to be able to determine the rights of earthly things (and we can but regret that this is no longer a truism) it is necessary to start from the axiomatic truth that the value of man and of things lies in their adequation to integral Reality and in their capacity to participate directly or indirectly in this end; the role of the contemplative man is constantly to look towards this Reality and *ipso facto* to communicate to society the perfume of this vision; a perfume both of life and death, and indispensable for any relative well-being to which the world here below may be entitled. It is necessary, therefore, to start from the idea that spirituality alone, including the religion which of necessity provides its vehicle, constitutes an absolute good; it is the spiritual, not the temporal, which culturally, socially and politically is the criterion of all other values.

As regards the *de facto* and *de jure* limits of the feeling of patriotism, it is proper to recall first of all that there is fatherland and fatherland: there is that of earth and that of Heaven; the latter is the prototype and measure of the former, giving it its sense and legitimacy. Thus in the Gospel teaching the love of God has priority over, and consequently may contradict, the love of near relatives, without there being here the least offence against charity; the creature, moreover, must be loved "in God," that is to say, love never belongs to the creature exclusively. Christ cared only for the heavenly Fatherland which "is not of this world"; this is sufficient to make one not deny the natural fact of an earthly fatherland, but abstain from any abusive—and above all illogical—worship of one's country of origin. If Christ repudiated temporal attachments, he none the less admitted the rights of nature, in the realm where they apply, rights which are eminently relative and which must never be erected into idols; this is a theme that St. Augustine has dealt with in a most masterly way, at least from one point of view, in his *Civitas Dei*. Normal patriotism is both determined and limited by eternal values; "it is not puffed up" and does not pervert the spirit; unlike chauvinism, it is not an official disregard for humility and charity or a paralysis of a whole sector of the intelligence;

remaining within its own limits, it is capable of giving rise to the most splendid virtues without becoming a parasite on religion.

One has to be on guard against abusive interpretations of the historic past; the work of Joan of Arc had nothing to do with modern national-ism, especially as the saint followed the impulsion, not of a natural patriotism—though this would have been legitimate—but of a will of Heaven, which was farsighted. For centuries France had been the pivot of Catholicism; an English France in the long run would have meant a Protestant Europe and the end of the Catholic Church; this is what Joan's "voices" wished to prevent. The absence in Joan of all passion, her serene words with regard to the English, corroborate fully what has just been said and more than suffice to defend the saint from any retrospective imposture.<sup>1</sup>

If it be permitted to interpolate here a more general consideration related to the abusive annexation of historical examples, it may be said that a very common and particularly annoying error is to believe that in our own age one is able to do everything that was done in the Middle Ages and Antiquity; but before speaking of this, it is convenient first to mention the opposite error, according to which our "time" gives us the right to despise as "out of date" what in the Middle Ages was timeless, and which consequently has not ceased to be so in essentials; this is a question of things or attitudes which concern, not the man of such and such a time, but man as such. Indeed, the attitude of modern men towards the past only too often comprises a double error: on the one hand, they consider that certain forms with a timeless content are irreconcilable with the mental conditions of what they call "our time"; on the other hand, in order to introduce some reform or simplification, they readily refer to what was done in Antiquity or the Middle Ages, as if cyclic conditions have always remained the same and as if there were not, from the point of view of spiritual fluidity and inspiration, a progressive impoverishment or lowering of possibilities. Religion (for it is religion that is mostly in question) is like a growing tree which has a root, a trunk, branches and leaves and in which there is no element of chance—an oak never produces anything other than acorns—and whose manner of growing cannot blindly be turned upside-down; such a growth is not an "evolution" in the progressistic sense of the word, although, in parallel with the descent towards exteriorization and hardening, there is obviously a deployment on the level both of mental formulation and art. The so-called return to a primitive simplicity is really at the antipodes of this very simplicity precisely because we are no longer at the origin and also because modern man is affected by a singular lack of sense of proportion; our ancestors would never have conceived that it was enough to see in an error "our time" in order to concede to it rights not only over things, but even over intelligence.

But let us return to the notion of fatherland: in concrete terms, the fatherland is not necessarily a State, but the country or countryside in which one was born and the people or ethnic or cultural group to which one belongs;<sup>2</sup> it is only natural for man to love his place of origin, just as it is natural, in normal conditions, that a man should love his parents or that spouses should love one another and their children; and it is no less natural that every man should contribute, according to his function and his means, to the defence of his country or of his people when they are attacked; it cannot assuredly be maintained that it is always illegitimate for one nation to attack another, but in this case it is illegitimate (let this be observed in passing) to force all citizens without distinction to

participate in such an attack, since traditionally, or let us say according to natural justice, a mass call-up is only legitimate in case of dire national danger.<sup>3</sup>

But nationalistic patriotism, precisely, is not content with natural positions: according to it, the fatherland becomes in practice an integral part of religion, even if it oppresses the latter. This is not to say that the fatherland is not more than an earthly accident without a spiritual meaning, far from that: it is evident that the fatherland may assume a religious value to the extent that it is the concrete and traditional vehicle of religion; this is beyond doubt in the case of the Vedic Lands, ancient Israel, the Middle Empire of China, Shintoist Japan, *Dâr al-Islam* and other analogous instances; and this obviously applied likewise to the ancient "Christendom," then to the Holy Roman Empire and to a certain extent to the Kingdom of France, "elder daughter of the Church";<sup>4</sup> it is noteworthy that the king of France considered that he derived his authority from David by sacramental analogy, while the Emperor of Germany derived his from Caesar, by historical continuity.<sup>5</sup>

The sacred character of a nation depends, not on the sanctity of its citizens, this is obvious, but on the traditional integrity of its regime; what makes it impossible to equate a secular State with a "Holy Land" is precisely the confessionally "neutral" and therefore hetero-geneous and profane character of modern civilization. There are two idolatries which are incompatible with the sacred character of a nation: one is "civilizationism," the other is "nationalism"; the former, which is "pagan" and worldly in essence, dates from the promethean upsurge that was the Renaissance, and the latter, which is secular, racialist and democratic in essence, dates from the French Revolution, which itself was a kind of Renaissance but in vulgar, not aristocratic, mode. Now it is precisely to these two key-notions, "civilization" and "fatherland," that many people firmly cling in the name of tradition, without realizing that this involves more than one contradiction: firstly, and this is essential, religion is something sacred and cannot fit in with entirely profane ideologies and institutions; secondly, "civilization" would have itself essentially objective, since it is rationalistic and scientific, whereas the nationalist and racialist "fatherland" on the contrary is subjective by definition, whence an absurd and hypocritical mixture of scientism and romanticism.

Profane patriotism improperly mixed with religion is a luxury which is all the more useless in that it substitutes itself for a normal patriotism, and all the more pernicious in that it fatally compromises the prestige of religion itself. Here it is a case of two religions being confused, one of them true and the other false, and this doubtless to some extent explains the lack of haste shown by Heaven in coming to the aid of a tradition which has already been betrayed in various ways by its own adherents. According to nationalistic and "Jacobin" patriotism, the fatherland never commits a crime, or nothing is a crime if it is done in the name of the fatherland; or again if it does act badly, it is a crime to reproach it for this.<sup>6</sup> The fatherland-nation is erected into a transcendent principle, but if it suits one's own book the patriotic sentiment of others is trampled under foot, even while an unsullied "loyalty" is still expected of them should the circumstances demand it; one despises foreign peoples, but one would still like to be liked by them. What we reproach chauvinistic patriots for is certainly not their consciousness of the real values of their country, but their blindness towards those of certain other countries (it is a question here of political and sentimental interest); this blindness extends to the most elementary

rights of other peoples, even though the said patriots erect these same rights into a universal law and make of them a principal of life; this brings to mind those so-called "peace treaties," conceived in the name of "self-determination," which replaced ancient oppressions by new oppressions while at the same time maintaining such of the ancient oppressions as do not inconvenience any of the signatories.

It is perhaps not inappropriate to mention here, on the margin of what has just been said, that the average European in the Colonies knew surprisingly little about the colonized people, either in general or as regards their culture: we have observed this not only in the Old World but also in America where the majority of the Whites living alongside Indians know next to nothing about them; this phenomenon, which would seem to be the opposite of what one might expect, is explained by a collective complex of superiority and by a reflex of self-defence against a foreign psychological presence which it is more convenient to ignore than understand; for one who wishes to be taken for superior, his mental security demands that he remain insensible to the values of whoever is supposed to be inferior.

It is a fact that in our day anti-colonialism only too often takes on a stupid and hypocritical character—the most intolerable colonialism apparently being that of countries which now no longer have any colonial possessions—but people fail to notice that the protagonists of these excesses are never men of a traditional and un-Westernized spirit; like "civilizationist" colonialism, the corresponding anti-colonialism bears the stamp of the West (or of "Christian civilization," since some people insist on this term) but it is illogical to reproach entire peoples for this inconsistency, after having undermined or destroyed their sense of the sacred and with it the very foundation of their intelligence and their virtues. The European presence has everywhere produced a spiritual vacuum, and it is obviously not St. Thomas Aquinas who is going to fill it; "civilization," whether labelled "Christian" or not, has other things to fill it with!

While rejecting racialism, we do not intend to subscribe to the foolish opinion according to which the only racial difference is in the "colour of the skin"; nor to a barbarous anti-racialism that aims purely and simply at the suppression of the races, which would be an entirely monstrous attack on the nature of mankind. Moreover, an anti-racialism may easily serve as a mask for racialism, as is proved by the organized and grinning genocide of which the American Indians have been the victims, from the fact that their ethnic personality and the elementary rights which derive from this has been denied adequate recognition.

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The extreme detachment of Christ with regard to his fatherland, which he neither saved from Roman domination nor even from destruction by the Romans, ought to arouse reflection in the partisans of unconditional patriotism; of course it cannot be maintained that every country is necessarily in the same position as ancient Judaea, but nevertheless it can be said that, like Judaea, no fatherland has an overriding value unless it is thanks to its remaining the vehicle of an unbetraysed spiritual patrimony. There is doubtless no tradition that has not been betrayed in part, but in this respect there are eminent differences of degree—a circle not being a sphere and a square not being a cube, in spite of the analogy; and in any case, after a certain degree of denial, a fatherland ceases to be

sacred in any sense.

The "amalgam"<sup>7</sup> of fatherland and religion prevents some protagonists of traditional integrity from seeing, firstly, that the non-Christian religions are necessarily the natural allies of Christianity in the face of anti-religion—for all religions teach the reality of a transcendent Absolute and of an eternal life<sup>8</sup>—and secondly, that it is completely unjust to confuse non-Europeans shaped by a Europe to which they are then hostile, with the religion of their fathers, to which they them-selves are opposed in the name of the "civilization" which has been instilled into them, even if by political calculation, or even by a certain sentimental attachment, they still keep up a few appearances of their ancestral religion.<sup>9</sup> If "neo-colonialism" has any real existence, it amounts to this, namely that traditional peoples are being colonized, not any longer by Europeans, but by a handful of European-educated, and so mentally colonized, native technocrats now become colonizers in their turn.<sup>10</sup> Be this as it may, an alliance between the religions has meaning only if it is truly a question of religions, and not just of some vague "Gandhiism" or some flat Bahaism; with this one proviso in mind, it may be asserted that the solidarity of the great world religions is no mere matter of rhetoric, but results from the very nature of things and that on this basis certain mutual approaches are a concrete possibility.<sup>11</sup>

Those who see in "civilization"—heir of the Renaissance and later of the French Revolution—a glory of the Christian religion and of the fatherland, reproach the other religions with this or that, but seem to forget that modern Western civilization gave rise to the negation of all religion, without mentioning phenomena such as the totalitarian dictatorships, the means of mass destruction, a devouring and levelling machinism, a science which devastates Nature and promotes a terrible imbalance, and so on. It is, to say the least, absurd to deplore, a little late and with an anti-Oriental and racialist intention, that the "international" modern world wishes to destroy "Christian civilization" and, at the same time, to claim this same modern world for Christianity; the de-christianization of the West comes neither from Mohammed nor Confucius, as far as we are aware, and the least that can be said is that Asiatic bombs have nothing particularly Buddhist about them.

No doubt the Catholic Church cannot be reproached for having positively allied itself with post-Napoleonic bourgeois nationalism, despite all the concessions it made and despite the political role played by the missions (it is in any case impossible for an international organization to be nationalist), but one cannot avoid noting the Church's solidarity with what may be called "civilizationism"; St. Peter's Basilica, by Michelangelo and Bramante, is like a symbol of this, with its cold and promethean giantism, as remote as can be from Christian contemplation to which the medieval cathedrals liturgically bear witness.<sup>12</sup> The profound discomfort which has afflicted the Church since John XXIII opened the floodgates stems from the fact that the Church has never had a consistent attitude with regard to the modern world it is thus only logical, if there can be said to be any logic in inconsistency, that she should have been caught off her guard by the novel forms of an ancient and insufficiently discerned evil and that by this very fact she lacks an intellectual and moral resistance adequate to the inhuman humanism that characterizes our century. "All that is civilized is ours," she seems to say, as if afraid to lose any possible claim to glory, however brutally incompatible it may be

with the spiritual Message of which she is the trustee; here lies the reason for the Church's strange weakness with regard to the pantheistic evolutionism now in vogue,<sup>13</sup> and also for the demagogic motives apparent in pastoral teaching and the liturgy. Everyone wants to be "adult" and the Church must not remain backward; no one seems to notice that in this very desire to be "adult" there is already a very suspicious sign, for: "Unless you become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven"!

Man at last "grown up" or "adult"—after millenia of somnolence and heedlessness—is in fact man become embittered and rebellious; the spirit of rebelliousness is like a cancer, it is incompatible with serenity of heart, with submission to Heaven, to the hierarchy of things, to destiny, and it is also the opposite of spiritual incorruptibility, which is an inward crystallinity and not an outward hardening.<sup>14</sup> To be contaminated by the spirit of bitterness, by a defiant coldness, is to withdraw oneself from everything that comes from on high, even if, in this mental climate, one still tries to juggle with theological notions.

Admittedly all this is no longer directly concerned with the patriotic amalgam spoken of above, except in so far as all usurpations of the religious feeling, or of religion itself, are fundamentally connected by the fact of the profane mentality or "worldliness" they imply.

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Civilizationism is properly speaking the real, sincere and unanimous religion of modern man; for progressist "believers" the true faith the one which enjoys their wholehearted loyalty, is the civilizationist conviction; the postulates of progressism are undiscussed and undiscussed taboos and whoever dares to touch them is written off as either abnormal or dishonest. It is in civilizationism that progressists and an all too large number of integrists<sup>15</sup> meet, in a greater or lesser degree; they consequently not only share a common religious belief, but also a common error; moreover in the case of the integrists who are affected by it, it is precisely this error which dulls and compromises their arguments and prevents them from being completely consistent, especially when certain questions are raised<sup>16</sup>: religion is all that it is, or else it is nothing.

A thesis tirelessly repeated (and how gratuitous and fallacious it is!) is the following: the non-Christian religions are like Platonism, they ignore "time" and lead to "escapism," metaphysical dreaming, to a lifeless absolute, and also to "Buddhist nothingness"; on the other hand Christianity has given their full meaning to "time" and the "human person," discovered by Judaism, or so it is said; as a result individualism, progress, scientism, technology and the rest, are accounted to be fruits of Christianity.

Nevertheless things remain what they are and it is sufficient to open one's eyes in order to see them such as they are; but the question which people always carefully omit to ask, as if there were on this subject a conspiracy of silence, is precisely that of knowing "why" a given phenomenon is what it is, "why" certain artists do what they do and "why"

our time comprises certain tendencies and not others.<sup>17</sup> The fact that behind all these manifestations there is one and the same irreligious mentality seems to worry no one nor does it lead to anyone's drawing a clear conclusion from that fact; people are concerned about certain particular effects but close their eyes to the general causes, while accepting eagerly, as expressions of "our time," a thousand manifestations of these causes. That a collectivity should be impermeable to spiritual values, or that it should be vulgar and blunted means nothing to these people; they think it good simply because it embodies contemporary trends—it becomes good form to flatter the collective vanity on every possible occasion; on this basis "charity" demands that one should see only good everywhere, except in "fanatics," that is to say, in those who think in terms of religion; the saints are basically wrong because they "belong to another age," just as religion is wrong because it does not arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. So-called "lucidity"<sup>18</sup> demands that everything should be suspected of psychological deception, or that everything should be accused of relativity except this accusation alone, a classical and significantly revealing contradiction common to all the grave-diggers of intelligence; the law of causality no longer operates, words no longer have any meaning; if Aristotle were to return to earth, people would want to feel his pulse. It is certainly no gain to turn away from a strangely blind patriotism, abusively mixed with religion, simply in order to fall into an evolutionist and inhuman mythology, a barbarous messianism of the uprooted which is at the antipodes of the faith which some still claim; one must first have forgotten the meaning of faith, in order to wish to mix it with such a substitute. To say the least, it is surprising that men who are so quick to wax indignant at some "gnosis" or "suspect mysticism" about which they do not understand the first thing, experience no repugnance in adopting ideologies opposed to all spirituality.

If profane nationalism (sentimentally confused with religion by virtue of an association of ideas between varying notions of the sublime) constitutes a usurpation of religious feeling, then in its own fashion, so-called Christian progressivism is at least equally a usurpation since, for it, religion includes a completely different faith, one which in fact is more truly felt and more sincere, namely, the materialist and evolution-ist creed. It is true that the intimate predominance of a profane faith over genuine religious belief is likewise to be found in those patriots who claim also to be believers, but who only too often are, not so much believers, as patriots. It is obvious that the two parties have more than one point in common, so much so that many of the criticisms levelled at one camp rebound equally on the other: speaking symbolically, progressists and conservatives both accept the forbidden tree with apparently unmixed joy, but the conservatives at least reject the spiritual poison that flows from it; their inconsistency is that, because of their civilizationist taboo, they refuse to judge the tree by its fruits.

A remark which is perhaps called for here is the following: it is most unjust to eliminate religion (starting with the realms of education and "public order") and then to declare that religion "has failed"; a purely "private" religion is already a dying religion, unless it is maintained by virtue of its coincidence with a very characteristic ethnic minority which thrives on pressure from outside, as was the case with the Judaism of the diaspora. The masses are passive and the destiny of a religion cannot be abandoned to them; it is not for nothing that every totalitarian political regime imposes itself in the manner of a "State religion," without thinking of submitting the doctrine in question to a popular vote, a fact which obviously does not prevent these regimes from passionately

condemning the same attitude in others. Everybody insists on the necessity of educating the masses in order to make them accept what is contrary to nature; but religion is deprived of all its influence and then required to reign by means of a smile, which moreover it tries to do, at the same time persuading itself that this is a virtue. The first rule to be observed, when one wishes to undermine a civilization, is to neutralize its leaders and compromise its authorities; the people will never maintain any transcendent element by its own strength and this is all the more true when it is exposed to the influence of an ideology and a morality which flatter and exploit its natural tendencies and its propensity towards an irreversible downward glide; the biblical story of the Golden Calf is completely significant in this respect.

If unbelievers reproach religion for its inability to solve the problems of "our time," they must not be blamed too much for this, since the religious authorities only too often assume responsibility for modern civilization and thereby for the sins of Prometheus and Icarus; whoever wishes to be responsible for certain causes must also be so for their effects. In reality, and most fortunately, the Church is quite unable to lay claim to the glories of scientism and technocracy, given that this modern world is a latter-day phenomenon situated outside the radiation of the Church's traditional "mythology," if one may so express oneself; if some religious authorities—not religion itself—implicitly claim for Christianity the world wars, the totalitarian dictatorships and the atom bomb, they clearly exceed their rights. It already happens that pastoral letters contain, not flagrant heresies regarding essentials, admittedly, but what may be called indirect or virtual heresies,<sup>19</sup> something that would not happen if there still were in the West a sapiential tradition in the full sense of the word;<sup>20</sup> in reality, whether one likes it or not, *gnosis* coincides with a "dimension of the Holy Spirit," if one may so express it, and no one can go on despising it with impunity; even if previously we had hesitated to believe this, we would in any case believe it today.

The enormous disproportion, in our age, between physical knowledge and pure intelligence is full of the mystery of the absurd, especially in the case of "believers" on whom the most "exact" and elaborate science has conferred not the slightest perspicacity with regard to the qualitative aspect of phenomena or their spiritual and eschatological meaning; indeed quite the contrary, since this science of their allows them to believe in progress in spite of the universal neglect of God; one cannot help thinking here of this passage from Scripture: "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" (*Luke*, XII, 56). Some have argued that in order to convert a world, one must first love it; if this means that one must love the immortal souls that one is taking the trouble to save, this is a truism; but if it means that one must love the unbelieving world for its own sake, then this is a non-sense. It is obvious that the Apostles loved the souls of the Romans; it is no less obvious that they did not love Roman morals and that they had no indulgence for the games of the circuses, for example, nor for the Saturnalia. What must be done in the first place in order to convert a world is to understand it; now "to understand" does not mean "to agree with," as a now common misuse of language would have it; it means "to know its true nature," be this good or bad. The scientist civilization creates a mental climate and a formal structure incompatible, not necessarily in principle but certainly in fact, with the development of a religious mentality; if the individual is deaf to the appeals of religion, this is firstly because his whole ambience, which invades his soul and from which he



cannot separate himself, makes religious things *a priori* seem extravagant and preposterous; an intelligent and effective pastoral teaching would thus begin by sizing up this ambience on the basis of immutable criteria, but this would demand, not the customary euphemisms, but a clear statement of certain truths—those, precisely, which a "categorical imperative" of intellectual blindness render unmentionable.<sup>21</sup>

Religion (when not neutralized by an adulteration which diminishes it or by concessions which debase it, and provided that, on the contrary, it be founded on what constitutes its true nature and its *raison d'être*, namely, our eternal destiny whose evidence we carry in the very substance of our spirit) comprises in its heart the answer to every possible human question and the solution to every genuine problem. A problem is real if it touches our integral nature and our final interests; an impasse due to our own refusal to accept the truth and together with the truth the calamities of earthly existence is not a true problem. All our miseries are the effect of our separation from the Divine Principle, or from the Self as the Vedantists would say; now religion is concerned with this cause rather than with its effects, or to be more accurate, it is concerned with the effects in function of their cause; it strives to end this separation—the saints succeed in this and show the way—but its aim cannot be to cure those effects in isolation and from "worldly" motives, nor does religion try to cause the world to cease from being the world. One cannot eliminate the consequences of sin without eliminating sin itself; and even if one could do so for a moment, nothing would be solved and everything would merely begin all over again, since sin itself would remain;<sup>22</sup> the great betrayal of the progressists is to ignore this deliberately and to shut their eyes to what constitutes the quintessence of the human condition. Religion is reproached for being unable to solve the "problems of our time," but people will not understand, firstly, that religion only has in view the problems of all times, and, secondly, that no one will solve new problems, if only because each solution, on this plane or level, gives rise to still newer problems;<sup>23</sup> finally, people fail to see that religion is qualified, alone and in principle, not to do impossible things, but to do what could and ought to be done, whether this be in conformity with the prejudices now in fashion or otherwise. The key to the world and its destiny lies within ourselves, and this is the point of view of religion and of every enterprise proportioned to our total nature; whoever can do the greater can in principle do the lesser, and the latter has no meaning except in function of the former. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you"<sup>24</sup> says the Gospel; no one can put it better.

(Original editorial inclusions that followed the essay:)

Meister-Eckhart says, I have been asked what God is doing in heaven? I answer, He has been giving his Son birth eternally, is giving him birth now and will go on giving him birth for ever, the Father being in childbed in every virtuous soul. Blessed, thrice blessed is the man within whose soul the Heavenly Father is thus brought to bed. All she surrenders to him here she shall enjoy from him in life eternal. God made the soul on purpose for her to bear his one-begotten Son. His birth in Mary ghostly was to God better pleasing than his nativity of her in flesh. When this birth happens nowadays in the good loving soul it gives God greater pleasure than his creation of the heavens and earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Likewise Joan's standard was a completely different thing from a revolutionary flag which unites in the same profane cult both believers and unbelievers.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the real fatherland of an Algerian Moslem may be not so much the Algerian State as the Islamic Maghreb, irrespective of what its accidental subdivisions may be; and this Maghreb is an ancient and vital part of the Moslem world. In this connection it could be added that one would have to be truly miserable or of a crass ignorance to regard as of no account the country which was the home-land of such men as Sidi 'Abd ar-Rahmân Al-Azhari Sidi Ah.mad At-Tijâni, Muir 'Abd al-Qadir and Shaikh Al-`Allawi.

<sup>3</sup> Even people as warlike as the Indians of North America knew nothing of "general mobilization," each individual having the right not to participate in a warlike expedition; this was often the case with medicine-men and recognized hunters. Likewise in the case of the Israelites: "And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people... and the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and bath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard ... let him also go and return unto his house... And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife... let him go and return unto his house... What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted ? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." (*Deuteronomy*, XX, 2-8).

<sup>4</sup> Likewise mention should be made of "Holy Russia," which could be looked upon as heir to Byzantium, the "New Rome and New Jerusalem," and as the predestined protector of the whole Eastern Church. Analogous remarks apply to Abyssinia, since she is the only sovereign Empire of monophysite confession.

<sup>5</sup> Following the manner of the kings of Judah, who were anointed by the high priest, the King of France received his consecration by unction administered by the primate bishop of France with holy oil kept at Rheims; according to legend this oil had come down from heaven, in a vessel which a dove had brought for the consecration of Clovis. In the eyes of the Medievals, this heavenly unction conferred on the kings of France a privileged role and a certain independence with regard to the Emperor, who himself was crowned and anointed by the Church; for his part, the Emperor was linked to the continuity of the function of Caesar, of whom Christ said: "Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's."

<sup>6</sup> But it is never wrong to proclaim aloud, or to carve in marble, the tale of other peoples' misdeeds, after taking them out of their own context of circumstances and without laying any heed to the laws of collective psychology lying behind them, in any given case.

<sup>7</sup> This word has become a technical term for the French modernists and means the mixture of religion and money (*Translator's note*).

<sup>8</sup> Pius XII once remarked that it is consoling to recall that there are on earth so many millions of men who prostrate themselves five times a day before God, namely the Moslems.

<sup>9</sup> It was a very grave fault on the part of the colonial powers, by wasting too much time, to allow native opposition to become extremist, following the style of the age; what should have been done was to reach an understanding in good time with the traditional elements and thus confer on them the prestige of liberation. In a certain kind of conflict one always ends up by having to face the kind of negotiators one deserves.

<sup>10</sup> The anti-Westernism of modernistic Orientals and Africans has something singularly contradictory about it, since modernism is a purely Western creation and since consequently every people that accepts it is automatically Westernized and thinks in European categories from then on, thus removing every reason for being proud of its Asiatic or African character. In a partially analogous manner, the "civilizationist-nationalists" among the Europeans readily forget that Christianity itself is of Eastern origin.

<sup>11</sup> Because a pseudo-spiritual and Vivekanandian universalism is lacking in intelligence, some conclude--or affect to conclude--that every kind of spiritual universalism is necessarily stupid; this would be the same as saying that Catholic-ism is absurd because Mormonism is so. It makes no difference that arguments of this type are only too transparent, they are much too comfortable to be jettisoned.

<sup>12</sup> A comparison of the "Last Judgement" by Fra Angelico—even though already of the *Quattrocento*—and the "Last Judgement" by Michelangelo shows the complete incompatibility between two worlds, the one Christian and the other titanesque. The Renaissance was not a "time" following another "time", it was an act of murder; the Renaissance killed Medieval "space" and invented "time."

<sup>13</sup> Luther was a Christian who left the Church; Teilhard was a pagan who remained in it.

<sup>14</sup> "I am meek and humble of heart," said Christ; likewise the Law of Manu: "When a man discovers in the intelligent soul an affectionate disposition, wholly calm, and as pure as the day, let him recognize that this

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is the upward quality" (*sattva*, conformity to *Sat*, pure Being).

<sup>15</sup> This expression, better known in French than in English, refers to those Catholics who, in contradistinction from the "progressives," stand for "Christian integrity" and who in English, are often referred to as "conservatives." (*Translator's note*).

<sup>16</sup> If we put the question as to whether the Holy Family were "civilized" or not, basing ourselves, not on the general notion of civilization but on the entirely special notion of "civilizationism" or "modern civilization," it is obvious that the Holy Family do not answer to this description, and it is precisely this which shows, or which proves, the wholly diabolic character of the civilizationist idea. If the Prophets and Apostles were "civilized," the Moslems are equally so; if the latter are not so, then neither were the former.

<sup>17</sup> The linking up of machines and other trivialities to Christ evinces a monstrous insensitivity with regard to the nature of things and to the obvious language of forms, signs and symbols which proclaims that nature. This is a real perversion of the imagination and sensibility, due to a refusal to recognize that even in "the age we live in" things continue to mean what they mean.

<sup>18</sup> This word has become in French the synonym of modernistically thinking intelligence. (*Translator's note*).

<sup>19</sup> Moreover, what is the value of the encyclicals of a given pope, since it is permissible to mock the encyclicals of some other pope?

<sup>20</sup> It is necessary to distinguish between an active or positive infallibility and one which is passive or negative: the first is the normal infallibility embodied in the pope and the totality of the Church, and the second is the minimal intervention of the Holy Spirit when the majority are contaminated by an extra-religious or "worldly" mentality; in this case, the Church remains infallible with regard to the strict minimum of orthodoxy and efficacy, but is fallible as regards everything else, which is enormous and which includes the liturgy in particular. The Holy Spirit allows human freedom its responsibility as far as this is possible: it limits itself to applying the brake *in extremis*, in cases of obscuration of the human support; thus its action here is "negative," while human participation is purely "passive" in this sector. The intervention of Heaven is absolute only for dogma and the sacraments; it is relative or conditional for liturgy and art, where it is exercised only by virtue of the positive disposition of man. Since it is now accepted, rightly or wrongly, that the Church was fallible in the case of the Crusades, the Inquisition and the sale of indulgences, by what right can its infallibility be invoked in the case of the new liturgy and the new pastoral teaching, which are just as much situated outside pure dogma as the abuses of the Middle Ages? In other words since the Church is supposed to have walked in darkness from Constantine to John XXIII, what is there to prevent it in principle from doing as much in our own day or from doing it especially in our day?

<sup>21</sup> There is an almost classical pseudo-argument which must be paraphrased here: fire is good, so it is good to set fire to a barn, providing, of course, that it behaves well and does not burn! This is the usual logic of Christianized machinism.

<sup>22</sup> By "sin" must be understood our separation from the Divine Centre in so far as this shows itself in attitudes or acts; the essence of sin is a forgetting of the Absolute, which is likewise the Infinite and the Perfect, and this forgetting coincides with centrifugal passion and at the same time with egoistic hardening.

<sup>23</sup> In the Nineteenth Century, the machine—the kind which combined "iron" and "fire"—was supposed to solve once and for *all* the problem of work; serums were to abolish illness, and so on. Now the results already before us prompt the remark that a rainmaker must neither be ineffective, nor provoke a flood. It is moreover contradictory to want to abolish work and then to glorify work to the point of making a religion of it.

<sup>24</sup> This means, not that Heaven is something subjective—*quod absit*—but that access to Heaven passes through the human subject.