

May the statesmen of America and the British Commonwealth have the vision, the wisdom and the devotion to live up to these principles!

Lead, kindly Light, lead thou them on.

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Cambridge, June 1947.

PERSONALITY AND RELATION

AS a being, man is dependent on God, the first cause of all things; as a being endowed with mind and will, powers of thought and desire, he is a close reflection of that first cause, in the knowledge and love of which, to the highest of his ability, he must find his perfection and his happiness if he is to find them at all. The first cause has not left man to develop the mere scope of his natural ability, great as that is. God has freely bestowed on him, as an overflow of his goodness, supernatural powers of knowledge and love which leave the natural pattern of human nature unimpaired, but make possible the attainment of a higher kind of perfection and a much greater happiness, consisting in consciously being so like God that man can have the same divine object of his thought and love that is proper to the life of God himself. Whether we think of man, then, as coming from God's creative hand, or as in process of conscious return to him, in either case we see ourselves as conditioned by that relationship, that company, the society of God.

It is interesting to notice how very close the Church and the world are in the subject-matter of their chief preoccupation nowadays. Secular thought is concerned as never before with man's relation to human society, and the Church is particularly concerned to elaborate man's place in a divine society too. This is not purely by way of reaction or correction on the part of the Church. In paying particular attention at this time to the Mystical Body of Christ, i.e., the unity of Christians with Christ, the Church is pursuing a dynamism of her own thought which has gone on for long enough by now for us to be able to trace its rhythms with some clarity. In examining that dynamism we can see also the Church's relationship to the world as she pursues her own course of thought. At first sight it looks like reaction pure and simple to any attack that comes. But the interesting thing is that as the course of history proceeds, her apparent reactions show a pattern all of their own. And as this pattern is most definitely the right one for her, the one we might expect for her thought, therefore the attacks must have followed her lead instead of her defences having followed the secular lead. In fact, ever since the

foundation of the Church, the world has been reacting to her rather than she to the world.

In the beginning the Church claimed to be founded by someone called Jesus Christ, who gave and continued to give men through her, a share in the divine life. Could he do that? At once the world began to attack his reality, the reality of his body, the reality of his human soul, the fact of his divinity. The Church's answer is to be found in the writings of St John. Momentarily repulsed on that front, the world turned to attack the chief of what Christ had to offer, which was also to attack himself, for he was the chief of what he had to offer. That proffering was a gift not so much of things as of persons, three divine persons in the one God. 'If any man love me he will be true to my word; and then he will win my Father's love, and we will both come to him, and make our continual abode with him' (John 14, 23). 'If you have any love for me, you must keep the commandments which I give you, and then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever. It is the truth-giving Spirit . . . he will be continually at your side, nay, he will be in you' (ibid. 16). That is the deepest of his message and his promise. If you love him, you will be true to his word, keep his commandments, and then Father, Son and Holy Ghost will come to you and stay with you, and be friends with you. So the world attacked the reality of that divine society of Persons, saying that the Son was not God, or the Holy Ghost was not God. Those two subjects provided the main topics of the Church's thought in the first five centuries of her existence. The direction of interest was indeed provoked by the attack, but it was just because these points form the essential substance of the Church's teaching that they were the first to be raised.

The next point of dispute was the manner in which the Church's mission of bringing men to Christ was to be accomplished. The main outlines of the theology of the Trinity and the Incarnation had been settled. Man's approach to God had next to be investigated. And so we have first the iconoclastic controversies about sensible representations of God and the Saints, and then the enquiries of the later Middle Ages about the necessity and nature of the Sacraments, those sensible channels of the divine life given to us. That period culminated in the Council of Trent, which shows also the beginning of a new period already in being, preoccupied with human nature and grace and human capacity for God. First God, then man's approach to him, then man in himself; an ordered sequence of thought, stimulated by external irritation but showing by the internal logic of its structure which side was really calling the tune.

The next stage was of course the consideration of man's relation to other men, and so we find the status of the Pope, the supreme authority in the Church, definitely settled at the Vatican Council of 1870, and now a flood of theological discussion on the Mystical Body of Christ, parallel to, and again partly provoked by, the social and political preoccupations of secular thought. What is the next stage? The external provocation and the internal dynamism of the Church's thought seem to point in the same direction, viz., to a renewed attention to personality, to the distinctive status, characteristics and needs of persons as such. In secular thought we see great forces of conviction upholding and denying the personal status of man. Is man simply a thing among other things, to be used and shifted about and finally thrown away by those who can achieve the physical power to treat him thus: or has he a value in his every individual self which gives him inalienable rights with an indefectible claim against mere power? This is one way of stating the conflict. People who sincerely incline to the latter, personal view, often become ineffective advocates of it because they feel that the acknowledgment of individual worth, rights and responsibilities must lead to the kind of chaos from which the world is trying to escape, and from which so many on the other side are trying to save it. There is an alternative to such discouragement. The absolute value of each individual person does not involve lack of social co-ordination, cut-throat individualism, and despairing loneliness. For a person who is rejecting social responsibility is falling short of the full dignity of his personal status. To see how this is so, we must examine a little the growth of human awareness of what it is to be a person.

In all the history of thought the growth of this idea and this consciousness is one of the most interesting topics. For it is nothing less than the growth of man's awareness of his own nature, not merely as an isolated object, but as in solidarity with other persons, both divine and human. Indeed it is a matter of historical fact that the first awareness of what it is to be a person was provoked by the meeting of human persons with divine ones. The ancient Greek philosophers had no word expressive of personality; the Hebrew prophets had the idea, for to them God was not so much an object of speculative thought as a participator in mutual speech, but it was not their way to reflect on life and elaborate their experience in systematic judgments. It was not till the Hebrew and the Greek mind came together in Christianity that something we can recognise as the idea of personality was expressly elaborated and examined.

The word 'persona' was indeed in use in pre-Christian Latin, and the meanings which it then covered are of interest as showing the reasons for the eventual adoption of this term to denote individuals

endowed with reason, its privileges and responsibilities. They also show the absolutist and relativist significances which are made explicit and contrasted in St Thomas's theological treatment of the subject, and which are most instructive for the guidance of our private, social, and political thought about the matter today. Cicero (106-43 B.C.) distinguishes four uses of the word, according as it signifies (a) a man as he appears to others; (b) the part one plays in life; (c) the assemblage of qualities that fit a man for his work; (d) distinction and dignity, cf. 'personage'. We should notice that the first two of these meanings indicate directly the co-activity of other persons; the last two indicate rather what man is in himself. I shall call these two main senses the relative and absolute senses. The relative senses are immediately derived from the Greek *prosopon*, which *persona* translates. *Prosopon* was the name of the mask which Greek actors wore—meaning literally a facing-towards, or a presented face. It was not I think the Roman theatrical custom, but under Greek influence a mask might be worn. We hear of a Roman actor wearing one to hide a squint in 100 B.C., and the word used is *persona*. It is by derivation from this Greco-Roman usage that our theatre programmes bear the legend *Dramatis Personæ*, the presented faces of the drama.

But it is to be noted that if a dramatic character is from one point of view a presentation to the audience and to the other characters, from another he is a distinct individual within the play, and it may be owing to this inherent ambiguity in the usage that the grammarian Varro (116-26 B.C.) was able to transfer the word from the theatre to grammar, using it to denote the subject of attributes in a sentence, clearly stressing the absolute sense, though not to the exclusion of the other. The ambiguity has remained with us, so that you can find phrases in common use in which the word means what is assumed, non-essential, false or on the other hand what is vital, inward and essential: Gordon W. Allport in *Psychology: a Psychological Interpretation* (Constable, 1938) has excellently worked out some fifty of these uses, their history and interconnection. As he puts it: 'Personality is used to describe almost everything from the attributes of the soul to those of a new talcum powder'. Philosophers have mostly stressed the absolute sense, viewing persons as intellectual, individual selves. The modern legal use denotes the living human being in his entirety. On the other hand, sociologists, while they may use the term of the individual within a human group, generally emphasise his lack of self-sufficiency, re-introducing the relative sense, which the Jungian school of psychologists stresses still further by using *persona* in its Latin form to denote the mask with which individuals are wont to disguise themselves in face of the social world about them. With that idea we get back to the original Greek usage. In common speech we talk of

personal life as inward and secret and cut off from the outside world, but again of personal appearance and personal relationships somewhat in the opposite sense. Since the same word persists with this constant duality of sense, it seems likely that both meanings are relevant to a full understanding of personality.

Indeed when we come to talk of private or political life in terms of the duties and rights of persons, of how persons ought to act and be treated, it is most necessary to take account of both elements. This is not always done. Berdyaev, widely hailed as the seer for our times in the matter of social and political trends, proclaims himself a personalist in every book, but his view of personality is exclusively a relational one. In fact, as we may later appreciate, he tends to make human persons into divine ones. Certainly the relational view suits the style of the seer or the prophet. Personal relations—there is a suggestion of vivid mutual life in that common expression. People are thought to live more fully in relationship with, in communion with other people than when keeping themselves to themselves. Berdyaev holds that it is the actuality of this full, relational life which constitutes personality. Thus in his *Cinq Meditations sur l'Existence*, translated as *Solitude and Society*, he says: 'Spiritually the person is never alone, it implies the existence of another, of a "thou" and a "we".' Shortly afterwards he says: 'The loneliness of the "I" is only possible in a world of objects'. For Berdyaev there is no greater condemnation than to say that something is part of the world of objects. He finds a purely rational and objectivising philosophy contemptible, unhallowed, irredeemable, lifeless. He openly asserts the primacy of freedom over being, i.e., of the good over the true, of desire over reason. Objectively reason is not for him a supreme manifestation of properly human life. That is only genuinely shown in the affective communion of essentially relative persons, who are not objects for each other's thought and action but co-subjects in a single mutual life. For him science is beneath the dignity of the human person: it is not the truth which makes man free, but the genuinely free man is he who makes his own truth.

The theory reflects the situation of a surrealist artist who wants to arrange life with the same despotic control that he would exercise over his paints. It is a theory which rejects the balanced affirmations and denials of the scientific mind which constitute an intelligible basis for the guidance of desire. Freedom is indeed a property of persons; but freedom, the power of self-determination, is rooted in the power to judge thus and thus about the worth of things. The existentialists do not see freedom as rooted in judgment, or judgment as the expression of objective truth; for them the only judgment worthy of the dignity of a human person is one withdrawn from the process of objec-

tivisation, and which instead of treating of something is itself something. This is Berdyaev's phrase and by it he seems to mean 'is itself anything but thought', for he gives the example of Kierkegaard, the common parent of the existentialists: 'At bottom the thought of Kierkegaard is only a cry of pain torn from him by the personal drama of his life'. But it is not by emitting cries of pain that man can rejoin the author of his being in a specifically human way, but rather by discovering through faith and reason the intelligible pattern in the world of nature, of thought, of speech, of action, by setting in order his desires according to that pattern, by the building of good law, reason's work, by promulgating and administering it through will motivated by reason. We are not made rational beings, persons, in order to use the best of our powers to immerse ourselves in an undifferentiated stream of existence, but so that we may differentiate between the natures of things, setting them in order among themselves and for ourselves, not merely doing *our* best for them but doing what is best for them, treating them in accord with the truth we have learned about them.

Such an exaggeratedly relative view of human personality results in a depreciation of the genuine glory of human nature and the highest and most specific of our operations. We can see the same thing working out in the same way in a thinker of a somewhat different type if we turn to D. H. Lawrence. He too is in revolt against the 'epoch of objectivation'. He too sees a full human life, in the words of Middleton Murry, as 'always an affair of *two* individuals united in a subjective polar antinomy'. He too states his contempt for science. His own philosophy is patently existential in the Kierkegaardian sense, a cry of anguish torn from him by the personal drama of his life. Of necessity the life of dark passion which he tries to glorify is a life not specifically human, and is exercised in a less than human way. Of necessity it destroys his characters as it burnt him alive; for mind without will is ineffective, but desire without mind is destructive.

In view of what we have said about the original meanings of 'person' it is most interesting to see that there is another strain in the thought—or should one call it 'feeling'—of these two thorough-going relativists. Berdyaev is deeply aware of the unique character of personality. 'The person is spirit and belongs to the spiritual world'. 'The person is above all an axiological category—a category of value'. The personal tragedy of Lawrence, seen by himself and expressed in his writings, was that he longed for a singleness or absoluteness or independence of soul, which he called of course impersonal, and his efforts after it were continually foundering in what he viewed as the brutal, undifferentiated, sea of personal relationships. We would rather say that his reason, his conscience, which made him a person,

were constantly being overwhelmed in a sea of impersonal, irrational relationships. Absolute and relative, how are we to view them as combined in personality?

The personalism of St Thomas is as true, as beautiful and as satisfying an account as he gave of anything. Personality is one of those pure perfections which can be properly and positively predicated of God, even though we must admit in the very act of predication that the infinite perfection with which they are realised in him is beyond any with which we are directly acquainted. A person is a complete individual endowed with reason and therefore with freedom. Freedom is what gives persons their high status and special value. St Thomas is in the tradition of seeing 'person' as a *nomen dignitatis* and an axiological category. It signifies the total rational individual. My hands, my mind, my will, they are not persons, for by themselves they are incomplete individuals, parts of me. But I, in my totality, am a person. An absolutist sense, clearly, but is it exclusively so? All St Thomas's teaching about man and human acts shows that it is not. The individual endowed with mind is able and is called upon to enter freely into relationships of charity, of justice, of prudence, etc., with other such individuals. One of the precepts of the natural law is that man should live in peace, which St Thomas calls the tranquillity of order, with his fellow men, and what is order but a system of intelligibly arranged relationships. We have not here the blind spiritual immersion in mere existence of Berdyaev, nor the blind immersion in contact with reality through passion of Lawrence, but a human approach to reality in which passion may play its part, for it is the subject of the moral virtues, but always in the light of reason recognizing truth, under the guidance of will exercising rational choice and submitting to obligation.

The human person has value, surpassing value, in himself, but as a complete free individual, not as the polar opposite of another Thou. The human person is an absolute, but can enter into relation. Let us now apply this pure perfection, this *nomen dignitatis* to God. An entire intellectual individual, yes, but in the light of faith we learn that the absolute divine nature is possessed entire by three individual relationships. Fatherhood, which subsists with the divine act of being, Sonship which subsists with the same divine act of being, and the love relation which they breathe forth in common and which subsists with the same divine act of being. They are distinct, for as opposing relationships they at once imply and exclude each other; they are real for they each have the being of God. These are the ultimate divine individuals to whom we must give the name of persons, and what are they? Absolutes who can enter into relation? No, relations possessing the same absolute actuality. Here is the

likeness and the difference between persons human and divine. To de-absolutize human personality, while it may seem to promise a divinisation, can only end in a debasement. To remove its substantial basis must be to confound it with the stream of things that exist indeed, but not in their own right. To remove its specific differentiation, its intellectuality, is to deny the ground of its freedom which gives it its peculiar value. To over-relationalize it is to make the right relationships of charity and justice impossible. But within these relationships and by means of them the human person can indeed rise to fuller and fuller sharing in the mutual relational life of the divine persons, in which we more and more enjoy the relation of Sonship, for we have received the spirit of adoption by which we cry, 'Abba, Father'.

That life of adopted divine Sonship may flower into mysticism and knowledge gained through the appreciation which love brings, but assuredly it takes its rise and its normal development through love motivated by cognition. As St Catherine of Siena says in the opening words of her Dialogue: 'The soul, who is lifted by a very great and yearning desire for the honour of God and the salvation of souls, begins by exercising herself, for a certain space of time in the ordinary virtues, remaining in the cell of self-knowledge, in order to know better the goodness of God towards her. This she does because knowledge must precede love'. The subject of growth in which this life of relationship has its being is no spontaneous urge but an intellectual substance. The conditions of its growth are not the anarchic movements of blind desire, but the intelligible social and juridical relations established and ordered by human society and by the Church.

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THE LANGUAGE OF THE GREEK FATHERS

REFLECTIONS ON A FORTHCOMING LEXICON OF PATRISTIC GREEK

AS the catalogues of the publishers show there is a great revival of interest in the study of the Fathers, especially the Greek Fathers, so long overshadowed by their better known and more accessible Latin brethren. If we read that the *Editions du Cerf* have already brought out translations of authors as comparatively little known as the apologist Athenagoras, the Cappadocian Gregory of Nyssa, John Moschus and Maximus Confessor, a new spring of patristic studies seems indeed to be upon us, and from America there come the translations of St Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians and of the Seven Letters of St Ignatius. Will England, whose interest in the Greek Fathers has always been particularly keen (we need only