

Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen

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But one of the features of post-conciliar Catholic thought is precisely the fact that Protestant initiatives are all the more readily transferred to the Catholic milieu and there undergo the sea change of a fresh significance and a new treatment. So last December in the London Month Nicolas Lash had an article of purely Catholic concern on "Faith and the Secular," while the international post-conciliar periodical, Concilium, has devoted at least three volumes to similar matters: volume sixteen was entitled, Is God Dead?, volume nineteen was on Spirituality in the Secular City, and volume forty-seven was devoted, as the present lecture, to Sacralization and Secularization.

I shall introduce my subject by outlining an article of Paul Ricoeur's on the atheism of Freudian psychoanalysis and by sketching Claude Geffré's contrast of Fr. Chenu and Cardinal Daniélou's radically opposed views on the end of the Constantinian era. I shall work towards an understanding of the issues by a discussion of the social construction of reality, not without a bow to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. I shall close with an attempt at clarifying terms and presenting a genealogy of differences.

Sacralization and Secularization

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Paul Ricoeur: 'The Atheism of Freudian Psychoanalysis'

Writing on the general topic, Is God Dead?, Prof. Ricoeur began by recognizing Sigmund Freud as one of the outstanding atheists of our culture. Freud's atheism he found evident in such writings as The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, Moses and Monotheism. But what makes this atheism outstanding lies in Freud's originality and in his profound influence on modern man's understanding of himself.

Freud's originality is that his atheism is not just another instance of philosophic empiricism or scientific positivism. For his work differs from that of natural science both in its data and in its technique. Its data are not the outer data of sense but the inner data of consciousness, even the data of dreams. Its technique is not the correlation of measurements but the interpretation of personal experiences. So it is that the work of the psychoanalyst bears little resemblance to that of a physicist and a great resemblance to that of a textual critic or an exegete.

Differing from natural science both in its data and in its technique, psychoanalysis concerns itself with the mental hygiene not only of individuals but also of cultures and civilizations. In this fashion Freudian thought comes to be classed along with the thought of Feuerbach, Marx, and Nietzsche.

As they did, it too criticizes culture and, along with culture, religion as a cultural phenomenon. As they did, it too reduces religion to a hidden movement of consciousness that is the source of an illusion and expresses itself in myth. As they did, it too is not content to destroy religion; it has a positive aim and would restore to man what is proper to him but had been displaced and lost in an alien transcendence.

After conceding the originality of Freudian atheism, Prof. Ricoeur proceeds to reveal his own originality. Where other religiously-minded critics tend to dispute in principle the legitimacy of psychoanalytic pronouncements on art, morality, religion, Prof. Ricoeur is at pains to grant explicitly that legitimacy in so far as art, morality, religion are cultural phenomena. The tension between human instinct and socially acceptable behavior is not confined to the individual psyche but is a real and significant component in the tensions of society itself. The Freudian 'censor,' 'superego,' 'father image' are psychic functions within the individual but they stand in vital correspondence with social demands. Finally, if these psychic functions are to succeed in meeting social demands, if they are to banish even the thought of incest, murder, cannibalism, then they need to be reinforced by some compensating factor at once terrible and consoling: terrible enough to preclude transgression; consoling enough to hide privation.

Now it is religion that can and does fulfil this twofold role. It can threaten punishments painful beyond measure and,

to boot, everlasting. It can promise joys that no one has known in this world. But as meeting a psychic need, as a cultural phenomenon that meets the need, religion is no more than an instance of wish-fulfilment. Its threats and promises are what men may need, what men may wish but, unfortunately, what men cannot bring about. Wishing effects nothing. We are not in fairyland.

I have spoken of Prof. Ricoeur's originality in granting that the Freudian critique of religion was, in principle, legitimate. But there is a further aspect to that originality to which attention must now be drawn. For in granting the legitimacy of the critique in principle, Prof. Ricoeur does not grant that the critique is in fact complete. Something more has to be said, and its tenor will be that, as in the past Freud has reinforced the faith of unbelievers, so in the future he may be used to reinforce the faith of believers.

The incompleteness of Freudian thought comes to light in two manners. On the one hand, Freudian analysis moves from a contemporary psychic situation in a patient back to its origins in childhood, in infancy, in prenatal experience. But this backward movement necessarily presupposes in the patient or client a previous forward movement that proceeded from the origins to the present state of affairs. Besides the archeology that discovers traces of the past in the present, there also exists a teleology along which the present emerged from the past. Moreover, and this is the second element in the matter, that process of emergence can be disturbed and distorted, and

such disturbances and distortions, in principle, can be corrected or remedied. For if no correction or remedy is possible, then it would be useless to consult a psychoanalyst on one's neurosis or to listen to one when he would liberate civilizations from their illusions.

But what is true of human development in general, also would seem to be true of man's religious development. It has its beginnings, its incomplete and rudimentary stages, its tendencies towards a fulness and balance that may be named a maturity. But traces of the rudimentary can survive in developed instances, and there can arise disturbances that, if let run their course, result in distortions. As in other domains, so too in the domain of religion infantile fears can outlast the time of their inevitability. They can color or pervade or dominate in religious feelings of guilt. But it does not at once follow and it is not at once to be assumed that such fears represent religious maturity and not religious retardation. One cannot simply ignore the fact that, as religious people advance in the life of the spirit, fear gives place to love, and the terrors of guilt yield to shame for one's lack of responsibility and sorrow for one's lack of love. Again, in so far as religious hope renounces the satisfactions of this life for the sake of the satisfactions of the future life, we have to do not with the maturity of hope but with the law, which for St. Paul was just our pedagogue in Christ. True hope for a time may express itself as a hope for recompense, but until it grows into a confidence that relies simply on the

goodness of God, then on a day of bitter trial the satisfactions of the present may seem the better bargain.

I have been sketching in bold outline and with simplified emphases the reflections of Paul Ricoeur on the atheism of Freudian psychoanalysis. For a fuller account you must go not only to the article I have mentioned but also to the book, De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud. But enough, perhaps has been said to introduce you into the climate in which such terms as sacralization and secularization can assume a precise meaning. Their clarification cannot be attempted at once, but it can at once be said that they deal with development and retardation, with mistaking retardation for development and mistaking development for retardation and, most disastrous of all, with triumphantly living out a mistake as though it were the truth, or living out a truth in the agony of fearing it to be a mistake.

Claude Geffré, O.P., 'Desacralization and the Spiritual Life'

In the nineteenth volume of Concilium bearing the title, Spirituality in the Secular City, Claude Geffré reviews a number of debates turning upon the tension between the inner life of prayer and the secular, desacralized world in which we live. Of these debates our attention will have to be limited to that between Marie-Dominique Chenu, who favors desacralization, and Jean Cardinal Daniélou, whose elevation to the cardinalate was preceded by a book entitled, L'Oraison, problème politique.

For Fr.Chenu the changed situation of Christianity in

cy/ Western Europe simply marks the end of the era of Constantine. It was Constantine that decreed the end of the persecution of Christians. He it was that initiated the fateful alliance of church and state that for centuries, despite changing circumstances and profoundly altered situations, despite quarrels and enmities and violence, nevertheless did define a basic state of affairs, a dyarchy of imperium and sacerdotium, of throne and altar.

It has been Fr. Chenu's thesis, if not his words, that the end of the era of Constantine means a passage from Christendom to Christianity. From being a power in the world, the church is to become a presence in the world. It is a change that he holds to be all to the good. His protracted study of the ways in which the Word of God is incarnated in time has led him to the conclusion that the more the world is itself, the more men will be themselves, and the more the Word of God will be itself. This triple authenticity frees the Word of God to be a pure presence, to be unentangled in worldly affairs, to follow freely the rhythms, embedded in history, of man's advance in humanness. A disciple of Aquinas, of the thinker who broke with the symbolic thought of his medieval predecessors and contemporaries, who acknowledged the reality of human nature and the legitimacy of its proper sphere of activity, as a disciple of Aquinas Fr. Chenu "gladly supports the progress of natural and profane forces all through history, and he is of the opinion that this support, far from jeopardizing the domain of grace, ensures its transcendence and richness."¹

In terms of our topic, sacralization and secularization, one would seek to discern in Fr. Chenu's position four aspects: (1) a sacralization to be dropped and (2) a sacralization to be fostered; (3) a secularization to be welcomed and (4) a secularization to be resisted. Of these the first and third are complementary and stand in a clear light. Fr. Chenu welcomes the contemporary movement of secularization and laicization in so far as it compels us through the force of circumstance to get out of the mental and institutional complex of Christendom. He contemplates with equanimity the church's abandonment of outdated institutions and past involvements. He expects the Christian of the future to take with a grain of salt certain institutions and heavy-handed procedures that prevailed in the past. He pictures that future Christian as eager to be a missionary of the gospel and loath to be the protector of a civilization he himself has organized.

As the first and third, so also the second of the four elements we mentioned appears quite clearly. Besides a sacralization to be dropped and a secularization to be welcomed, there is a new sacralization to be fostered. The second Vatican council advocated the Christian's discernment of the signs of the times. Among such signs Fr. Chenu would include man's becoming more human, his socialization, peace among nations, the rise of conscience in the peoples of the world. Such signs reveal the autonomous process proper to the world, but Chenu sees them as 'toothing stones,' as a new kind of praeparatio evangelica leading to the ultimate destiny of man. The function

of the Christian is not to despise such human values but to lift them up; it is not to bring about a sociological Christianization of the masses, or to set up a Christian world alongside the world, but to be in the world without being of it, to respect and promote its genuine values without being confined to them and without identifying Christian values with them.

I have accounted for three of four elements in Fr. Chenu's position, but if we look for the fourth element--the resistance to secularization--we find it not in Fr. Geffré's account of Fr. Chenu's views but rather in the diametrically opposed views of Jean Cardinal Daniélou. For Daniélou 'The conversion of Constantine made the Gospel accessible to the poor.' 'The faith can really take root in a country only when it has penetrated its civilization, when there exists a Christendom.' 'There can be no Christianity for the masses without a Christendom; there lies the choice.' 'In a world threatened by atheism, we must defend the substance of the sacred wherever it is found.' While those that follow Chenu rejoice in the church's abandonment of secular institutions, Daniélou wants to restore a Christendom. As opposed to those who rejoice in the desacralization of the world (it has even become a slogan), Daniélou insists in an almost provocative way on resacralization of the world before it can be sanctified.

So Fr. Geffré paints the opposition between Chenu and Daniélou in bold strokes and in the plainest possible manner. But he does so in a single paragraph and proceeds to add six

more not to mitigate the opposition but to locate it precisely. He insists that both Chenu and Daniélou want faith to penetrate social and political life and that both reject an over-simplified separation of the spiritual and the temporal, the sacred and the profane, the Christian and the political element. Again, both are haunted by the evangelization of the world, by a realistic presence of the church in the world. Where they differ is in their view of man in his concrete situation. Chenu would have progress in Christian life promote the natural processes and inherent freedom of this world. Daniélou, while he has abandoned the dream of a Christendom as it existed in the middle ages, wants the faith to have other securities than God's word alone. He wants some kind of sociological preparation for the faith, certain zones where sacred and religious elements are preserved so that the faith of the poor is not left without cultural and social foundations.

But to this debate we shall return later when certain further factors in the matter have been clarified.

One's World

The word, world, is used in many senses. It may be used absolutely to denote the sum of all that exists. It may also be used relatively to denote as much as I happen in one way or another to apprehend. It is in the latter sense that I may speak of "my world," "the world for me," "the world as I happen to apprehend it."

Now it is common to associate sacralization with primitive times and secularization with advanced civilizations and, in this connection, a further distinction is relevant. It regards "my world" and it is between "a world of immediacy" and "a world mediated by meaning." The world of immediacy is the world of the infant, the world of the nursery as given to sense, as accompanied by feelings of comfort and distress, as beginning to stretch out in time through memories and anticipations. In contrast, the world mediated by meaning is the world into which the child plunges with eager glee as it learns to speak and listen. It is a world that includes the absent as well as the present, the far as well as the near, a long, long past behind and an indefinitely long future ahead, a world of probabilities and possibilities as well as facts, a world of rights and duties, a world enriched by stories, by traveller's tales, by discoveries and inventions, by the meditations of saints, the reflections of philosophers, the investigations of historians, the achievements of scientists.

Now two sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, have written an illuminating book entitled, The Social Construction of Reality.² If we need not bother to ask whether the world of immediacy is socially constructed, there remains a significant distinction to be drawn with regard to the social construction of the world mediated by meaning. If the claim is that our knowledge of that world is not an independent personal achievement, then certainly there has to be acknowledged a social contribution and a consequent dependence of our knowledge on

that contribution. But if the claim is that not merely our knowledge but also the things known are socially constructed, then there becomes relevant the ancient distinction between nature and art. The objects studied by natural scientists are known through scientific collaboration; but in the main they are not in the first instance constructed by scientific collaboration. On the other hand, knowledge of human artifacts, of Plato's houses and tables and beds, is knowledge of what in the first instance was constructed by man; and the sociologists' point would be, I believe, that social realities--family and custom, community and education, state and law, economy and technology, and indeed all that results from human counsel and decision--are products of human activity; and as there is very little that individual men achieve all by themselves, there is a vast region of human reality that is not naturally given but socially constructed.

Now the construction of human reality gives rise to a distinction between an infrastructure and a superstructure. It has long been obvious that animals in hive and pack, flock and herd, anticipate human social structures. The fables of Aesop and La Fontaine drew human morals from plausible fictions in which animals provided the cast of characters; but it was reserved for ^{the} ethologists of our own day, recently awarded Nobel prizes, to give detailed accounts of the behavioral codes of insects, birds, and beasts.

By the social infrastructure, then, is meant simple prolongations of prehuman achievement. If I may quote what

I wrote some years ago:

.. primitive community is intersubjective. Its schemes of recurrence are simple prolongations of prehuman attainment, too obvious to be discussed or criticized, too closely linked with more elementary processes to be sharply distinguished from them. The bond of mother and child, man and wife, father and son, reaches into a past of ancestors to give meaning and cohesion to the clan or tribe or nation. A sense of belonging together provides the dynamic premiss for common enterprise, for mutual aid and succor, for the sympathy that augments joys and divides sorrows. Even after civilization is attained, intersubjective community survives in the family with its circle of relatives and its accretion of friends, in customs and folk-ways, in basic arts and crafts and skills, in language and song and dance, and most concretely of all in the inner psychology and radiating influence of women. Nor is the abiding significance and efficacy of the intersubjective overlooked, when motley states name themselves nations, when constitutions are attributed to founding fathers, when image and symbol, anthem and assembly, emotion and sentiment are invoked to impart an elemental vigor and pitch to the vast and cold, technological, economic, and political structures of human invention and convention. Finally, as intersubjective community precedes civilization and underpins it, so also it remains when civilization suffers disintegration and decay. The collapse of

Imperial Rome was the resurgence of family and clan, feudal dynasty and nation.³

What once I described as intersubjective community, may be identified, I believe, with the infrastructure of some sociologists. It is any set of social arrangements that goes beyond prehuman attainment but does so with a maximum of obviousness, directness, simplicity. It can be the society of primitive fruit gatherers, or hunters, or fishers. It can make its home in the tropics, in polar regions, or with the animals in the plains of America. It can adjust to the hurdle of large-scale agriculture introduced by the discovery of the ox and the invention of the plough to give the ancient high civilizations their peasantry and to encircle their frontiers with parasitical nomads. Through the vicissitudes of European history it can preserve the folk songs and stories that nineteenth-century romantics have uncovered by their research and celebrated by their theories.

As there is a social, so too there is a religious infrastructure. Arnold Toynbee has remarked, not without penetration, that "The pith of primitive religion is not belief but action, and the test of conformity is not assent to a creed but participation in ritual performances."⁴ In brief, religious experience may be objectified in two manners. It may do so in the world mediated by a meaning that leaps beyond the world of immediacy; then a creed enters into its essence, and assent to a creed becomes the manifest test of conformity. But it also may do so in a manner that clings to the world of immediacy; it will fixate on sacred objects, it will acknowledge sacred places, it will

hallow sacred times, it will celebrate sacred rites; it will conform to the dictum that the metaphysics of primitive man are expressed in the sedate and rhythmic movements we associate with the dance. So, for the religious infrastructure, for the primitive in any age even our own, creeds are just words, and insistence on assent to creeds is an alien intrusion or, at best, insistence on a formality.

Religions of the infrastructure can, in principle, be as authentic and genuine as any, for I do not suppose that the grace of God is refused to certain stages in the unfolding of human culture yet granted to other stages. None the less, it is true that the religions of the infrastructure, like all things human, are under the dialectic of progress and decline, righteousness and aberration. More than other religions, the religions of the infrastructure are open to palpable idolatry and superstition, to orgiastic and cruel cults, even to the ritual murder of human sacrifice. So it was with reason that Abraham was called to leave the land of his fathers and to sojourn in a strange land, that Moses was ordered to lead the people of Israel away from the flesh-pots of Egypt and into the desert, that the book of Deuteronomy in its most solemn manner commanded: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6, 4 f.). It was a momentous command, spelt out positively in the many ways in which the Old Testament makes known the transcendence of God and, more practically, negatively by the prohibition

of any sharing in the cults of neighboring peoples. It was a difficult command, as witnessed by the repeated backsliding of the people of God and, if one would understand that difficulty today, I can only suggest that one think of it as an epochal transition in which religious experience of transcendence began to express itself in the style, not of the infrastructure but of the suprastructure. For if Hebrew religion had its sacred objects, its sacred place and times, its sacred recitals and rituals, still its God was hidden, powerful above all, creator of heaven and earth, one sole Lord God brooking no strange gods before him despite all the diversity of creation and despite the contradictions in which man implicated himself.

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the eternal Word, binds together both styles of expression, the style of the infrastructure for Christ was man, and the style of the suprastructure for Christ was God. At the same time it affirms the dialectic by which the one must decrease that the other increase. As the sacred temple and the holy city of Jerusalem were destroyed, so too Christ suffered in the flesh and died to rise again, to sit at the right hand of the Father, to rule the living and in a heavenly Jerusalem to rule the dead. It it was sacralization for Christ according to the flesh to be esteemed, revered, listened to, followed, so it was secularization for the secular power to condemn him to suffering and death. But it was a new and far superior sacralization for him to rise again according to the flesh, to sit at the right hand of the Father, to rule in a kingdom

that has no end. Finally, as Christ attained his full stature when he entered into the glory of his Father, so too for Christian hope 'coming of age' is not some human perfection attained in this life but being received by Christ in the kingdom of his Father.

A Clarification of Terms

I have been illustrating the realities that may be subsumed under such terms as 'sacralization' and 'secularization,' and the illustrations have come from very different fields, from Freudian psychoanalysis, from Constantinian and later establishments of the Christian religion and from the secular revolutions of recent centuries, from religions objectified in the style of the social infrastructure or in the style of the social suprastructure. It is now, you may feel, high time to clarify basic terms and, if possible, to state clear conclusions.

First, then, the words 'secular,' 'secularize,' 'secularization,' 'secularist' are in common use. They are neutral terms that replace the older adjective, 'profane,' the verb 'to profane,' the noun 'profanation.' While 'profanation' suggests something like sacrilege, 'secularization' may denote what is good, what is bad, and what is indifferent.

Secondly, what 'secular' does for 'profane,' 'sacral' does for 'sacred.' Similarly, 'sacralize' and 'desacralize' denote the actions meant by 'consecrate' and 'desecrate,' while omitting the moral judgements the latter terms express.

Thirdly, while 'secular' is in common use--there has been a good deal of secularizing going on for some time--'sacral' is not. It is true that dictionaries acknowledge its anatomical meaning, but of the four I consulted only one acknowledges the usage of anthropologists. Finally, the derivatives of 'sacral,' such as 'sacralize,' 'desacralize,' 'resacralize' can be found in technical writing but have not yet made their way into the dictionaries.

Fourthly, the reason for the additional terms is simple enough. One wishes to state matters of fact without making judgements of value. In the Hellenistic empire, meat from animals offered in sacrifice was regarded as sacred by the pagans. Such sacredness was overruled by St. Paul as in principle of no account (1 Cor. 10, 25 ff.). If one wishes to state matters of fact without committing oneself to judgements of value, one may say that meat sacralized by pagans was desacralized by Christians.

Fifthly, to move from verbal to real issues, one may observe that any regularly recurrent human activity tends to generate roles for persons, to appropriate special places and times for the exercise of the roles, and to reserve material objects for use in that exercise. Now let us say that roles, places, times, objects are sacral, when the activity involved is regarded as religious by the participants. Again, let us say that the roles, places, times, objects are secular, when the activity involved is not regarded as religious by the participants.

Sixthly, by this definition--which is not meant to be authoritative--the terms, sacral and secular, are relative in meaning. They do not tell what really is sacred and what really is profane. They only tell what the participants regard as sacred and what they regard as profane.

Seventhly, the transition from 'sacral' to 'really sacred' and from 'secular' to really profane' involves three criteria, the personal, the communal, and the historical. The personal criterion is the authenticity of the individual, an authenticity that results cumulatively from his attentiveness, his intelligence, his reasonableness, his responsibility. The communal criterion is the authenticity of the individual's tradition: for it is only a partial and qualified authenticity that results from an authentic appropriation of a defective tradition. Finally, the historical criterion arises inasmuch as religion itself develops; for what is authentic at one stage of religious development may no longer be authentic at another; and again one style of religious development may be defective in comparison with another style.

A Genealogy of Differences

It would seem that the earliest stages of religion, as of society and culture, pertain to the infrastructure. Within that matrix the sacral and the secular may exist and may operate. But they will be implicit rather than explicit, acted out but not named, shown rather than said, vécu but not thématique.

From such indistinction it would follow that religious roles and tasks as religious places, times, and objects can develop without at once claiming the exclusiveness we associate with the sacred. In similar fashion secular business can be penetrated with concerns and precautions that we would be inclined to label religious.

Now if such initial indistinction implies a de facto secularization of the sacral and a de facto sacralizing of the secular, one may also expect its prolongation into subsequent periods. It is true enough that "sacred" and "profane" are not recondite notions and that their application to concrete activities is not difficult. But it is another matter to think of them generally, to discern the proper sphere of each and, above all, to adjudicate the extent to which religious thought and feeling may reach beyond a strict interpretation of its proper sphere and exert a suzerainty over certain aspects of the secular domain. Indeed, before such issues can be formulated, before legitimate and illegitimate sacralizations can be distinguished, before the former can be approved and the latter effectively abolished, there are needed matters of fact.

It has been thought, for instance, that large-scale, long-term cultivation of the soil could only become possible after the institution of property in land, that the original institution of such property was under the auspices of religion, that such was the origin of the temple states that preceded the empires in Mesopotamia and still functioned in Cappadocia and Phrygia down to Roman times.⁵

Again, when the empires succeeded to the temple states, when even the Roman empire succeeded to the oligarchical city states of Greece and Rome, it could be argued that the one way to secure the respect of a vast and motley population was some association between the imperial power and divinity. In any case, in point of fact, the pharaohs of Egypt were regarded as divine beings, the monarchs of Assyria were the adopted sons of God, this royal ideology found its way into Israelite thought, and the Roman emperors were accounted lords and gods, kurioi kai theoi.

Christianity had a basis for a sharp distinction between "sacred" and "profane" in the celebrated response: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Mk 12, 17). It lived out this distinction during intermittent persecutions over two and a half centuries. Its long travail ended with the advent of Constantine, but the new era of tolerance first mixed politics with the affairs of religion and later, in the slow decay of empire in the West, witnessed a gradual decline of secular talent and prestige and the consequent transfer to local bishops of an increasing share in the burden of secular offices.

In the dark and medieval periods the beginnings of Western civilization found traditions and structures that had been cradled in the church and served to reinforce incipient feudal economies and politics. But a sacralization of the secular, justified by the decline of one civilization and again by the weak initial stages of its successor, was bound to be challenged

all the more forcibly the more that laymen became capable and eager to handle their own affairs. So a series of secularizations in the body politic, now in this country and now in that, were the ambition or the achievement of feudal overlords, of Renaissance admirers of ancient Greece and Rome, of the reformers' affirmations of the rights of individual or regional conscience, of Enlightenment propaganda, and of Marxist denunciations of the opium of the people.

I have been attending principally to the sacralization and secularization of social arrangements, of the already understood and commonly accepted modes of cooperation, such as custom and the family, community and education, state and law, economy and technology. But in the history of Europe and America the issues were not only social but also cultural, and on this more basic terrain one has to distinguish not only sacralization and secularization, but also secularism and resacralization. For the sacralization of Western Europe in the medieval period went well beyond social arrangements. It penetrated art and literature. Its canon law was a principal source of the common law. Its theology aimed not only at a reflective statement of religious motives and beliefs but also at a synthesis that made philosophy and science subordinate parts of a world view.

But if the Babylonian cosmology implicit in scripture could easily come to terms with Ptolemaic astronomy, if the Greek elements in the New Testament and the apocrypha could facilitate a fusion of the biblical view of man with Aristotelian

anthropology, if the science borrowed from Greeks and Arabs could hold its own against scattered Western developments, still all of these in time only illustrated the disadvantage of building one's house not on a rock but upon sand. For this sacralized construct of man and his universe was impugned and impugned successfully by Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, by Darwin and Freud, and by the swarm of philosophies and counter-philosophies that began at least with Descartes.

But the success was not recognized by all. A persistent age-long rearguard action was maintained in Roman Catholic and in other circles against these pernicious novelties. The result was not merely secularization but secularism--the outraged and outright rejection of all religion as the futile champion of a dead and unlamented past. Nor was this all. The rejection began indeed as an attack on religion but in due course it became in philosophy and science and in the broader fields of literature and education an unquestioned and unquestionable assumption. In Nietzsche's phrase, God had died.

To the medieval sacralization of philosophy and science, of society and law, there later was added a defensive sacralization of scholarship. In the seventeenth century Richard Simon, (1638-1712), introduced the methods later known as biblical criticism. Three centuries later such methods were implicitly approved and defended by the second Vatican council. But Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, a very celebrated preacher and the bishop of Meaux, had no foreknowledge of this event. He

had the royal council confiscate thirteen hundred copies of Simon's basic work, Histoire critique du Vieux Testament (Paris 1678), and he had most of Simon's writings placed on the Index of Prohibited Books, where they remained up to the final edition of that publication.⁶

Such was the extension of the mantle of religion over the opinions of ignorant men. Its result was that, in the intervening centuries, Catholic biblical studies, when not condemned, remained in an ever more archaic rut. The whole of Catholic theology was deprived of the problems whose challenge would have brought about a revision of its methods and a reorientation of its concern. It is the abrupt and fragmentary occurrence of such revision and reorientation that has followed the second Vatican council, that has aroused the misgivings and dismay of many loyal Catholics, that has been encouraging others to an indiscriminate rejection of the past and now to this and now to that venturesome restructuring not only of Catholic thought but also of Catholic living.

For at this point there becomes relevant a somewhat subtle distinction between secularization and desacralization. For secularization is the liberation of a secular domain from the once but no longer appropriate extension of the sacral. Still, for it to be known as secularization, there also must be known that the extension of religious feeling over the domain is no longer appropriate. When this second item of knowledge is lacking, there is apparent a withdrawal of sacrality, a

desacralization, but there is no realization that this withdrawal was overdue, that it simply grants to the secular what belongs to it. For those unaware of the profound developments in historical scholarship that occurred basically in the nineteenth century, the new style in Catholic biblical scholarship is not an overdue secularization but an incomprehensible desacralization. For those unaware that modern science has not merely added new elements to earlier accumulations but more radically has changed the very concept of science, changes in Catholic theology and philosophy are not overdue secularizations but incomprehensible desacralizations.

But if the wind should be tempered to the shorn lamb-- and this perhaps is the justice of Cardinal Daniélou's contention--there remain more complex issues represented by Paul Ricoeur's study of Sigmund Freud. There do arise new developments that cast a searching light on human affairs but present their findings in an unsatisfactory manner. They are not to be rejected outright. They are not to be swallowed whole. They are to be met with a distinction: not indeed with a distinction expressed by two Latin adverbs and found in a text book, but with a distinction that presupposes a basis in long and patient study and that can be formulated only when the mischievous oversight has been pinpointed and the relevant insight has uncovered the appropriate correction. It was only after completing three books of his Philosophy of the Will⁷ and adding over five hundred pages in a study of Freud,⁸ that Ricoeur was able to write his paper on The Atheism of Freudian

Psychoanalysis and to announce that if, in the past, Freud had reinforced the unbelief of many, Freud now could be used to reinforce the belief of many.

Ricoeur, I believe, has made a point in depth psychology. But I am much more firmly convinced that he has set an example. The example illustrates the principle that, when secularization becomes secularism, the secularism can be overcome by a resacralization. The example not only illustrates the principle but also shows how the principle is to be applied. As Ricoeur studied Freud, so other believers can study in detail other leaders in contemporary secularism. As Ricoeur had the detachment and the patience to come to understand what was correct and valuable in Freud, so other believers can labor in detachment and patience to understand other leaders in secularism. As Ricoeur had the penetration and the good luck--all discovery presupposes some luck--to uncover what Freud assumed yet did not explicitly acknowledge, so other believers can come to uncover the short-comings of other secularists. As Ricoeur was able to use his discovery to turn the tables, so too other believers can work on other fronts to tackle secularism on its own ground and to resacralize what never should have been secularized.

Others no doubt will tell you that the errors of secularism need to be denounced so that the shorn lambs be not exposed to the shock of desacralization. I would have you grant that their contention is true, but I would also have you live and work--with much labor and commonly with little encouragement--

in the light of another, complementary truth. It is that modern science makes no claim to truth. It claims to be no more than the best available opinion. Its claim is met and its theories are abandoned, not because they have not yet reached the full truth, but only because another theory is recognized by the majority of the scientific community both to provide a more satisfactory account of the available data and to promise a more fruitful line of investigation.

Notes

- 1) Concilium 19 (1966), 114.
- 2) Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Garden City: Doubleday, 1966.
- 3) Bernard Lonergan, Insight, A Study of Human Understanding, London: Darton, Longman & Todd and New York: Philosophical Library, 1957, p. 212.
- 4) Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History, Abridgement of Volumes VII - X, by D.C. Somervell, London/New York/Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 95.
- 5) Christopher Dawson, The Age of the Gods, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933, pp. 111 f.
- 6) Enrique Dussel, "From Secularization to Secularism: Science from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment," Concilium 47 (1969), 93 - 119.
- 7) Paul Ricoeur, Philosophie de la Volonté, I. Le volontaire et l'involontaire; II. Finitude et culpabilité: 1. L'homme faillible, 2. La symbolique du mal, Paris: Aubier, 1950, 1960. English translation: Freedom and Nature by E. Kohak, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966; Fallible Man by C. Kelbley, Chicago: Regnery, 1965; The Symbolism of Evil, by E. Buchanan, New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- 8) Paul Ricoeur, De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud, Paris: Seuil, 1965. E.T. by Denis Savage, Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.