

HITLER AND ISRAEL, OR ON PRAYER
A CHAPTER FROM "LETTERS TO CYNTHIA"

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"I have never really prayed, and I don't actually know what prayer is or is supposed to do."—
AN UNDERGRADUATE IN HIS EXAMINATION PAPER.

I

October 19, 1944

DEAR CYNTHIA,

In the last letter we spoke of Israel's contribution to antiquity. We contrasted it with the great Greek achievement. The Greeks recognized the Pluralism of the cities of men and listened to Hector's and Priam's voice. Achilles and Priam wept together. Israel held out for Oneness.

This specific role of the chosen people was denied by the critics of the nineteenth century. The scholars broke the backbone of Jewish history by reading Christianity into the last fourth of our sources, into the prophets, and by treating the first three quarters as the tradi-

tions of a nomadic, oriental, tribe who shared the superstitions of Edom and Egypt.

We did not find it so. In the middle of the world, Israel preferred to be disliked, for God's sake, rather than to worship with Arabs and Egyptians. Abraham, Moses, the judges and the prophets, were the necessary phases of one majestic cycle—phases which unfolded the various aspects of the same basic vision. We were not surprised by this unity, since we had made a similar discovery for Egypt. Here, too, the gods of One Sky World—Horus, Ra, Osiris, Aton—followed each other not by accident but

* After publication in the October number of the *Journal of Religion* of Dr. Altmann's article, "Franz Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy: An Introduction to Their Letters on Judaism and Christianity," we wrote Dr. Rosenstock-Huessy, asking him if he wished to comment on the paper. In lieu of a comment he sent on to us the present letter because of its close bearing upon the issues described in the Altmann article. The author began his scholarly career as a classicist and went on to the teaching of jurisprudence in Leipzig and Breslau. Between 1914 and 1918 he was in active military service, and it was during this period that the correspondence with Rosenzweig described by Dr. Altmann took place. From 1923 he became active as a pioneer in various nonacademic forms of education: labor schools, work camps, and adult education. He brought this interest to this country in 1923 where, besides holding a teaching relationship with Dartmouth College, he has organized Camp William James. Besides his writings on education, he is the author of *Sociologie* (1925) and *Die Revo-*

lutionen (1931) (English ed., *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* [1938]) and has contributed papers to theological and educational meetings. For his more significant annals Dr. Rosenstock-Huessy writes: "Meeting has been my life; of one Altmann-speaks; another is embodied in *Das Alter der Kirche* (3 vols., 1927-28), together with Joseph Wittig." Apropos of his work-camp and labor-education interests, another aspect of the philosophy of "meeting," he says of himself: "From 1914 to 1944 I considered myself an impeded scholar—that is, a man who by nature is a scholar but who sees that 'the ring of listening and speaking thinking and learning humankind' was broken and must be reformed."

¹ This is one in a series of letters to a student of history on "The Reconquest of Our Era." It is true that in the following text some points are mentioned which are treated more fully in other parts of the correspondence. This may seem unfair. However, in an independent article, the reader would not fare better. He also would have to be referred to another forum for these points. Hence, it seemed justified to keep the authentic form, as the letter has the merit to be addressed to a real person in need.

represented "aspects" of one fundamental conception.

Since Israel resisted Egypt and Edom, there was no reason to be surprised that through Abraham, through Moses, through David, through the prophets, the same protest was launched against Edom as against Egypt. To embody this protest became more difficult as time went on, and the prophets, perhaps, are less comprehensive representatives of the protest than the Mosaic legislation. Hence it is true to say that Abraham and Mary belonged to the same chosen people who had said "No" to the idols of the temple states and the blood-thirsty ghosts of the tribes. The first day of this "No" was established when Abraham forwent the temptation of becoming the chieftain of one more tribe and did not sacrifice, in the power of chieftaincy, his son Isaac. And the same "day" was created when Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, left this "sky world" nonetheless. Both these acts established the first day of Israel. The last day of Israel was created when, to speak in a figure, Mary inside the Promised Land was told, "Flee to Egypt," and when the son of Abraham offered himself as sacrifice. It makes no difference that these days lasted thousands of years. Once, they began. They testify to the fact that man is created and not nature.

There is, however, a second approach to Israel. And since our letters intend to reconquer the past as it speaks to us, this second approach recommends itself; it leads not through the political acts so much as through the sacred texts. Israel wrote the Bible. To this day, the church universal, regardless of denominations, prays the psalms of David.² As a power

in our own days and as a question mark to our own future, Israel speaks to us most immediately through the Psalms. For this reason, we shall now make a second start. The unique historical creature Israel wrote the Bible. Can we do without it? What was created by Israel which must go on forever? Why is Hitler wrong? Or is he right? The simplest way to answer these questions might be to look at the kind of language created by the Jews. No language which has not been revitalized by a translation of the Bible distinguishes clearly between the acts of God, the properties of nature, the roles of man.

The shaman in the tribe was the ecstatic incantator for the whole tribe. The Egyptians (and all other temple states) spelled the cosmic laws upon stone and papyri. Israel's Bible has added a new dimension of language to tribal and temple speech. And since we know already that man is man when he speaks or listens, Israel would not be unique in human history if her speech had not rung out with a new tone.

We can reopen our ears to this new tone, thanks to Hitler. Hitlerism is a plunge into the pagan world of tribes and temples as it existed before Judaism arose. Now what is lacking in Hitler's linguistic equipment? If he actually does (as he boasts) belong to another solar constellation, he belongs to the pre-Israelitic world; if this is so, he must be unable to say something that the Bible says on every page. And so it is indeed. This letter deals with the element absent from Hitler's mighty speeches.

By speech we recognize and orient ourselves and others. The tribes recognized themselves and their clannish order in animals and stones, trees and mountains. They called themselves lions and foxes, crows and eagles, because man

² On this stupendous fact see my essay, "Kirche und Menschheit," in E. R. and Joseph Wittig (eds.), *Das Alter der Kirche* (Berlin, 1927), I, 98.

must somewhere get orientation for his bewildering freedom.

The temples depicted the sky world. In the stars, men recognized their own proceedings.

Israel built a temple, it is true, but they added that God did not dwell in it, as the gods of all other temples did: Israel voided the Temple. Israel circumcised her young men, it is true; but they did it to the child in the cradle, not to the initiate novice of the fertility orgies: Israel voided the rite. Israel wrote "poems," but she denied that she "wrote" them lest man-made "poems" became idols. She insisted that she was told and that she replied: Israel voided the arts. In these three acts she emptied the three great "speeches" of the heathen, the tribal, the templar, and the artistic, of their lure and spell and charm.

But Israel recognized herself in the divine "No" spoken over man's naïve pretenses. Majestically, the Bible is based on three divine "No's." The first is Man's Fall, called his fall, made into his fall by God's judgment. The second is the Great Flood, judging the World of Tribes. And the third is the Exodus, the leaving of the temples and the fleshpots of Egypt, and the condemnation of everybody connected with the witchcraft of Egypt; since he used sorcery once, even Moses could not enter the Promised Land.³

In listening to God's "No," Israel recognized herself as God's servant, as mortal man in the face of God's majesty. In this "No" all merely human desires are burned out, and our notion of God's will is cleansed. "Revelation" is a knowledge of God's will, after his "No" to our will has become known. Only then is God pure future, pure act—only when all his

former creations stand exposed as non-gods, as mere artifacts. To have revealed what is not God is the condition for all our understanding of God. On this basis the Jews became prayer. Israel is neither a nation nor a state nor a race, but it *is* prayer. What are the prayers of Egypt or Rome, the prayers to Apollo or to Osiris, compared with the one hundred and fifty Psalms? The universal priesthood of all the Christian churches prays these psalms to this day. Isn't that strange? Why should there be something insuperable in these psalms? Why is it correct to say that the Psalms embody Israel as much as Abraham, Moses, or the Prophets? Because all Israel is prayer. The whole world repeats the Hebrew word "amen."⁴

This prayer of true faith, of "amen," was separated from spellbinding, from magic, by Israel's faith. As you will remember, the slowly growing division of plainchant into music and speech happened before—in the temple city. But speech was still spell. And it remains spell in Hitler. He is a spellbinder. Things which merely exist—such as his own "blood," the invincible nature of Siegfried, the Germany of his dreams before 1914 (and dreams are things, too)—are naïvely invoked in his speeches as deities. They have ceased to be data; they are gods. To Hitler, they are the only powers which direct the world.

The God who beckons us from the end of time as the common destiny of man is an abomination to him because he is not found in the past. He quite logically is denied by Hitler, whether he comes as the messianic God of Israel, as the Founder of the Church, or as the speaker of the Sermon on the Mount. Hitler persecutes

⁴ Read the magnificent chapter on "Amen" in Ernest Hello, *Paroles de Dieu* (Paris, 1877), pp. 481-503.

³ Numbers, chap. 20.

Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. The fact that he has singled out the Jews has historical reasons. They bear the brunt of Hitler's attack because the same *furor Teutonicus* was let loose twice before on the triad of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in Germany. Since this fact is unknown in America, I hasten to inform you of the two previous occasions. After 1825, the Lutherans, after 1871, the Catholics, bore the brunt of the attack. But, each time, the two other groups were persecuted, too.

The old Lutherans resisted a change of their Confession of Faith, introduced by the king of Prussia. After 1825, for more than a decade, Catholics and Jews came in for their share in this outburst.⁵

The second outburst was let loose by Bismarck after the Reich was constituted. This was called the Kulturkampf against Rome; and in the United States, the Ku Klux Klan and Blaine's "Rum, Rebellion, Romanism" were feeble parallels. Again, though the spearhead was directed against the Roman Catholics, the Protestant independents and the Jews came in for their share in the following decade.

Hitler, therefore, is the third attempt to free the nation from any check on its nationalistic conscience. This time, the triangle Luther-Rome-Israel is attacked foremost at the Jewish corner. Also, the attack is far more violent than the two former. However, again, the attack comprises persecutions of all three groups. All Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance, who did not recant, by insulting Mary and Jesus grossly, were shot in Hitler's camps.

⁵ One of the persecuted "Alt-Lutheraner" was Henrik Steffens, who inspired Grundtvig, the father of the Danish People's High Schools. You find the facts in my life of *Henrik Steffens* ("Schlesische Lebensbilder," Vol. IV [Breslau, 1932]).

The order, then, was:

1825 ff.: Protestants, Catholics, Jews
1872 ff.: Catholics, Jews, Protestants
1933 ff.: Jews, Protestants, Catholics

Obviously, the *furor Teutonicus* cannot be laid by a Catholic restoration this time. The abyss has opened more deeply. Hitler hates everything started by the Jews, including democracy and the Freemasons. Why? They all know of the insertion of God's "No" into history as a vital element. But a spellbinder must be sure that his spell will work under all circumstances. This prevents him from admitting God's "No" to the fabric of history.

Hitler's will and his God's will are nauseatingly one. The great art of speech has made Hitler crazy. Since he has the privilege of speaking, of inflaming the masses, he spellbinds. And so he hovers as a ghost from the abyss of paganism, a ghost of the days before God touched Israel's lips with his fiery coal: My will, O mortal, not thine, be done.

The specific character of biblical prayer explains the uniqueness of the Bible. We can't forget the Bible because the divine "No" was created, in our speech, during those thousand years of Jewish prayer. And all the other departments of our linguistic faculty rest on this clear distinction between prayer, on the one side, and science, poetry, fiction, and law, on the other. If we do not pray with Israel, we cannot retain our Greek mathematics, our Roman law. This will sound arbitrary or exaggerated at first reading. But it is simple truth.

As long as spells bound the material world of sky and earth together, astrology and magic could not become astronomy and techniques. Every arithmetical problem remained a religious task, to be executed by priests ceremoniously, and

with exultation. The Pharaoh had to build temples by spells.

We state today that 2 and 2 are 4, and 4 and 4, 8, without raising our voices. The essence of mathematical symbolism is the fact that the voice is not raised for stating the truths of mathematics. Figures, graphs, triangles, are designed to be conceived unemotionally. We master the secrets of mathematics best when we do not raise our voices.

But this is tremendous news. Never before had speech been used without deep excitement. The shaman foamed at the mouth. The priests in the temples lay prostrate.

Israel taught the Gentiles to distinguish. The world which is under man's care must be elucidated by a divine clarity, by a mind acting with God's superior, dispassionate, penetration. "Two and two are four," although very wonderful, may be jotted down unexcitedly. But this is impossible unless man's passion is allowed to express itself in the realm where we are not in God's place, as we are with regard to matter. Prayer is speech which is spoken in the highest excitement because the act is extremely important and because at the same time we ourselves are relatively powerless. In such a crisis everything we say is either prayer or blasphemy. *Tertium non datur*. The mathematicians who try to have science, genuine science, without prayer defeat their own ends. Two great examples of blasphemy may elucidate this strange thesis. One comes from Greece, the other from Germany—two countries in which science went mad.

In one and the same century of Athenian history, Socrates lived and the city-god of Athens, Demetrios the Macedonian (also called Poliorketes). He belongs in a history of science. In 399 Socrates died. Later, Plato established his Acad-

emy at the city gates. Aristotle organized the sciences. Their disciple Demetrios of Phaleron became mayor of Athens. The mind seemed to triumph: a philosopher was king. And a good king he was. But in 307 B.C. Demetrios of Phaleron was expelled. A rough Macedonian officer was proclaimed the city's god and savior. The most enlightened city of the world, in an ebullition of blasphemy, kneeled before a mortal in adoration. And Germany, a nation of scholars if there ever was one, which had seen the mental masterpieces of Kant, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, fell prostrate before the Christ (as he was called to my face by a Protestant parson), Hitler.

Great nations can fall as fast as individuals. The idea that prayer is a private affair is erroneous. It is a worldwide institution as much as science, and it must check our other trends. The Jews checked these trends. They staked their whole existence on the faith that God is in process of creating Man, not men. The Hebrews left the arts and crafts to the Gentiles not for any lack of talent but for the one function which would make the passionless speech of mathematics and science innocuous. They made possible a better use of speech by the Gentiles because science and prayer became distinguishable in the divine "No."

The terror and glory of the prayer in the Psalms, in Job, lies in this incessant abandonment of man's self-will to God's will. What true prayer is, then, we know only from the Bible, just as we owe the arts and sciences to the Greeks. Homer is our universal humanist. But his gods are poetical; they are not our gods. God becomes universal by true prayer. Mathematics are true for all when we don't have to raise our voices. God is true for all when we praise him at the top of our voices. The Jews have universalized

prayer. Their prayer is the true knowledge of God. This is nearly forgotten. You do know, however, what science is from its style, its manner of speech, its dispassionate rendering of the words. The majority of people today think that this noiseless, unemotional conduct is comprehensive enough. Hence that is all language means to them—a kind of toneless reporting and reasoning. But science collapses without its opposite pole, prayer. No wonder that, in an era of mere science, spellbinder Hitler won out. Because theirs is the way of speaking of absent or deaf things, these scientists may talk noiselessly. Science speaks of 2 and 4 and 8 in its cold manner because 2 and 4 and 8 are not people who listen. They have no names; they do not resent being called scientific names. It is in our power to name *things* as we please. But can you call a person "No Luck" or "Idiot" without getting into trouble? Can you whistle the One Hundred and Fiftieth Psalm: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord"?

The mathematical ideal of the modern logician is "thing-faced." The actual clanishness of this same logician or scientist is of no concern to his theory of speech. When someone drafts him and gives him orders—"Turn about," "Double time"—he wonders over this new use of language. And when a spellbinder comes, the scientist obediently makes bombs, fighter planes, V-1 and V-2 weapons. The emotional strain on the whole community in wartime should refute the scientist's philosophy of language. He, the scientist, suddenly thinks and toils not for science but for victory. He has fallen into the network of quite another type of speech.

At this moment our scientists might well study the true pedigree of our power to speak and to write and to listen. Then they would know why Hitler was

the answer to the arrogance of science. They should perceive that if "Two and two are four" and "The horse is black" were all we need of speech, the spellbinder Hitler would not have won out. But he knew the fallacy of this rational reduction of language to description. His instincts and his experience advised him to plunge back to the time before this era of noiseless speech. His speech was demagogic; he did not think of things but talked to people. We "think" of mute and deaf things; but, equally, we are spoken to and speak to resentful and excitable people. The function of speech, through which people speak to each other, precedes science. In the days of Egypt and of the tribe, spell had not separated into mathematics and prayer, into Greeks and Jews. The Greeks in our midst today, i.e., the scientists, proclaimed that mathematics sufficed; but the permanent need of people to be spoken to called for some counteraction to scientific logic. Two ways were open. Either the spellbinder could be called for or the true twin of mathematics, prayer, could be reinstated. The spellbinder identifies his audience's will and the divine will, while true prayer separates these two. Now, what will a nation do whose scientists have poked fun at prayer and have destroyed people's faith in prayer? For we cannot live through great calamity by mathematics alone. Prayer, with its "No" to *our* will, was pooh-poohed; mathematics had to do only with things; people had to fall for the charmer. Hitler became the mouthpiece of all their dreams; he won out when the clergy of God had been squeezed out by the clergy of mathematics. And he will win out everywhere for the same reason. For speech is threefold: it is used for things, it is used to address people, and it is used when we listen

to God. It must be one and the same speech by which these three procedures are fulfilled. Since speech is indivisible, demagogues will reduce God's will to your and my desire, as long as the educated people officially treat speech as pure mathematics. But true speech is the alternation between prayer, mathematics, and conversation. If a man is only a man-about-town, he may converse, but he cannot tell the truth to anyone. For we only know of the truth by distinguishing between our will and God's will. Our assumption of a man who can be only conversational proves untenable. Similarly, if a man were to pray in mystical ecstasy only, there would soon be no man to pray. And if we spoke or wrote mathematics only, the division of labor would separate us in murderous disintegration, as it separated Cain and Abel.

No, in one and the same language must I say: "The Lord is my shepherd," "Two and two are four," and "How do you do?" and my sanity depends on my ability to alternate between them. The logicians must enlarge their concept of truth. That 2 and 2 are 4 is only one aspect of the truth. For what about a man's obstinacy when he knows that he is wrong and will not admit it? And, on the other hand, what about a man's endurance who is right but who is constantly reproached by others for his views? Any truth, for instance, that "the earth revolves around the sun," lies between the two millstones of one person who upholds it against resistance and danger and another person who denies it against the evidence and reasons. The objective "truth" that the earth revolves does not come into existence unless two people fight it out. But, in this fight, prayer is the only power which can hearten Galileo and discourage his opponents. Since neither is as yet absolutely sure of sci-

entific truth, both must be steeped in a much more absolute relation to truth. Out of their prayers, the power of their prayers, scientific truth finally emerges! "The earth revolves" is the external result of a battle between false and genuine prayer. For this reason we need science, prayer, conversational talk—all three—lest the people perish. And today they perish from too much mathematics, from the bombs made by science.

Many a scientific mind hates to admit its polarity to the spirit of prayer. But hate blinds; and science sees its nice academic world shaken by spellbinders. Theoretically the scientific minds and semanticists and symbolic logicians and all other shades of rationalism abhor spellbinders. But, practically, science has called for Hitler because science has no longer a true philosophy, knows no longer of its limitations. *Scientists should crave their opposite*: that white heat of speech, during which man's will is separated from God's will, and men come to know God's will as differing from their own wishes and from their leader's will.

The Germans all knew in 1918 that the World War had been lost deservedly. Faith accepted the defeat. But it takes faith in God to accept defeat. If there is no divine will, then our will must reign supreme. Naturally the whisperers came—those who cannot be named but who are always quoted—those who said, "It was a stab in the back," "It was this or that," "It was unnecessary," etc. The reaction was inevitable: "We shall undo the defeat." Whispering is unauthorized speech. The devil is the person who does not wish to be quoted; and so he never attains the rank of a person. For a person accepts God's judgment over what he has said or done. Thus can he come to know the truth. The devil never receives

his verdict because he whispered only and never spoke truly and verily.

So far, this German whisper was but natural. General Boulanger in France and the Ku Klux Klan in the South reacted similarly to defeat. But the inspired speech which restrained the unauthorized whisper was too weak. Some of us said: "Our defeat was no accident. It was the transformation of Germany for a new task." But we were too recent voices. The people who had believed in science now fell for the stump speakers and could not distinguish between spell-binding magic and prayer.

We have witnessed Hitler's Wagnerian "spell"; we may now see prayer in crisis when everything depends on the distinction of your will and God's will. We will appreciate the new language instituted in the words: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Perpetually the whole gamut of tones from the outcry of prayer to the toneless thought of mathematics must be trained into a man and a nation. Or the very vanity and arrogance of the logician will cause the relapse into magic, sorcery, astrology, and witchcraft. Invariably the scientist who claims for science the primacy of speech lands us with the primates, the apes. But in the agony and leaps of prayer, man's mind is reborn. When we simply exclaim "For God's sake!" our hearts leap into a new frame of mind. We accept a new fact of God's government of this world. In the same manner, when Archimedes shouted his "Eureka!" he was divine, and he shouted and did not use mathematical logic to express his elation.

All scientists rejoice in their findings. If they didn't, their discoveries would not be worth while. You have to throw yourself into the unknown, in fear and trembling, and yet in the white heat of

faith if you wish to hear God's answers to your prayers.

To pray then means to be at the opposite pole from "2 and 2 are 4." It means to have accepted the fact that the whole security of past conventions is no match for God's will with us, at this moment. True prayer supposes that "anything might happen" and that, "with God, nothing is impossible." True prayer could not exist inside tribal or temple worship. It was created by the creators of the future. And hence it came that God spoke through Moses and the prophets and that the Messiah was born in Israel.

II

True prayer breaks spells. This may best be understood by looking at the prayer of prayers in Israel, the prayer on the Day of Atonement. This prayer explains all the prayers of Israel.

You will remember the feat of the Egyptian calendar which rhythmicized this whole people's behavior through the year. Their calendar identified two behaviors: that of the Nile and that of the people. The people wept with Isis lest the fertilizing flood go to waste; they rejoiced, when, by their intervention, Osiris came to life in their bumper crops. The calendar was the spell cast by the cosmos upon the human will. A calendar, we said, was the score by which the nation in antiquity moved rhythmically in harmony with the sun, moon, and stars. The calendar was the order of behavior for the community. The very word "calendar," as we use it, is derived from the first day of the new year, the *calendae* in Rome, but that is suggestive enough, for it meant that he who said A must say B and C too. By entering the first day of the year, the whole year was upon us.

We were ineluctably immersed in its rhythm.

The Jews fought this subservience to the calendar's spell. Their own calendar replaced the events in nature by events in history. Easter ceased to be a "spring" festival; Sukkot was not a harvest festival. And the climax of their fight against the calendar of Egypt became their highest holiday, the Day of Atonement. It was celebrated as the day of emancipation from all vows, promises, preconceptions. Israel prayed on the Day of Atonement for the cancellation of all vows, promises, devotional or ascetic offerings entered upon by a Jew during the year. Every year, every seven years, every seven times seven years, Israel stripped herself of all obligations which might interfere with God's will. These obligations might degrade the year to an Egyptian year: the Egyptian who said A on the first day of the year found no freedom from the year's magic for the rest of the year—ay, for the rest of his life. The individual Jewish Sabbath once a week is a mere reflection of this Sabbath of Sabbaths once a year. The character of Israel centers in the Day of Atonement when all its self-will is annihilated. For this reason, the Jewish prayer for the annihilation of vows and obligations on this Day of Kippur became the great divide between Jews and Gentiles. Anti-Semitism centered on a violent resentment of this Jewish presumption. How could law and order subsist on earth, asked the Gentiles, if a man could offer them to God every year as mere pretense and could ask God for a new order? Was this not to bring rebellion, insecurity, anarchy, for the relations between men? Throughout the later Middle Ages, down to 1800, any Jew in Europe who entered upon a contract with a Gentile had to take a gruesome oath; by this oath he

abandoned his rights or claims that might result from the prayer on the Day of Atonement. It was an intentional misunderstanding, since contracts between two men were not involved in the Prayer of Prayers. But it was significant. The naïve pagan principle that my will is my God and the Jewish principle that in God's "No" we should recognize ourselves came to blows in the violent curses of this oath imposed on the Jews by their gentile neighbors. When we read these curses today, they make us recoil by their refined cruelty. They dramatically illustrate the absolute and ineluctable contradiction between the sky-world of external spells and the new world of purified prayer.

In 1800 one great element of this Jewish prayer finally entered the laws of the Gentiles. Nobody could sell himself into slavery any longer. And a worker's contract cannot be enforced on land by force. The employer may sue a man for breach of contract, but he cannot ask the police to drag the man in chains to his place at the lathe. If the man does not appear "in person," the boss may sue for damages. This means that the "personality" of the worker has conquered freedom from any obligation. His property is liable; but his soul may obey higher orders. Also, a contract involving personal services cannot be entered for more than a short number of years. Obligations of this kind cannot fetter a man for a lifetime.

These legal innovations on the part of the Gentiles were the baptism of civilian law by Jewish messianism. It cannot have been an accident that they came at a time when Jewish emancipation became a fact. The rigor of pagan self-surrender to a man's own will had to be softened before the prayer of mankind (Israel's spirit) and the mathematics of

mankind (Greek genius) could found a commonwealth.⁶ The covenant of Greeks and Jews, in our times, rests on the common victory over the pre-Jewish and pre-Greek spellbinding humanity of "Egypt" and all it stands for.

We have spoken throughout this letter of true prayer. All times and places have heard sincere prayers. The Bible itself as well as the Fathers of the Church have always taught that genuine prayers have been offered to God from the beginning of history. True prayer, then, is not a monopoly of the Jews. But it is true, just the same, that the Jews have sacrificed their very existence for the establishment of true prayer as an ineluctable rock against a relapse into ghosts and spells. This is a hard lesson to accept. When, for instance, more than twenty years ago, Friedrich Heiler wrote his great volume on prayer which made him leave the Roman church, he was overwhelmed by the world-wide flow of prayer. Believers and unbelievers, Gentiles and Jews, savages and civilized men, all pray. The volume made this spread of prayer its foremost concern. And it certainly created an indelible impression. He told how desperately all human beings before our own days prayed. The differences, then, between true and false prayer, though not denied by Heiler himself, did become of secondary importance in the minds of many of his readers. His book was a truly academic book: it declined to take sides between true and false prayers. It analyzed only. True prayer, however, as seen against spells and charms, magic and witchcraft, is not to be taken academically and catalogued. False prayer must have no future. True prayer must go on. The intellectual pride

of our reason-made purposes must be dissolved. A "No" must be invoked over the makeshifts of our past or the accidental ideals of our present being. Whether we call this purge prayer or not does not matter. It *is* prayer, true prayer. All true prayer begins with establishing distance between two poles: one, the sacrifice of a mortal's own ideas and ideals, i.e., his self-will, thus making room for God's will by repentance; the other a majesty of light, future, creativity. Prayer is the act by which the potential between the two poles, God and man, is enhanced or enlarged; the hollowness of man and the glory of God both are increased. Any analysis of the hundred and fifty Psalms and the grouping inside of them, or the order of service in every church since the days of the apostles, will prove that a definite sequence of true prayer is indispensable. The soul must become able to receive her order of the day. Therefore, the weeds of her own preconceived routines must be cleared away. And the "No" spoken over these weeds of our wills must precede the creative "Yes" out of which we shall live tomorrow.

Now, in the pre-Jewish world people certainly did and do pray as desperately as in any world. But in the worship of clan and temples, God's "No" is not yet established once and forever in its true place. The faithful are led to believe that rites and customs, calendar dates, and sky apparitions will reveal to them who they are and who God is. Instead of their own will, some visible victim is sacrificed. It is, therefore, not at all contradictory to retain the two assertions which to the last generations seemed mutually exclusive: First, that all men of all times genuinely pray. Second, that mankind would have destroyed themselves by pseudo-prayers as the result of their own ideas if true prayer had not been es-

⁶ See the chapter, "The European Genius of the Isle de France," in *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (New York, 1938).

tablished as the historical contribution, the perpetual intercession of Israel.

You may ask: But is there any need for this representation of true prayer in our own day? In some form, certainly. If true prayer is not represented in a fashion which excludes any relapse into prayer mills, incantations, charms, and sorcery, we shall invite disaster. The most imminent danger comes from psychology. To this day our psychologists hang on to a pre-Jewish theory of man because they ascribe to him will, intellect, and feeling. In this pagan theory or idea of man, his power to love, his "Eros," is made into a desire, a form of his will. And his intellect is considered a part of himself. Israel and Christianity both scorn such a psychology. True prayer teaches the soul who prays that this intellect is given him not as a tool of his self but as a power to judge himself. And true prayer further proves that human will and the love of God have nothing whatever in common. Any psychology fails which confuses appetite and love, will and charity. Rightly, the Swedish book on the difference between the Platonic *eros* and the biblical *agape* has made a deep impression upon theologians. The only thing one could wish were that the professional theologians would not have made this newly discovered *agape* into a "religious" or specifically Christian notion. That Plato's *eros* is a fiction and that *agape* is a fact of our nature is everybody's daily experience. His loves emancipate a man from his self-will, and his intellect illuminates him so that he can rise above himself. Prayer, this universal fact of historical man, is the key to his psychology. It proves that man has intellect to seek connection with a truth more valid than his own existence and that man has love lest his self imprison

his soul. True prayer must be considered a fact of history before psychologists can claim that their inventory of the human faculties makes sense. We are far from that. Modern psychology goes so far as to call God who is the only "I" of the intellectual process, and the creativity of love, by the term "Id"; to call love, sex; to call charity, faith, and hope forms of will-power; and to call the intellect a tool in the service of enlightened self-interest.

Modern psychology denies the existence or the possibility of prayer. It has therefore made it quite impossible for the world of Gentiles to understand the services rendered by Israel. If Israel has never rendered a service, it can be classified with the Negro problem. And this is actually done today. Israel, by her very existence, saved the world from the endless spells of Egypt and of the Spanish Inquisition; today she is lumped together with Negroes as an "inferior" race. Freud and Hitler might well shake hands; both have tried hard to disestablish Israel and true prayer.

And immediately we see the rise of world-wide spellbinders and race-worshippers, of dictatorships, and superstates which unrepentingly identify their will and God's will, their world and the real world.

Pre-Homeric and pre-Jewish men are rising who are immune against both science and prayer. Greeks and Jews are both ousted from their seats because they have become divorced. We are thrown by a new power into an uncertain future. All our history has to be reconquered. You know already that this is the reason why I sign myself neither subjectively nor objectively, but

prejectively yours,
EUGEN