

GASTON FESSARD, S. J.,

HIS WORK TOWARD A
THEOLOGY OF HISTORY

by

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PREFACE

Gaston Fessard, S. J., His Work Toward a Theology of History, is a historical survey of the development of Fessard's thought between 1939 and 1960. The work grew out of my interest in a theology of history. Fessard was chosen for study because of his contribution to the development of this theology, and because his thought had not yet been made available to English speaking audiences. The study illustrates that his efforts to develop a theology of history were concentrated on employing modern philosophies of history and the biblical dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. My work includes the critical articles written in response to Fessard's publications. It concludes by evaluating, with the help of pertinent sources, his use of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. This is done with special emphasis on current exegesis and the emerging theology of the continuing vocation of Judaism.

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INTRODUCTION

The Composition of the Book

The primary exposition of Gaston Fessard's insights concerning historical being, and its application in the supernatural dialectic of the pagan and the Jew is found in his book entitled De l'actualité historique, published by Desclée de Brouwer in 1960. This volume was followed by a second in the same year, in which Fessard evaluated the Christian progressivist movement in France, the influence of Communism on the movement, and the apostolate of the priest-workers which it inspired. The principal concern of this paper will be the position of the first volume, which is subtitled A la recherche d'une méthode. The paper will study other articles by Fessard which are relevant. The reaction following Fessard's works, particularly the response of Fessard's Thomist contemporaries, will be included. Finally, Fessard's dialectic of the pagan and the Jew will be evaluated.

De l'actualité historique, Volume I, reassembles two series of essays, four of which were written some time prior to the publication of the book. The first, entitled Direction de conscience, originally appeared in the revue Volontés in June, 1939. It constituted an inquiry into its topic as much from a social as from an individual point of view, and as such,

touched the major political confusions existing at that time.

The second article contained in Fessard's book is the text of a conference given at the church of Saint Louis de Vichy on the third Sunday of Advent in 1940. It was later published in the revue Cité Nouvelle in February of 1941. This essay dealt with the meaning of history and included a study of the three spheres of history, natural, human, and supernatural.

A third essay, "Théologie et histoire: à propos de la Conversion d'Israel," appeared in Dieu Vivant, number 8, in 1947. It contains the broad scope of Fessard's thought and will be cited at length in this paper.

The fourth and last of the older essays is an outline study of the historical and dialectical development of society, entitled "Esquisse du mystère de la société et de l'histoire." It studies the ideological genesis of Fascism, Nazism, and Communism, in the light of the Hegelian dialectic of the master and slave. Fessard elucidated his understanding of this dialectic with that of the man and woman, which he believed was necessary and more fundamental.

Seulement, en raison même de la lumière qui leur vient de cette origine, je refusais de faire de cette première dialectique le seul principe de la genèse de l'humanité et je lui opposais une dialectique complémentaire et en un sens antérieur et supérieure, celle

de l'Homme et de la Femme.¹

He also introduced the concept of a dialogue of love between man and God, in the person of God's word of love to man, Christ. It is this final dialectic which was foremost in Fessard's mind, and it was in order to lead us to an understanding of it that he had employed and explained the dialectics of the master and the slave, and of the man and the woman. He saw the dialectic between man and God as fundamental to, and as a paradigm for, the ultimate fulfillment of the natural couples of master and slave, man and woman.

The first volume of De l'actualité historique was concluded by the inclusion of two essays written just prior to the publication of the ensemble. In them Fessard dealt with objections to his use of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew.

His long introduction, which contains detailed analyses of the various articles in the volume, as well as answers to some of Fessard's major critics, is vital as an explanation of the development of his thought.

The Title of the Book

The title of Fessard's book requires some explanation.

¹Gaston Fessard, S. J., De l'actualité historique (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), p.51.

It may be translated "historical reality" or "the historical present," expressions which appear enigmatic. "Actualité" denotes an ever changing present, limited and ephemeral, whereas "historique" refers to the past in its most memorable aspects.² At the nexus of these two concepts lies a central problem which Fessard attempted to clarify and make existentially serviceable. This problem is an understanding of this historical, and its influence on present decisions. These decisions constitute the fabric of the future.

L'historique peut désigner ce centre, pourvu que par ce terme on entende moins le passé à jamais disparu que ce qui, en lui, continue de s'imposer à qui veut comprendre le sérieux de son existence, de façon à éclairer son avenir et les décisions qui peu à peu le mettront au jour.³

In the hope of dealing successfully with the need to bring the past to bear on the creation of the future, Fessard sought an adequate method. He stated that this method must be able to envision each problem and event in its historically present reality. It must attempt to capture the historical element in its own essence, as well as in its rapport with the dimensions of being which are more familiar to the philosopher and the theologian, i.e., the natural, the rational, the supernatural, etc. In light of this, it is necessary, according to Fessard, to seek the solution of the

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 10.

difficulties encountered by means of a hierarchy of values, founded on the rapport of these diverse dimensions of being with present reality.⁴

Fessard believed that such a method would be invaluable in understanding the problems of our times. It would illumine the situations in which men make the personal choices which constitute the formation of human reality, both individual and social.⁵

⁴Ibid., pp.10-11.

⁵Ibid., p.11.

Fessard's Historical and Philosophical Development

CHAPTER I

His Concept of History

A concept of history is basic to any understanding of Fessard's thought. His concept of history presents man as a being whose reality progresses on a natural and on a human level, neither of which is capable of being understood either alone or in the light of the other. Rather, a transcendent intentionality must make itself known in order that the history of mankind may have meaning on either the natural or the human level. This means that eternity must insert itself within the realm of the temporal to make the significance of the temporal visible, otherwise, only ultimate frustration can result.

As early as 1940, Fessard believed that "to have a history" is to be engaged in a drama which calls into question the totality of one's existence, its ultimate value.¹ It is not a complete reality to term the processes of physical or cosmic evolution history, unless the term is qualified by being called natural history. Truly human history is to be found only where it has been created by the free decisions of men, and where these elections, made successively, have

¹Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p.78.

accorded with a destiny knowingly chosen by a free and spiritual being.

L'histoire, au sens propre du mot, l'histoire humaine ne commence qu'avec le premier acte libre, et son objet propre, qui échappera éternellement à toute histoire naturelle, ne peut être que la suite et l'enchaînement de ces actes libres grâce auxquels l'homme accomplit sa destinée d'être spirituel.²

In 1940, when Fessard wrote this, he was able to exemplify his position by the political situation which existed in Europe, a situation which his own country, France, was forced to evaluate in order to choose its course. It was his fear that France might desert true history for purely natural progress.³ Rationalism had given birth to two mystiques, one of race and the other of class, which were embodied respectively in Nazism and Communism.

C'est alors que de l'idéologie rationaliste commune à l'Occident naquirent deux mystiques nouvelles: celle de la Race et du Peuple, celle du Travail et de la société sans Classes.⁴

Fessard believed that the insufficiency of these purely naturalistic options would inevitably become apparent. Both were founded on the Hegelian dialectic of the master and the slave; both would eventually issue in failure. The first would perish in its own blood because an order created by force cannot endure.⁵ The second would defeat itself, since

²Ibid., p.79. ³Ibid., pp.80-81. ⁴Ibid., p.82.

⁵Ibid., p.84.

in it the classless society was to emerge after a long period of labor, which could be accomplished only by the use of force.⁶

Inherent in the inadequate concept of history which rationalist systems offer is their eventual frustration. As early as 1940, Fessard told us that history, for him true history, is a human-divine drama in which the son of God shows us how to be men. It is the Spirit of the Son which levels the walls between peoples: Thus, history is capable of being fulfilled only in the Parousia.

L'histoire est, aux yeux de l'Église, un drame humain et divin tout ensemble et indissolublement. De ce drame, l'auteur premier est un Dieu infiniment juste et bon, dont la Toute-Puissance dirige tout à sa guise; et le ressort essentiel, caché sous les plus petites comme sous les plus grandes passions humaines, c'est une foncière aspiration à devenir semblable à Dieu lui-même. Qui plus est, de ce drame le principal Acteur, c'est aux yeux de l'Église le Fils même de Dieu, son Verbe, sa Parole faite chair et venant habiter parmi nous, afin qu'à l'exemple de ce protagoniste divin nous apprenions à jouer notre rôle d'hommes vraiment humains. De ce drame enfin, le dénouement véritable dont l'Église possède déjà avec l'assurance les prémices, c'est la diffusion d'un Esprit d'Amour dont les effluves embrasées renversent les murs de séparation dressés par le péché entre les peuples, exterminent les germes d'inimitié entre les hommes et font cesser les querelles qui les jettent les uns contre les autres.⁷

Fessard believed that any history conceived without a transcendent dimension will degrade itself, reverting to the

⁶Ibid., p. 85. ⁷Ibid., p. 87.

level of purely natural history, and humanity will be the victim that is sacrificed to the idol of progress, class, or race.⁸ Sacred history, which he defined as transcendent history, the consecration of the profane,⁹ must serve as a means of understanding the events and movements of our times.

Car, sitôt que nous avons compris les moments divers de cette histoire sainte dans leur liason intime, il nous est loisible de les appliquer en quelque sorte comme une grille sur les événements que nous vivons pour déchiffrer leur sens le plus profond et le plus vrai.¹⁰

Two articles by Fessard, contrasting the Christian goal of history with the Marxist eschatology of progress without end, appeared in 1949 and 1950. Fessard stated at this time that history, in the Marxist sense, is self frustrating and ultimately irrational.

In opposing the desire of the Christian Progressive movement which sought dialogue with the Marxists, Fessard gave as his reason the fact that Marxism is built upon a false eschatology. He brought this out in both articles. In the first, principally addressed to E. Mounier and André Mendouze, entitled "Le Christianisme des chrétiens progressistes,"¹¹ Fessard stated his belief that those Christians who attempt collaboration with the Communist cause will find

⁸Ibid., p. 88. ⁹Ibid., p. 88. ¹⁰Ibid., p. 89.

¹¹Gaston Fessard, S. J., "Le Christianisme des chrétiens progressistes," Études, CCLX (January, 1949), 65-93.

themselves enmeshed in its dream of a temporal Parousia, and will inevitably lose sight of the true consummation of history. They will end by substituting a Marxist eschatology for that of Christianity, believing in theory in the transcendence of the Church while contracting an unconscious atheism.¹²

In the second article,¹³ Fessard demonstrated again this confusion of "eschatologies," stating that it is only the presence of the Word Incarnate among us in the Church which can be the true reconciliation of man with his world. The Marxist's ideal of progress without end makes it impossible for him to accept an "end of history." This ideal constitutes a rejection of the transcendent and involves him in a confusion of language. It serves to prove the rationality of history for him at the same time that it actually condemns history to irrationality.

Comment concilier la première affirmation où la société sans classes apparaît comme devant réaliser le rêve de l'eschatologie judéo-chrétienne avec la seconde où elle prétend au contraire poursuivre l'idéal rationaliste et libéral du progrès sans fin? Grâce à l'Incarnation du Transcendant Verbe Incarné dans le passé et dont la seconde Venue doit avoir lieu dans une actualité imminente, le chrétien peut réconcilier

¹²Ibid., pp. 82-83.

¹³Gaston Fessard, S. J., "Signification du Marxisme," Études, CCLXIV (January, 1950), 86-102.

l'idée du progrès avec la fin de l'histoire dont il reconnaît des maintenant la présence en l'Église. Mais le marxiste dont l'athéisme se fonde au contraire sur le présupposé socialiste de l'unité de l'Homme et de la Nature, s'interdit absolument de dépasser l'horizon du temps successif. Pour lui, progrès sans fin et fin de l'histoire sont donc rigoureusement contradictoires. Et même s'il se voile cette antinomie par quelque sophisme, le rejet du transcendant qui se reflète en elle, n'en condamne pas moins son langage à se contredire et son action à se pervertir.¹⁴

In speaking of the Marxist method as applied by

Desrocher, Fessard said:

Elle l'emène en effet à employer d'une part la dialectique pour prouver aussi bien la prévisibilité et la rationalité de l'histoire que son irrationalité et son imprévisibilité, et d'autre part à user de l'histoire pour justifier aussi bien la réussite que l'échec de la dialectique.¹⁵

In this same article, Fessard showed that a Marxist will accept collaboration because he sees faith as irrelevant. It is the task of the Church to render the eternal present within time, to allow Christ to unify history in a true dialectic. Here we meet the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew which throughout his works Fessard claims reveals the fundamental opposition between supernatural revelation and natural reason. In a note, Fessard cited the importance of language in a dialogue. The final word on the meaning and unfolding of history must be the Word Incarnate.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p.89. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 91. ¹⁶Ibid., pp. 94-98.

The publication of De l'actualité historique in 1960 found Fessard stating that precisely because man is caught up in the progress of the universe and of humanity, he must despair of finding any real significance in the events of history without the existence of transcendent meaning.

Justement parce que l'homme est lui-même un être essentiellement naturel et historique, de toutes parts englobé dans le double devenir de l'univers et de l'humanité, il doit désespérer de comprendre le sens de ce qui lui arrive, s'il ne trouve le moyen de s'élever au dessus de la dualité de son être. Or, seul l'Éternel qui dépasse et embrasse toute durée, est capable, s'Il s'insère dans la nôtre, de nous dévoiler quelque reflet de sa propre vision du temps.¹⁷

It is necessary that there be a history properly called supernatural in order that natural life and human history have meaning, and that this meaning might enlighten our judgments and aid us in making our decisions.¹⁸

In summary, there is value in the evolutive process; this process might be termed natural history. A truly human history is to be found only where men are acting freely and with knowledge--choosing a course of events which is compatible with their spiritual destiny. This destiny can only be known in the light of a supernatural history which is centered on the event of the Son of God's choosing to be

¹⁷Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 12.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 12.

among men. This event is made present through the Church. Supernatural history must serve as a guide in the formation of the choices by which men create their human destiny. It must help them in evaluating the movements and issues of their times.

Fessard's understanding of human history always required a transcendent dimension. Throughout the years in which he wrote, he applied this insight to the ideologies and political problems which arose -- especially to Communism, Nazism, and the desire of Christians to collaborate with Communist goals.

Fessard's Philosophical Presuppositions
and Theological Deductions

In 1947 Fessard wrote the essay "Theologie et histoire: a propos de la conversion d'Israel," which appears as chapter three of his book, De l'actualité historique. This essay is the primary source of his early philosophical speculations and theological deductions.

Before beginning an analysis of the position of Israel in a theology of history, Fessard made reference to two types of philosophy, those of essence and those of existence. The former express themselves in highly structured systems such as Hegelian idealism or traditional Thomism, while the latter dispense with rigid concepts which might sacrifice the freedom of man as he faces his experience. Typical of the philosophies of existence are those of Kierkegaard and Marcel. A certain tension exists between the two systems and today we witness attempts to bring them together in some sort of synthesis.¹⁹ Fessard quoted Gilson as asking if the dialectic of essence and existence in St. Thomas does not offer itself as the only satisfying solution to the problem posed by Kierkegaard.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid. p. 96.

²⁰Étienne Gilson, "Le Thomisme et les philosophies existentielles," Vie Intellectuelle, XIII(juin, 1945), p. 152.

It was necessary for Fessard, whose ultimate concern was a theology of history, to deal with its philosophical basis, and he attempted to do so. He declared that the true object of a theology of history is the analysis of the structures of human historical being and the discovery of the dialectic in virtue of which this being might engender a supernatural life.

---le véritable objet d'une théologie de l'histoire, ce ne peut être la détermination d'étapes successives dans l'avenir, mais bien plus simplement et aussi bien plus profondément l'analyse des structures de l'être historique humain et la découverte de la dialectique en vertu de laquelle cet être peut s'engendrer à la vie surnaturelle, c'est-à-dire devenir Chrétien.²¹

In a note appended to this statement, Fessard stated his belief that St. Thomas was familiar with the term "dialectic," even in its Hegelian sense, and cited the tract In Trinitate, IV, as his source. The same note affirmed that Thomas was familiar with the term used by the Father, "the economy of Redemption." Fessard believed Thomas said all that was necessary to justify the use of the expression "a dialectic of Christian history."

... Saint Thomas, comme philosophe d'abord, n'ignore pas ce terme, encore qu'il le prenne au sens aristotélicien et non au sens moderne. De plus, il situe très exactement la source de toute dialectique, même au sens hégélien du terme, lorsqu'il

²¹Gaston Fessard, S. J., De l'actualité historique, p. 112.

écrit dans In Trinitate, IV, I: "Sic igitur patet quod pluralitatis vel divisionis ratio prima sive principium est ex affirmatione vel negatione, ut talis ordo originis pluralitatis intelligatur quod primo sint intelligenda ens et non ens, ex quibus ipsa prima divisa constituuntur, ac per hoc sunt plura." Enfin, comme théologien, il n'ignore pas que les Pères ont volontiers parlé non seulement de la Providence, mais d'une "économie," de la Rédemption, dont le but est précisément de révéler dans l'histoire la nature divine comme trinitaire. Il y a là, nous semble-t-il, tout ce qu'il faut pour justifier l'emploi de l'expression "dialectique de l'histoire Chrétienne."²²

The complexity of the question of a historical dialectic, a complexity which is compounded when one approaches a theology of history, was evident to Fessard. He believed that a major source of confusion is the double sense, due to the different philosophical emphases mentioned above, in which the terms philosophy or theology of history can be understood.²³ For Hegelianism and other nineteenth century systems, the philosophy of history consisted essentially in the rationalization of "human becoming" or the historical process, and presupposed a purely speculative metaphysics, for which actual historical events furnish a concrete context. The diversity of these philosophies and of the metaphysics on which they are built has led to the relativism called historicism. This largely logical way of approaching the question was followed by a reaction which gave primacy to the historical event

²²Ibid., p. 112, n.1. ²³Ibid., p. 113.

over its rational predictability or explanation. Thus the phenomenologists and existentialists deal more in theories of history than in philosophies of history, and question the possibility of arriving at a universal system such as that of Hegel.²⁴ What emerges from these different ways of approaching the unfolding of human history is that historical reflection tends not to express itself in an ontology in which human reality is seen as an atemporal nature, but rather in one in which this nature is seen to be essentially historical.

Mais la réflexion sur l'histoire a de toutes autres ambitions, puisqu'elle tend de soi à constituer une ontologie où la réalité humaine est envisagée non plus seulement sous l'angle d'une nature intemporelle, mais en tant au contraire que cette nature est essentiellement historique.²⁵

This is true despite the fact that phenomenologists and existentialists today often fail to delineate an ontology, and leave the question at the problematic of existence, an existence which is hopefully not absurd. It is here that Fessard felt a Christian existentialism might make its great contribution, by placing at the heart of reflection on history not mediation, as did Hegel, but the Mediator whose entrance into time brings time within the intentions of the eternal.²⁶

²⁴Ibid., pp. 113-114.

²⁵Ibid., p. 114.

²⁶Ibid., p. 114.

At this point we have moved into the realm of a theology of history, and Fessard noted that theologians of history must first recognize the categories which compose the structure of human historical being in order not to confound the essential concepts of their dialectic with the symbols or images representing them in the inspired books.²⁷ These concepts or "moments" Fessard calls eschatological, while the symbols are apocalyptic, that is, the former are essential for the adoption of a Christian stance in the here and now, while the latter refer to some future time. For Fessard, the ideas or concepts (moments) are not derived from the philosophical currents of present historical thought, but are more fundamental, providing a foundation for human understanding and a true witness value.

In summarizing the preceding ideas Fessard showed that a true philosophy or theology of history must make a synthesis between the philosophies of essence and those of existence. He believed that this position is exemplified by the Pauline "historical" or "existential" categories of the pagan and the Jew, which for him expressed the fundamental stances of human history before divine revelation in Christ. This primary dialectic of the pagan and the Jew held for him

²⁷Ibid., p. 115.

the key to the reconciliation of being and thought, as well as to the elimination of social divisions. As such, it is preliminary to, and can be elucidated by, the "existential categories" of the "master and the slave" and of the "man and the woman." For Fessard, all divisions find resolution, and history finds meaning in Christ.²⁸

The foregoing section of Chapter I, i.e., Philosophical Presuppositions and Theological Deductions, is based on Fessard's third essay, Théologie et histoire, subtitled A propos du temps de la conversion d'Israel. The essay appeared first in Dieu Vivant in April, 1947, and contains an outline of Fessard's thought throughout all of De l'actualité historique.

In 1949 Fessard raised the question of language in two publications. Both were reviews of the work of other men. One, entitled "L'Actualité prophétique de Hamaan,"²⁹ should be of special interest to philosophers, historians and exegetes who follow the renewed dialogue between existentialism and rationalism today. In his work Hamaan centered his research on the problems of language, of exegesis, and

²⁸Ibid., pp. 118-119

²⁹Gaston Fessard, S. J., "L'Actualité prophétique de Hamaan," Études, CCLXIII (October, 1949), 116-119.

of history. He was reacting against rationalism when he appealed to Scripture as the source of all truth. Hamaan believed that God reveals himself in nature and in word. These two orders mutually sustain each other. Man's language with its fundamental images, comes from his nature. The communication of divine and human idioms is found in the word. It is in recognizing itself as dependent upon the Word of God that human language is able to fulfill its role of deciphering the divine intentions in natural phenomena and the events of history. When reason pretends to be autonomous in explaining nature and history, it can only create contradictions. Reason should lead us to recognize our powerlessness. Hamaan vindicated the liberty of man before revealed authority in opposition to those who establish it in the name of reason alone. Hegel, who was familiar with Hamaan's thought, believed that this position of Hamaan situated him at the heart of the problem of reason and exposed its solution, even though only under the form of language.

Fessard asked why -- if the problem posed to all philosophy or theology of history today is, "one might say" to reconcile the Concept of Hegel with the Instant of Kierkegaard, as well as with the Society of Marx (all of these seek to answer the meaning of man's existence) --

the mediatorial role in this reconciliation might not be given to Hamaan's "sacrament of language"? In the Scripture, God reveals what He is, as well as the rapport of nature and spirit, and yet remains the "Mysterium absconditum." Hamaan suggested the key to these oppositions when he asked if the idealism of pure Reason might be the wall of separation between Judaism and paganism. Fessard was quick to see this reference to his favorite dialectic of the pagan and the Jew, but stated that Hamaan himself did not develop the thought.

In an article called "Thomisme et philosophie moderne"³⁰ Fessard reported that A. Marc saw the concept of "being" in St. Thomas' theory of knowledge as a point of departure for a metaphysical reflection which would be close to modern thought, even that of Hegel.

Marc saw the "act of sign" (he had previously analyzed language as the sign of our ideas) as the principle of discernment which permits the philosopher to study all functions of the spirit. The act of sign is the mediator which organizes them into a whole. It founds the value of thought before the absolute. This reflexive psychology changes itself, because it is reflexive and synthetic, into an ontology.³¹

³⁰Gaston Fessard, S. J., "Thomisme et philosophie moderne," Recherches des Sciences Religieuses (A propos de la psychologie réflexive du Père A. Marc) XXXVI (1949), 310-320.

³¹Ibid., pp. 312-313.

For Fessard, Marc is an example of how to study Hegel. His method rests on the principle that thought which reflects on its own act is able and ought to remain in act itself. This act is the interior word, but also the sign of language -- the words of the proposition which manifest thought outside of the subject. Language, from which the word is never able to separate itself completely, serves to aid the intelligence in attaining the truth, just as much as it is an obstacle causing it to fall into error. It is reflection which must hold thought in act, so that by means of language it might constantly realize this "presence to the spirit" which is a "presence to being." Fessard did not feel that Marc's Reflexive Psychology could be accused of relativism because it was founded on the unity of thought and being.³²

He believed that no one would deny that Thomism's greatest task today is to accept and integrate the truths contained in the major systems of philosophy, those stemming from Hegel, Kierkegaard and Marx. Fessard believed that to construct the bridge between Thomas and Hegel, one must define history as the locale of an eventual meeting between God and humanity, and analyze the principles capable

³²Ibid., p. 317.

of uniting nature and grace --- a difficult task.³³

At this point in the present study of the development of Fessard's thought, it is necessary to return to the introduction to the article, "Théologie et histoire..." found on pages 13 through 25 of the text and dated 1960. In this introduction Fessard expanded upon his concept of historical being, having been motivated to do this by reactions which he received from the Thomists after the publication of the original article.

Shortly after the publication of his essay, Fessard met with objections. These appeared in the first issue of La Pensée Catholique, in an article entitled "L'Église théologique," and in the Bulletin thomiste, (8, 1951-1952), p. 428. Respectively, Fessard was accused of speaking of a theological dialectic in the same sense as the Marxists speak of a historical dialectic, and of carelessly citing St. Thomas as justification for the expression "a dialectic of Christian history" without any reference to Thomas' theory of knowledge. At this point in the incipient debate a learned article was published by the Thomist, Jules Isaac, on "La Notion de Dialectique chez saint Thomas." The article appeared in the Revue des Sciences philosophiques et

³³Ibid., pp. 316-319.

théologiques for 1950.³⁴

In his introduction to De l'actualité' historique Fessard quoted a passage in which he felt Father Isaac stated the terms of the problem as he saw them. Isaac said that in St. Thomas the dialectic is seen as the art of discovery in any domain, and its employ admits of only probable conclusions. Isaac cited the la llae, q. 57, a. 6 of the Summa Theologica. He said that Fessard transferred the use of the dialectic from the noetic order to the real order, committing the same error as do the rationalists and the idealists. Here he quoted from IV Metaphysics, lec. 4, 573. Isaac also stated that, in Fessard, the dialectic becomes the demonstrative science par excellence in its legislative function, that is, it becomes the normative and formative principle of those systems which it is used to explain.³⁵ Thus history furnishes the principles of the dialectic for Fessard. In its executive function, that is, in using the dialectic to understand the real, the dialectic takes on an essentially historical form.

³⁴J. Isaac, O. P., "La Notion de dialectique chez Saint Thomas," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, XXXIV (1950), 485-506.

³⁵Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp.15 & 16.

Fessard quoted Isaac as follows:

Nous ne le croyons pas et voici très brièvement pourquoi: le passage d'une conception à l'autre est dû manifestement au rationalisme avec sa confusion de l'ordre logique et de l'ordre réel, et à l'idéalisme avec son identification de la pensée et de l'être. Dans ces conditions, en effet, la dialectique, en sa fonction exécutive, prend inévitablement une forme historique; au lieu d'être uniquement l'activité du sujet connaissant s'efforçant de progresser dans la découverte de la vérité, elle devient -- par une série de délargissements de cette notion primitive, et dès lors d'une manière on ne peut plus dialectique -- le mouvement du Tout (Esprit ou Matière, Classe ou Moi) s'inventant en quelque sorte de façon progressive... Il est vrai que bien des divergences se révèlent, lorsqu'on entre dans le détail, selon les positions philosophiques adoptées ou celles dont on est plus ou moins solidaires... Peu importe. L'idée commune qui commande assurément toute la pensée contemporaine ou presque, c'est bien cette idée du dynamisme et du progrès; et l'on ne peut nier qu'elle implique la transposition, --- essentiellement logique, encore une fois, --- à l'ordre réel d'une notion réservée par saint Thomas à l'ordre noétique de la découverte.

Quant à la dialectique, en sa fonction législative, on ne s'étonnera pas qu'elle devienne du même coup la science démonstrative par excellence, la science unique, la sagesse suprême, puisqu'il lui revient désormais de déterminer les règles que suivent l'Esprit ou la Matière, la Classe ou le Moi, etc., dans leur évolution historique d'êtres qui se cherchent. Cette fois, comme on est dans le théorie et qu'on ne peut recourir au futur, on jugera par référence au passé: l'histoire avec ses faits et ses lois fournira les principes de la science nouvelle. (Art. cit., pp. 505-506).³⁶

The legislative function of the dialectic refers to
Aquinas' notion of dialectic as a quasi-scientific study of

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 16 & 17.

a way of thinking and arguing. Isaac was accusing Fessard of identifying this quasi-science of thought with the science of the laws of the real order, or metaphysics. That is what Hegel does.

The executive function of the dialectic, as Isaac interpreted Aquinas, uses the laws of thought in a concrete instance of thinking or arguing. Because Fessard used these laws not as laws of arguing, but as laws of the development of historical events, he was again accused of Hegelianism.

Father Fessard wished that his critic had not stopped at this point but had extended his study of the notion of dialectic in Saint Thomas. He agreed with Isaac that rationalism and idealism are largely responsible for the abuse of the dialectic in modern thought. For his part, he felt that he and Isaac were not in such great disagreement as it might seem, since for him, in his appeal to the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew, is it supernatural history "with its laws and events which are the principles of the new science in its legislative function." In stating his belief that the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew would not be resolved within time he felt that he was giving it a historical form "in its executive function."

En effet, lorsque j'invoquai la dialectique du Païen et du Juif, je ne prétendais à rien de moins qu'à prendre "l'histoire SURNATURELLE avec ses faits

et ses lois" comme "principes de la science nouvelle, en sa fonction législative." De même, lorsque je montrai ensuite que cette dialectique interdit de supposer supprimées dans le temps des divisions dont la réconciliation définit la fin des temps, ai-je fait autre chose que de lui faire "prendre, en sa fonction exécutive, une forme historique"?³⁷

In seeking to understand why his critics were Thomists, Fessard believed that this was not by chance. He believed that for St. Thomas the dialectic cannot issue in "science" or knowledge, but only in the probable because for Thomas there are only two categories of being. In his Commentary on the Metaphysics (lec. 4, 573-574), Thomas defined them as rational being and natural being. Rational being is all that which is properly the subject of logic, whether abstract or concrete, and as such is coextensive with natural being since this falls under the consideration of reason. Fessard quoted Thomas as follows:

La raison en est que l'être est double: l'être de la raison et l'être de la nature. Or, on appelle à proprement parler être de raison ces notions que la raison découvre dans les choses en tant qu'elles sont considérées par elle: ainsi les notions de genre, d'espèce, etc. qui ne se trouvent pas dans la nature, mais résultent de la considération de la raison; et c'est cet être de raison qui est proprement le sujet de la logique. Mais ces notions intelligibles sont coextensives aux êtres de la nature, du fait que ceux-ci tombent sous la considération de la raison; et c'est pourquoi le sujet de la logique s'étend à tout ce qui mérite le nom d'être de la nature. Aussi Aristote conclut que le sujet de la logique est

³⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

coextensif au sujet de la philosophie qui est l'ê[^]tre de la nature. ³⁸

If for Thomas, as for Aristotle, there were only two categories of being, this is not true of modern thought, which is dominated by the concepts of dynamism and progress. There is, according to Fessard, need for the distinguishing of a new category of being, that of historical being. Theology, as well as philosophy, suffers from the lack of it.

... depuis que la théologie s'est élevée au niveau d'une "science" de type aristotélicien, elle s'est souciée beaucoup moins d'analyser l'historique que de mettre en relief la part du naturel et du rationnel dans la Révélation Chrétienne.³⁹

Fessard stated that it is not unknown to the best Thomistic scholars that Thomas himself was not concerned with history. This is no reason why a disciple of his should fail to be. Thomas did not hesitate to examine and incorporate into his thinking the insights of Aristotle. It is the task of today's philosophers and theologians to recognize that the historical does not exactly coincide with the natural or with the rational even while it participates in both. It is for them to determine the exact rapport among these three regions of being --- to see them over against a fourth, the supernatural.⁴⁰

³⁸St. Thomas Aquinas, O. P., IV Metaphysics, lec. 4, 573-574, quoted in Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 19.

³⁹Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 19.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 22.

While Fessard was in agreement with Isaac that time presents a serious obstacle in the hegelian, marxist, and other idealist dialectics, he believed that this obstacle could be overcome by the use of supernatural history as principle of the dialectical science. This would overcome an unreal progressivism by means of the insertion of the eternal within time. Nor is this method a pure abstraction; rather it is ordained to a clarification of historically present reality.⁴¹

Fessard's position in the introduction, and his article entitled "Théologie et histoire" may be summed up in these words:

Puisque, par hypothèse, l'histoire surnaturelle fournit les principes de "la dialectique, en sa fonction législative," on ne s'étonnera pas que celle-ci "devienne du même coup la science démonstrative par excellence, la science unique, la sagesse suprême, puis qu'il lui revient désormais de déterminer les règles que suivent l'Esprit ou la Matière, la Classe ou le Moi, etc., dans leur évolution d'êtres historiques qui se cherchent." Ainsi cette dialectique, fondée sur l'histoire surnaturelle, s'identifie avec "la science unique" ou "la sagesse suprême" des saints, qui sont ou du moins tendent à être en totale dépendance de l'Esprit de Vérité et d'Amour.⁴²

The last essay in the volume, published in 1960, sheds further light on Fessard's concept of the possibility and nature of a theology of history. In it he discussed and

⁴¹Ibid., p. 23.

⁴²Ibid., p. 22.

built on Charles Journet's division of theology as it appeared in Journet's Introduction à la théologie.⁴³ To this he applied his own understanding of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew.

Journet made fundamental distinctions in theology and its related sciences. A first is that between scholastic or doctrinal theology and historical theology, which he called a form of positive theology.⁴⁴ While doctrinal theology works to unveil the internal order of revealed mysteries, historical theology explores, under the light of revelation, the whole range of time; it seeks to recover the order of the history of salvation, and to view the concrete in the light of timeless wisdom.

Mais il reste encore à explorer, pour autant qu'elle est connaissable sous la lumière de la révélation, toute l'étendu de l'univers du temps, et voilà précisément la tâche de la théologie historique. Docile aux leçons de la divine sagesse, elle s'applique à redécouvrir l'ordre de succession suivant lequel a été réglée la suite de l'histoire du salut; elle est sûr de beaucoup apprendre en essayant de déchiffrer dans une si haute lumière l'ordre et le sens des événements. En elle s'achève en quelque sorte la péripétie de l'intelligence, qui, partie de l'étude inductive de l'histoire et du concret, rejoint maintenant l'histoire et le concret, mais cette fois-ci par voie d'application, de "résolution," car elle est devenue capable, en quelque mesure, de considérer les emenements sub specie aeternitatis.⁴⁵

⁴³Charles Journet, Introduction à la théologie (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1947).

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 73-76. ⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 176-177.

Historical theology is both positive, because it shows the supreme intelligibility of events, and a true theology, since it devolves from reason illumined by faith. It is, however, to be distinguished from the positive religious sciences, whether historical or exegetical, which must precede theologizing.⁴⁶

Finally, Journet asserted that historical theology is a theology of the history of salvation, from Calvary until the end of the world. While it does not touch directly on the history of peoples and of cultures it does concern itself with them, inasmuch as they form part of the unfolding of the kingdom of God. It allows for the formation of a Christian philosophy of history, culture, or politics.

Elle ne porte pas directement sur l'histoire des peuples et des cultures. Elle n'y touche qu'à propos des destinées du royaume de Dieu, qui forment son objet spécifique.

Mais les grandes vues qu'elle peut alors exprimer relativement aux destinées temporelles de l'univers permettront de procéder avec sûreté à la constitution d'une philosophie chrétienne de l'histoire, ou de la culture, ou de la politique.⁴⁷

Several points will be cited here from Fessard's long essay discussing Journet's ideas on a theology of history. For Fessard, the "historique" of which Journet spoke is

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 258.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 201-203.

Christian Revelation as it inserts itself within human and natural events, in order to uncover for us their supernatural dimension. Thus a positive historian and a positive theologian will view the same event from a different perspective, and there will exist between them a dialectical or analogical rapport.⁴⁸

Because he saw real danger of confusion in defining positive theology and historical theology he proposed that the latter be called a theology of supernatural historicity; this would distinguish the three domains of theology as positive, speculative and the theology of supernatural historicity -- evading the use of the term "theology of the history of salvation." He saw some correlation between these domains and the three categories of being which he had distinguished.

Cette division tripartite est déduite de l'analyse de la notion d'historique selon ses trois niveaux: histoire naturelle, histoire humaine, histoire surnaturelle. Mais, en même temps, nous avons rencontré les trois régions de l'être que, dès l'Avant-propos, j'ai eu l'occasion de déterminer: naturel, rationnel, et historique.⁴⁹

Fessard believed that this provides a fertile field for an investigation which might illumine the question of an ontology of history.

⁴⁸Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 248.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 252-253.

...l'ê[^]tre et le sens de cette historicité surnaturelle consistent essentiellement en l'unité et la totalité, divinement révélées, de l'ê[^]tre et du sens des histoires humaines et naturelles.⁵⁰

It was Fessard's belief that speculative theology would be relative without the primacy of supernatural historicity.⁵¹

He believed that he was correct in interpreting Journet's statement that it is less necessary to assemble the data of history than to choose the formal point of view from which to explain it, as designating the category of the historical as a formal object -- which must be given the same respect as the categories of nature and reason. He felt this was so because in Thomas' theory of knowledge it is the object and not the subject which dictates the formal point of view from which this object is intelligible.⁵²

It is for the theologian, by means of the category of supernatural historicity, to penetrate the totality of being from the formal points of view by which it is able to be presented. It is for him to elucidate the meaning of "being" by the use of language, the manifestation of rational being. He must know that the ultimate rapport between the levels of history can only be revealed by the Word of God, made incarnate in nature and history.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 255. ⁵¹Ibid., p. 263. ⁵²Ibid., p. 266.

Ceux-ci (refers to the three ways of the spiritual life), sans nul doute, doivent avoir quelque rapport tant avec les trois régions de l'être: naturel, rationnel et historique, dont nous avons découvert l'importance dès notre Avant-propos, qu'avec les trois niveaux de l'histoire: naturelle, humaine, et surnaturelle, qui eux-mêmes nous sont apparus comme fondant la division tripartite de la théologie. Si ce fondement est solide, il s'ensuit que le théologique lui-même, par le moyen de l'historique dont il est en quelque sorte le redoublement et la réflexion, doit pénétrer, en l'englobant, la totalité de l'être et des points de vue formels que celui-ci peut présenter. Or, cette pénétration se fait essentiellement par le langage qui est lui-même l'être naturel et historique où se manifeste le rationnel. Il est donc conforme à l'essence du langage, et par conséquent logique, que l'unité et la distinction de l'histoire naturelle et de l'histoire humaine ne soient révélées que par le Verbe de Dieu, incarné dans la Nature et dans l'Histoire, et en fonction d'une historicité surnaturelle, elle-même déterminée par l'événement et le récit de cette incarnation. Il n'ya pas moins dans le mot même de théo-logie ⁵³

The present chapter may be summarized as follows: In his essay published in 1947, Fessard had noted the confusion caused by the divergent points of view of the philosophies of essence and of existence. He saw that the philosophies of existence tended to see man as a being whose nature is essentially historical. He felt that St. Thomas was familiar with the term dialectic, and that he could be called upon to support the expression "a dialectic of Christian history." Fessard moved easily from a discussion of the philosophies

⁵³Ibid., p. 268.

and theories of history to a consideration of a theology of history based on the Pauline categories of the pagan and the Jew.

In 1949, Fessard asked if language might be the key to reconciliation among the theories of Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Marx; he felt that the reflexive psychology of A. Marc, which constituted a unity of thought and being, could not be accused of relativism. He stated his conviction that Thomism's greatest task was to integrate the insights of modern philosophy within its system.

When writing the introduction to his book, De l'actualité historique in 1960, Fessard defended his use of the term "a dialectic of Christian history" on the grounds that supernatural history, which is not completed within time, was the principle of the dialectic. He believed that his dependence on supernatural history absolved him from the Hegelian confusion of the real and rational orders.

At this same time, he called for the conception of a third category of being, historical being, to be accepted along with the Thomistic categories of real and rational being. St. Thomas, Fessard said, had not concerned himself directly with history. In discussing Journet's division of theology, Fessard reiterated the primacy of supernatural historicity, and stated that he felt Journet designated the historical as a formal object.

CHAPTER II

The Concept of the Dialectic in Fessard

The Dialectic of the Pagan and the Jew

Fessard initiated his discussion of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew in an essay entitled "Théologie et histoire" which was written in 1947 and has been quoted at length in the previous chapter. Journet had raised the question as to whether the Jews, as a people, would accept Christ at some time prior to the Parousia.¹ Fessard opened his own study by addressing himself to Journet's question. It was Journet's belief, as well as that of several other scholars -- P. Allo, J. Maritain, P. Féret -- that the conversion of Israel would take place within time rather than at the end of time, for three reasons. The first was a desire to harmonize the diverse elements of Scripture's teaching about the end of time. The second was the precise translation of the fifteenth verse of the eleventh chapter of Romans, which is "life from among the dead." The third was the "jealousy" toward the converted pagans which would incite the Jews to be converted. (Rom. 11, 13-14)²

¹Abbé Charles Journet, Destinées d'Israel: A propos du "Salut par les juif" de Leon Bloy (Fribourg-Paris, Egloff, 1945).

²Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 98-99.

Fessard was not in agreement with Journet and questioned the readiness of the Thomists to abandon the position of St. Thomas.³ Quoting Romans 11:12-15 he stated that such expressions as "the riches of the Gentiles," "the riches of the world" which the decline and offense of the Jews precipitated, and "reconciliation of the world" which followed on their rejection could only be surpassed at their return by the plenitude of the Parousia, or "life from the dead."⁴ This was the position of ancient exegetes who saw Jews and pagans as "historical categories" more than as "phenomenal realities." Their exegesis was more spiritual than literal.⁵ Fessard believed that, for Paul, the categories were first part of his experiences on missionary journeys, but later became symbolic of "existential attitudes" which men assume before God, so that finally the pagan and the Jew became historical categories.

Tout naturellement, au cours de cette réflexion, païens et juifs qui sont d'abord des réalités historiques phénoménales, se stylisent pour ainsi dire en "attitudes existentielles," caractérisant les positions diverses de l'homme en face de Dieu, si bien que finalement "le païen" et "le juif" apparaissent comme des "catégories historiques" dont le jeu, fonction de l'avant et de l'après du Christ, définit le devenir-chrétien de chaque homme comme de toute l'humanité, par rapport au second Avènement, fin de l'histoire.⁶

³Ibid., p. 100. ⁴Ibid., pp. 102-103. ⁵Ibid., p. 103.

⁶Ibid., p. 104.

Fessard felt that Paul was showing us that the opposition of the Jew and pagan before Christ constitutes the pivot of all history, and their reconciliation its end, cf. also Ephesians II.⁷ He saw the Pauline dialectic of the pagan and the Jew before Christ as revelatory of human nature, which is always divided between the need to incarnate the absolute in the sensible (which is idolatry), and the demand of reason to reject any "given" data (which is incredulity).

En effet, l'inimitié des deux peuples révèle la vérité de la nature humaine, toujours divisée entre le besoin d'incarner l'absolu dans le sensible-- besoin qui fait le païen idolâtre--et l'exigence, essentielle à la raison, de transcender tout donné-- exigence qui fait le juif incrédule et rejeté.⁸

Fessard asked how the true value of the opposition of the pagan and the Jew in Paul could be maintained if the traditional exegesis were not followed. He saw its renunciation as a denial of the worth of the dialectic and believed that the new interpretation sacrificed the atemporal value of the categories.⁹

Sacrifier la valeur intemporelle de catégories historiques, tel est le reproche que nous venons d'adresser aux thomistes partisans de l'opinion nouvelle sur la conversion des juifs.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., pp. 104-105.

⁸Ibid., p. 107.

⁹Ibid., pp. 108-109.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 109.

In 1960 Fessard returned to the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew to discuss it at length, and to defend his own use of it. The introduction to Del'actualité historique will be cited here. In it Fessard contended again that if the divisions between man and woman, master and slave, Greek and Jew cannot hope to be completely resolved in time, neither can the historical manifestation par excellence of the "mystery of iniquity" which is destroyed by the Cross of Christ?¹¹ .

In the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew the Old and New Testaments are separated by the death and resurrection of Christ. In the light of the Christ event the position of both pagans and Jews was reversed. The chosen Jews, except for the remnant of the disciples, became rejected for their incredulity. The idolatrous pagans were called to conversion. The termination of history will come about when both groups are reunited. The Church is the presence of this unity, this end of time, within time.

L'essentiel en est d'ailleurs implicitement saisi par quiconque n'ignore pas qu'aux yeux du chrétien le temps historique se divise en deux périodes, Ancien et Nouveaux Testament, séparées par la mort et la résurrection du Christ, et caractérisées par le renversement de la situation respective des Juifs et des Païens en face de Dieu. Avant le Christ, Israël est le peuple élu par

¹¹Ibid., pp. 110-111.

oppositions aux nations idolâtres; après le Christ, les Juifs sont, à l'exception du petit "reste" des disciples fidèles, rejetés dans l'incrédulité pendant que les Païens idolâtres sont appelés à la conversion, la fin de l'histoire étant déterminée par la réunion de ces deux totalités. En tant qu'elle rend déjà présente dans le temps cette fin de l'histoire, l'Église ainsi que chaque chrétien en elle peut être défini comme l'unité du Juif élu et du Païen converti, qui s'oppose tant au Juif incrédule qu'au Païen idolâtre.¹²

For Fessard this dialectic projects a decisive light on present problems because it reveals the religious sense of the totalitarian ideologies which dominate our times. It shows the nexus of the choice to be made before these ideologies, as before the fact of God in time.

Corrélatives et finalement convergentes, ces deux inimitiés mortelles (N. & C.) font apparaître le sens et l'origine commune des "élections" contraires revendiquées par ces idéologies rivales. Elles attestent que le Nazisme représente et rend présente à nouveau la volonté de puissance du paganisme converti mais retournant à l'idolâtrie, comme de son côté le Communisme l'appétit de jouissance du judaïsme incrédule, mais conservant toujours l'idéal de son messianisme temporel.¹³

The dialectic of the pagan and the Jew is central for Fessard. He believed that it can be used to evaluate the political currents and ideologies of our times. Following a book by Jeanne Hersch entitled Ideologies et Réalité, he analyzed the Fascist, Nazi, and Communist ideologies.¹⁴

¹²Ibid., pp. 38-39, n.1. ¹³Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁴Jeanne Hersch, Ideologies et realite (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1956).

It caused him considerable concern that some Catholics, and among them Thomists, hesitated to reject Communism totally, not seeing in it, as he did, an ideology which is intrinsically antithetical to Christianity.¹⁵ Fessard cited Jeanne Hersch's definition of a totalitarian state and concurred with it. For her, a totalitarian state is one which seeks to know, dominate, and master reality in its totality, to the exclusion of all transcendence. The role of religion is assumed by the state, and the qualities of the divine by its chief.¹⁶

For Fessard, this anti-religious attitude can be seen in the way a particular ideology relates to the Church. Another criterion for judging the internal constitution of a regime is by observing the enemies it chooses. Again, Fessard followed Jeanne Hersch, who argued that it is necessary for a totalitarian regime to choose its enemies from the beginning, in order to define its own essence.¹⁷ For Nazism the enemy chosen was the Jew, whose privilege as chosen made him inimical to a master race. For Marx the enemy was Christianity, whose social principles are at

¹⁵Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 29.

¹⁶Hersch, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁷Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 33-36.

variance with his concept of the necessity of the revolution of the proletariat to resolve the enigma of history. Fessard noted that for Christ the only enemy was evil. He felt that it is most significant that Nazism and Communism should choose as their respective enemies the two major determinations of supernatural history, the pagan converted to Christianity, and the Jew, who still embodies the Old Covenant. Here he saw the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew before Christ in operation.

Ansi, en raison de son passé de race élue, et de son cosmopolitisme présent, le Juif est-il pour Hitler l'ennemi mortel qui empêchera, s'il n'est exterminé, le Peuple et des Maîtres de faire regner la paix de mille ans. Pour Marx, ce sera au contraire le Chrétien dont "les principes sociaux sont serviles" (Morceaux Choisis, édit Gallimard, pp. 223-224) et s'opposent comme tels au prolétariat révolutionnaire qui a pour mission de "résoudre l'engime de l'histoire."

Est-il besoin de le souligner? Juif ou Chrétien sont les deux déterminations majeures de l'histoire surnaturelle, l'une spécifiant l'Ancien Testament, l'autre le Nouveau. Devant ce résultat qui nous fait retrouver après un long circuit la dialectique du Païen et du Juif, on doit comprendre le rôle capital que joue l'adversaire mortel dans le discernement de l'idéologie totalitaire...¹⁸

Fessard had been comparing the regimes which were extant in Fascist Italy, Nazi German, and Communist Russia. He summarized his thoughts as follows:

¹⁸Ibid., p. 37.

Idolâtrie de la nation, pouvoir, magique du dictateur et même reconnaissance officielle de l'Église, ces trois traits qui furent communs au Nazisme comme au fascisme pouvaient induire à assimiler celui-ci à celui-là. Mais la présence de l'antisémitisme en l'un, son absence en l'autre manifestent aussi que l'idolâtrie de la nation fasciste ne va pas jusqu'à la sacrilization du racial et que la reconnaissance de l'Église par Mussolini à une toute autre valeur que celle de Hitler. Un éventuel Concordat avec l'U.R.S.S.--remarquons-le en passant--devrait être soumis au même examen; de si bon augure qu'il soit pour l'évolution future des pays communistes ou sous tutelle soviétique, il mériterait lui aussi quelque suspicion aussi longtemps que ne serait par renié l'antichristianisme, marque indubitable du totalitarisme marxiste.¹⁹

It is his belief that the Nazi and Communist stances summarize, or are examples of, the two possible types which comprise the position which humanity freely chooses before God.²⁰ In a note he reviewed the essential characteristics of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew which he had explicated as early as 1936 in his book, *Pax Nostra*.²¹

In an article called L'Antisémitisme en U.R.S.S.,²² written in 1960, Fessard answered the accusation of Jules Isaac that the traditional teaching of the Church, which had forgotten the teaching of Christ, was responsible for Marxist anti-Semitism. He based his position on an application of

¹⁹Ibid., p. 38.

²⁰Ibid., p. 38.

²¹Gaston Fessard, Pax Nostra: Examen de conscience international (Grasset, 1936), quoted in Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 38-39, n. 1.

²²Gaston Fessard, S. J., "L'Antisémitisme en U.R.S.S.," Études, 306 (September, 1960), 215-232.

the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. Fessard's reply was that the inherent atheism of Marxism is the breeding ground for the anti-Semitism which has developed within it. Communistic atheism is for him a perversion and inversion of Judaism. While Christianity has come out of Judaism, this in some sense is also true of Communism. Both Marx and Trotsky were Jews. Fessard saw the situation in Russia as comparable to that of the First Century with its mortal opposition of "unbeliever" and "chosen."²³

Il faut plutôt revenir à l'enseignement de Paul concernant l'opposition du Païen et du Juif et le sens de leur inimitié en vue de leur salut final et commun. Dans une telle perspective, il apparaîtra facilement que si l'on peut, de fait, parler d'un antisémitisme des Chrétiens, parce que infidèles à cet enseignement de Paul, ils se sont souvent conduits comme des païens idolâtres ou des juifs incrédules, il n'y a pas d'antisémitisme du Christianisme. Car selon Paul, le chrétien authentique est celui qui à l'exemple du Christ "notre paix," détruit la barrière d'inimitié qui sépare ces deux peuples pour n'en faire qu'un seul en sa personne, les fondre en un seul Homme nouveau et les réconcilier avec Dieu, par sa Croix (Eph. 11, 14-17).²⁴

Anti-Semitism cannot come from fidelity to the spirit of Christ, Who is the unity of "Jew and Greek."

²³Ibid., pp. 229-231. ²⁴Ibid., p. 232.

Fessard's Defense of the Dialectic of
the Pagan and the Jew

Both theological and philosophical objections were leveled at Fessard for his use of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. He undertook a lengthy defense of his position in one of the later essays in De l'actualité historique. The essay is entitled "Pour et contre la dialectique du païen et du juif," and appeared first when the entire work was published in 1960. Fessard had been accused of granting too much importance to the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew by making it "the principal key to the philosophy of history and of society" -- and of offending even more by seeking to place such a hypothesis under the patronage of St. Paul. His critic, whom he does not name, stated that the references to Jews and pagans in Romans show them both as sinners, while those in Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:10-11, etc., indicate an ethical antagonism rather than fundamentally opposite attitudes toward God.²⁵

Fessard believed that while it is true that the first three chapters of Romans intend to show both pagan and Jew as sinners in equal need of redemption, St. Paul returned to their antithesis too often for his meaning not to be more

²⁵Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 217.

profound. In succeeding chapter, St. Paul opposed justification by faith to salvation by the Law of the Jews, and later, he spoke of circumcision as opposed to uncircumcision. The opposition of rejected Jews and converted pagans is fundamental to chapter nine. Even more important, since it is here that Fessard first founded his dialectic, are Chapters two and three of Ephesians which show Jews and pagans to be separated by the Law which was broken down by Christ. It is true that St. Paul spoke of ethnic divisions, but his purpose was to manifest the universality of redemption. It is not difficult to see, according to Fessard, even in a brief study, that for St. Paul the opposition of pagan and Jew was basic.²⁶

Fessard believed that the "absence of reflection on the historic" was largely responsible for the confusion. He said that the opposition of pagan and Jew is not only fundamental for St. Paul, but is "the mystery" of the Promise to which both Jew and pagan were invited, and before which one was to supplant the other. He called to his side "all the liberal exegetes, Protestant and Catholic."²⁷

Enfin, puisque le Nouveau Testament a pour centre le Christ-Messie et l'Église, nouveau Peuple élu en qui sont accomplies les promesses de paix et de réconciliation universelle, comment pourrait-il

²⁶Ibid., pp. 218-219.

²⁷Ibid., p. 220.

être la vérité et la réalité de l'Ancien si l'antithèse du Païen et du Juif n'y jouait plus le même rôle fondamental?²⁸

Fessard quoted Benoit²⁹ who asserted that "Jew" and "Gentile" were understood at the time of the writing of the Epistle to the Ephesians as the two categories which composed humanity, and that this understanding of the two groups is so common in the Bible that it needs no proof. Fessard believed that the word "categories" might be understood in the philosophical sense of historical categories, or what Kant would call the a priori forms of our discursive consciousness.³⁰ For Hegel, the term category signified the identity of knowledge with its own object. Hegelian idealism is excluded because these categories are founded on faith.³¹

Next, Fessard addressed himself to two further criticisms, this time of a theological nature. According to Journet, he had used the Hegelian dialectic to prove the "internationality" of the Church, but in doing so had made

²⁸Ibid., p. 220.

²⁹P. P. Benoit, O. P., "L'Horizon paulinien de l'Épître aux Ephésiens," Revue Biblique, XLVI (1937), p.521, cited in Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 221.

³⁰P. J. Maréchal, Le Point de départ de la métaphysique: la critique de Kant (Museum Lessianum, Section Philosophique, V) Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1944-1947.

³¹Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 221-222.

it impossible to distinguish the natural from the supernatural.³²

His first critic had accused him of the same fault in saying that he had assimilated the dialectic of the man and woman into that of the pagan-Jew and sought to explain the Church by an antithesis which is not proper to human nature, and can only be fully intelligible if one presupposes the Church.³³

Fessard replied that he never intended a purely natural dialectic. He saw the pagan-Jew dialectic not merely as uniting natural and human history, but as central to a theology of history. It should not be impossible at any moment to distinguish the natural from the supernatural, because this distinction was present from the beginning. Journet himself had allowed that the concrete events of life are to be viewed "sub specie aeternitatis" and thus brought into a kind of peaceful unity by an intelligence which joins eternity together with time, and sees in one panorama all the vicissitudes of history.³⁴ If this is so for him in theory, why does he object to its application to the events of our day in fact?

³²Abbé Charles Journet, Introduction à la théologie, pp. 290-291.

³³Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 224.

³⁴Journet, p. 177.

Fessard stated that, while his method of exposition was to work from the natural, his intention was, from the beginning, to show how these natural elements have their relative autonomy because of Revelation, which is supernatural and historical. Thus, the Church was always presupposed.³⁵

Finally, Fessard refused to agree that the dialectic of the man and woman is totally different from that of the pagan and the Jew. Admittedly, one is of the natural order, but he intended to speak analogously, always guarding the transcendence of the other. It is always and only grace which draws human nature to surpass its proper limits, and while this nature does not demand the ability to transcend itself it allows for it.

Double tendance de directions contraires où se marque par une inversion caractéristique le rapport intrinsèque de notre liberté à celle de Dieu dont elle est le reflet. Nécessairement transcendante, la Sienne en effet a le pouvoir de s'incarner, tandis que la nôtre est à la fois capable de dépasser toute limite pour tout nier et se vouloir "être comme Dieu," mais aussi contrainte de se limiter dans une détermination objective pour pouvoir se posséder elle-même en même temps que jouir de son objet.³⁶

Fessard cited a philosopher and an atheist as seeing this transcendent quality in the rapport between pagan and Jew, even while he recognized that the Pauline ideal seeks

³⁵Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 226-227.

³⁶Ibid., p. 228.

to create a human unity within time. Fessard quoted A.

Kojeve as follows:

Mais en fait, l'universalité et l'homogénéité à base transcendante, théiste, religieuse, n'ont pas pu et ne pouvaient pas engendrer un État proprement dit. Elles n'ont servi de base qu'au "corps mystique" de l'Église universelle et homogène et elles ne sont censées se réaliser pleinement que dans l'au-delà, (dans le "Royaume des Cieux," a condition de faire abstraction de l'existence permanente de l'Enfer). Sous la seule et double influence de la philosophie païenne antique et de la religion chrétienne, la politique n'a en fait poursuivie que le but de l'État universel, sans d'ailleurs l'avoir jamais atteint jusqu'à nos jours.³⁷

The last defense of his position which Fessard made was to call to his service the thought of H. M. Feret. Feret, in a small book, recalled and analyzed the conflict of Peter and Paul in Antioch and in Jerusalem during the days of the infant Church.³⁸ In it, Feret cited the providential character of history, in this case the conflict over the conversion of the pagans and their position with respect to the converted Jews. Fessard saw Peter and Paul as the embodiment of the dialectic between the pagan and the Jew and called their struggle to come to unity a

³⁷A. Kojève, "Tyrannie et sagesse," pp. 272-274, en suite de De la Tyrannie par Leo Strauss (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), quoted in Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 230-231.

³⁸H. M. Féret, O.P., Pierre et Paul à Antioche et à Jérusalem: le "conflit" des deux Apôtres (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1955).

dialogue. In this dialogue, Peter represented the Jerusalem community, which was of Jewish background, while Paul, because of his missionary activity, was in sympathy with the Gentiles.³⁹ In his preaching, Paul went first to the Jewish communities of the dispersion, but, when rejected by the majority of them, he turned to the Gentiles, who were often equally hostile. Fessard saw this as an illustration of the Hegelian tendency for the extremes "independent of their choosing," by a kind of instinctive connivance to pass into one another. In this instance the "unbelieving Jews" and the "idolatrous pagans" took the same stance before Paul's message.⁴⁰

After Paul's preaching experience, Fessard stated, it is not difficult to understand the conflict at Antioch during which Paul refused to admit any compromise between the Judaisers from Jerusalem, who championed the observance of the law, and "justification by faith in Christ," which was the liberation from sin for both pagan and Jew. Fessard asserted that Peter and Paul, themselves, prefigure the unity of pagans and Jews at the Parousia. After initial disagreement they came to a unity in which it was Peter who enunciated a decision which was essentially Pauline in its

³⁹Ibid., p. 99.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 71.

conception. Fessard saw Peter and Paul as the embodiment of their respective missions, and as having exemplary, universal, and eschatological value. They demonstrate the concordance of the dialectic in itself and the historical dialectic.

Pierre et Paul avec leurs "missions apostoliques, inséparables et solidaires l'une de l'autre," visant les foules anonymes et "réfractaires" et des "idolâtres" qui, avant d'être atteintes par elles, les tiraillent en sens contraire -- ont tous et chacun valeur exemplaire, universelle, "eschatologique." Aurais-je pu si aisément montrer la parfaite concordance de l'épuration dialectique et du dialogue historique....⁴¹

The Two Apostles finally found unity by accepting the truth that salvation for all men comes from faith in Christ (Acts 15, 11). Their positions, at first extremely divergent, found a synthesis (and Fessard defended the Hegelian tone of his explanation) by a supernatural instinct toward unity in Christ.⁴²

From the beginning of his writing, Fessard employed the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. He never modified it significantly. He referred to it as early as 1936 in his book Pax Nostra. In 1947, he countered Journet's belief that the Jews would accept Christ within the course of history, saying that Journet's position was not consonant with Scripture, or with traditional exegesis. It was his

⁴¹Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 240.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 233-241.

opinion that Journet negated the fact that the two peoples are to be seen as paradigms of humanity, as humanity faces the transcendent in Christ. In 1960, Fessard demonstrated his belief that Nazism and Communism were examples of the categorical stances of pagan and Jew before Christ. He explained, again, his use of the dialectic and asserted that it made an evaluation of present ideologies possible, particularly through an analysis of their relationship with the Church and their choice of enemies. Again in 1960, he identified the intrinsic atheism of Marxism as the cause of Communist anti-Semitism. He stated that there was more than an "ethical antagonism" between pagan and Jews in the writings of Paul. Their separation and final reunion are "the mystery" of which Paul spoke. He stated his belief that the two peoples were employed as categories in Paul, even categories in the Kantian sense. He insisted that he never intended a purely natural dialectic; for him, the natural has its autonomy from the supernatural, and the Church was always presupposed.

Society and Its Underlying Dialectic

When Fessard wrote the fourth essay in his book, i.e., "L'Esquisse du mystère de la société et de l'histoire," in 1948, the three principal ideologies which caused him concern were Fascism, Nazism, and Communism. The last two were founded on the Hegelian dialectic of the master and the slave. While studying these ideologies Fessard analyzed at length the natural doublets, or dialectics, which he believed were basic to the evolution of society, i.e., those of master and slave, man and woman. His ultimate intention was to show that another dialectic, superior and more all-embracing was at work. This was the movement of God's Word into the history of mankind at the time of the Incarnation. The Word of God expressed His Love, and revealed the meaning of man's life. God's Word invited then, and continues to call today, for a response in kind. Here is a dialectic of love between God and man, in which men respond by acceptance and belief, or by rejection. If men reject dependence on God, they make idols of their own freedom. This is the only dialectic which can adequately explain the meaning of history; it is essentially supernatural. The natural doublets of master and slave, man and woman, can only give partial illumination of the progress of mankind toward its final goal.

Marx, himself, rejected Hegelian idealism as he found it in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.⁴³

For Marx, man was not primarily a thinker but an animal whose imperative needs demand satisfaction. It is for man to humanize nature by his work, and this mastery of nature is the dream of Marx. If the worker does not consume of the fruit of his labor, he will become alienated; this alienation, Marx saw as one of the principal evils of capitalism. Thus, Marxism suppresses private property in order that man, the collectivity or "social man," may reap the benefits of his own labor, in a society without classes or states. In this way the naturalization of man and the humanization of nature should be accomplished. In order for this to happen, there must be a class struggle in which the capitalist masters are overthrown by the enslaved proletariat. After the struggle, in which slave supercedes master, the resolution of the mystery of history will ensue; a Communist society will have been created without distinction of classes or the existence of States.⁴⁴

In Nazism, the ideal differs. It is not that man might conquer nature, but that he might become the master of

⁴³Georg W. F. Hegel, Phänomenologie des Geistes (Bamberg und Würzburg: Joseph Anton Goebhardt, 1807. --- or Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1949).

⁴⁴Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 130-136.

less enlightened peoples, cf. Mein Kampf. For Hitler, the primordial fact of history was a "struggle to the death" in which the weaker would be reduced to the ends of the strong. The ideal held up is personal sacrifice for the sake of the group, but contrary to Communism it is the leader and not the group who is responsible for progress. Thus, there are basic differences between the Nazi and Communist application of Hegel's dialectic of the master and the slave, for the first, it is struggle and domination; for the second, it is work and the creation of the classless society.⁴⁵

It is important to note that for Hegel the first stage of the dialectic of the master and slave was a "struggle to death" in which the victor enslaves the other, who in turn becomes humanized through his work and growing self-consciousness in the service of the victor. Marx reversed the order of struggle and work, and in the mind of Fessard, obviated the Hegelian effect of the dialectic, that is, the origin of political society as an essential stage in the genesis of the human reality. Labor would not issue in a growing self-consciousness for the slave if he enjoyed its fruits from the beginning. It would not serve as a humanizing force.⁴⁶ This purely economic genesis of society would

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 136-141.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 143-148.

become a rapport not of man with nature but of an animal with nature.⁴⁷

The Nazi form of Hegel's dialectic is doomed to failure because its emphasis on the power of the master will lead inevitably to another struggle.⁴⁸

Fessard believed that while Hegel's dialectic of the master and the slave allow us to envision the political and economic destiny of society, and the means by which it is to be attained, by itself the dialectic is not sufficient to attain these ends. He proposed another, which he felt is as universal as that of the master and the slave, and more fundamental. This is the dialectic of the man and the woman, whose struggle is one of love, which issues in the labor of creating the human. It is a struggle in which the man respectfully seeks to know the woman, and in which each asks the other to manifest the value which he or she perceives in love. In this dialectic, the first step is a unity of man and man, rather than of man and nature, the second a "work" in which nature is not humanized but "hominized." Fessard saw the man-woman dialectic as the model for all social relations, and as complementary to the dialectic of the master and the slave. In the former, the

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 157. ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 158.

struggle of love issues in knowledge, while the labor of child-bearing and rearing is fulfilled in "recognition."⁴⁹ In the latter, the struggle "to death" issues in a recognition and consciousness of self as superior to sensible and organic needs; the period of labor allows for the growth and deepening of the consciousness of the slave. This reverses the Hegelian dialectic with respect to the finality of the stages ("moments") but does not reverse the stages of struggle and work themselves. When Marx reversed the "moments" of the dialectic, he did not realize that in doing so he was defeating its final term. The labor of his first moment could not allow for a deepening of consciousness, because it was the labor of a slave who had not yet arrived at self-recognition. It would not bring about the submission of nature to man, because man was still at a level lower than human.⁵⁰

From this, Fessard concluded that the true object of the debate between Nazism and Communism, under the guise of a political and economic supremacy, was the attitude of man before All Being, God. In one of the mystiques he described, the will to power is deified, in the other an "appetite for enjoyment" seeks an absolute immanence.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp 163-168.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp 168-169.

In order that these two opposing attitudes be brought into interaction, and a human unity be possible, one must suppose a dialectic between man and "the totality of being" analogous to that of the man and the woman, a dialectic of love between man and God.

Pour mettre en interaction ces deux attitudes opposées et pour que l'unité humaine soit possible, il faut donc supposer que se joue une dialectique entre le Tout de l'être et l'homme, analogue à celle de l'Homme et de la Femme: dialectique de Dieu et de l'Humanité. Présente en nous et par là intérieure à toutes celles qui se déroulent dans les événements temporels, cette dialectique les dirige aussi et devient du même coup le principe d'une nouvelle genèse de l'humanité, genèse encore historique quoique n'étant plus seulement naturelle, mais proprement surnaturelle, et vraiment spirituelle.⁵¹

This is a dialectic which is properly supernatural, but which unfolds in temporal events and becomes the principle of a new birth for humanity. Love is its impetus. It is the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew, which, illumined by the "man-woman" dialectic between God and mankind, exposes the "stages" of our supernatural growth. It shows how supernatural growth perfects natural and historical growth, which cannot be achieved according to any purely "worldly" plan. Here is the importance of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew; it is a mediator between supernatural and profane history.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 173.

A la lumière de cette dialectique Homme-Femme entre Dieu et l'Humanité, le couple Païen-Juif peut alors exposer les divers moments de notre genèse surnaturelle et montrer comment elle vient parfaire les genèses naturelle et historique que les dialectiques Homme-Femme et Maître-Esclave ne peuvent achever sur le plan universel et purement mondain. Voilà en définitive ce que fonde l'importance de la dialectique du Païen et du Juif et lui assure un rôle médiateur entre l'histoire profane et l'histoire surnaturelle.⁵²

It is the synthesis of the two natural dialectics.

In it, the chosen Jew is slave and woman before the transcendent God, while the pagan idolator, because he does not know God, usurps the position of God, as both master and man.

Si la dialectique du Païen et du Juif unit histoire profane et histoire religieuse, ce n'est pas seulement que ses deux termes, pris en leur sens le plus objectif et abstraction faite de toute foi, relèvent de l'une et de l'autre. C'est aussi qu'en présence de la révélation par laquelle l'unité Homme -- Nature -- pour parler, comme Marx -- s'objective dans la nature et l'histoire, ou -- pour prendre un langage à la fois hégélien et chrétien -- par laquelle Dieu se fait Homme pour que l'Homme se fasse Dieu, cette dialectique offre la synthèse des principes mêmes du devenir naturel et historique, contenus dans les couples, maître-esclave et homme-femme. La preuve en est, nous venons de le voir en détail, que le juif élu est et se veut esclave et femme en face de ce Dieu Transcendant, tandis que le païen idolâtre, au sein même de sa mé-connaissance de Dieu, se fait, à la place de Celui-ci, tout ensemble maître et homme.⁵³

Let us summarize, still following Fessard's thought.

In Christ, natural and historical growth reach a unity, in

⁵²Ibid., pp. 184-185. ⁵³Ibid., p. 194.

principle but not yet in plenitude. The dialectic of the pagan and the Jew works a transposition of the dialectics of man and woman, master and slave, to the supernatural level. Since the higher dialectic contains within its terms the will to power and desire for enjoyment in their "purest form," these two tendencies are brought into direct relationship with the all-powerful liberty and infinite love of God, made visible in Christ. Therefore, the rapport of the man and woman is able to symbolize mankind, created innocent and chosen in love despite its revolt. The relationship of the master and slave shows the dependence of humanity upon God, as well as the radical separation which resulted from sin. The two lesser dialectics assume a role analogous to that which is theirs in a natural or merely human sense.⁵⁴ Synthesized within the dialectic of the pagan-Jew, they continue to direct and reveal the supernatural destiny of humanity.

Aussi est-ce à travers elle que s'opère l'interaction de ces deux genèses, et grâce à elle que les problèmes posés par cette interaction ou par la distinction dans l'unité de la Nature et de la Grâce peuvent trouver leur solution.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 197.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 199-200.

An article by Fessard entitled "Lutte de classes" appeared in Études, in 1960.⁵⁶ It was written at a time during which the "cold war" had produced a crisis within the Organisation Internationale du Travail (O.I.T.), and appeared first as part of the second volume of Fessard's two volume work, De l'actualité historique. It is included at this point in the present study because it deals with the Marxist concept of "class." The article was written about 12 years after the foregoing material, and introduces eschatological considerations into this study of "class."

Fessard believed strongly that Catholic theologians and sociologists must not accord class solidarity in the marxist sense, the value of universal fraternity, or even worse, see it as having a kind of "vocation" within the historical development of mankind.⁵⁷ Because the emergence of class is a natural evolution there is no reason to conclude that it is inevitably productive of a human fraternity. Fraternity is essentially rational, and not merely natural. Because of its Marxist origin, contemporary "class" may be

⁵⁶Gaston Fessard, S. J., "Lutte de classes," Études, CCCIV (January, 1960), 41-59.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 58.

affected by a fundamental irrationality. To the degree that it is, it closes itself to the "universal" and makes itself unable to be Christianized. How, then, could class, in this sense, be accorded the dignity of having a truly human or Christian vocation?

The same is not true of such natural communities as family, profession, or nation. These communities refer to specifically human nature and are basically rational. In the case of the marxist "class," a material as well as a natural foundation is present, because this class is opened on the universal by means of its participation in the industrial labor which is the humanization of the universe and the universalization of man. Fessard feared that the universal fraternity of classes, having an economic base, might not be completely purified of the irrational elements which affect the bourgeoisie and Marxist proletariats.⁵⁸

In order to compensate for the Marxist degradation of the natural into the material, Fessard felt it should be understood that the foundation of contemporary class is less natural than historic, and that the historic should discern the rational from the irrational. This would make Christianization a possibility. The rationality or

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 54.

irrationality of a classes is dependent on the goal of history which it envisions.⁵⁹ Fessard accused some theologians of not understanding this.

Once again, in this essay, Father Fessard stated his conviction that a practical confusion results from a lack of attention to the historic, that because most theologians have been formed in the discipline of the schools, they work with the Aristotelian categories of being, that is, natural and rational. Marxism appeals constantly to a third category of being, the historical.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 54-55.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 59.

Freedom and the Dialectic

Human freedom is central to the problem of dialectic. In his book entitled La Dialectique des exercices spirituels de S. Ignace de Loyola,⁶¹ published in 1956, Fessard showed how St. Ignatius had analyzed the essential stages of the free acts which the Christian makes in faith; he also showed the structure of the "Exercises" as a synthesis of the Old and New Testaments around Christ, "the eternal within time." An article by Fessard, which dealt with the question of freedom and the dialectic, entitled "Idéologies et réalité selon Jeanne Hersch"⁶² was written in 1957. In this review, Fessard cited the truth that all dignity for man is in his liberty, which Miss Hersch understood as overture to the transcendent, as "center of what is possible." Miss Hersch held that if there is no absolute, history loses its meaning. It becomes impossible, because human liberty is the first victim to fall in the wake of the loss of the transcendent. The problem of the relation of liberty to the absolute is the milieu in which ideology and historical reality meet.

⁶¹Gaston Fessard, S. J., La Dialectique des exercices spirituels de S. Ignace de Loyola, I (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1956).

⁶²Gaston Fessard, S. J., "Idéologies et réalité selon Jeanne Hersch," Études, CCCXCIII (June, 1957), 355-373.

If an ideology pretends to give a total coherence to reality, it is totalitarian, and engenders idolatry. If it resists totalitarianism, it is always in danger of espousing false values.⁶³

Fessard introduced into his study of Miss Hersch's ideas his own belief that it is the presence of the supernatural within time that gives coherence to the unfolding of history and which is the guarantee and goal of human liberty.

En effet, de par cette prétention qui, si fautive soit-elle, la définit, l'idéologie totalitaire révèle son sens ultime en prenant position de quelque manière face au tout de l'histoire. Et par conséquent aussi, face à l'histoire surnaturelle, au sens chrétien de ce terme, puisque celle-ci, je l'ai expliqué ailleurs, est seule capable de dominer la totalité de l'histoire.⁶⁴

It is in the free choice of a mortal enemy that we clearly betray the meaning of our lives. In choosing respectively as mortal enemies Jews and Christians, Nazism and Communism betrayed their fundamental stance before the absolute, God. Fessard underlined the primordial importance of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew before Christ for the solution of the problem of liberty. Its categories give

⁶³Fessard, "Idéologies et réalité selon Jeanne Hersch," pp. 356-358.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 363.

us a way of characterizing the current ideologies which solicit our adhesion. Because the paradigm categories of pagan and Jew found unity in Christ, who by his sacrifice destroyed the wall separating men from God and from each other, we can have hope in the possibility of overcoming the enmities of our times.⁶⁵

In her book, Miss Hersch, vindicated the importance of the individual, who is free because of his opening on the transcendent, and who cannot objectivize himself in any earthly reality. Fessard showed that the structure of the individual free act can be exemplified by the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. In seeking to make an authentic choice, a person is torn between the self-divinization of paganism and the self-transcendence necessary to respond to divine Liberty. The ancient Jew exemplified self-transcendence in responding to his election. Man must unite himself with Christ in order to rise above the pull toward self-sufficiency. After his choice, he will find his liberty transfigured as the pagan, once converted, was transformed, but he will always face the need to oppose the tendencies toward "pharisaism" and "incredulity" within himself, which attempt to draw him back into a pagan stance, or threaten to

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 364-368.

pervert his attitude as "chosen."⁶⁶

In 1960, in the introduction to De l'actualité historique, Fessard cited the universalism of Hegelian logic and the fact that Kierkegaard opposed it as sacrificing the temporal existence of the subject, who alone is capable of liberty and truth.⁶⁷ It was Kierkegaard who distinguished the three spheres of the "esthetic," the "ethic" and the "religious." He divided the religious sphere into two parts. The first, "religion A", is a religion of immanence, primarily rationalistic. The second, "religion B," is the faith of the true Christian, who has accepted the "absolute contradiction" of existence and conforms himself to the eternal, which has entered into time. Kierkegaard saw his three stages as typified by the Greek, the Jew, and the Christian. He believed that through the exercise of his freedom, a man passes from one sphere to another.⁶⁸

Fessard believed following the stipulations laid down by Jeanne Hersch, that it is possible to follow this dialectic

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 371.

⁶⁷Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 42-43.

⁶⁸Soren Kierkegaard, Post-scriptum aux miettes philosophiques, TR. du danois par P. Petit (Paris: Gallimard, 1941), pp. 375-379, 386-387.

of the pagan-Jew in Kierkegaard's sense of the "devenir-chrétien" -- man becoming Christian -- to see it centered on St. Ignatius' analysis of the act of decision, and by this means guide one's political and individual choices.⁶⁹ Miss Hersch had laid down the following norms for the selection of an "ideal" political ideology: 1) it must be centered on an existential liberty which is open to the transcendent; 2) all of its principles and concepts must refer to this liberty and serve as pure intermediaries between the singularity of its choices and the totality of history; and 3) it must contain a constant antidote for the error and idolatry inherent in the "generality" of its concepts and principles.⁷⁰

Fessard saw the dialectic of the pagan-Jew as embracing the whole of the history of salvation, its participants as embracing the whole of humanity. Therefore, he said, it is relative to the whole of history, as centered around Jesus, in whom time and eternity are united. A dialectical movement produces the synthesis which reconciles men with God, and among themselves. This dialectic, as do all situations

⁶⁹Fessard, La Dialectique, pp. 46-47.

⁷⁰Hersch, Idéologies et réalité, pp. 115-118.

of choice, can only function in the context of human liberty.⁷¹ Fessard saw the Ignation dialectic of the free act and the Pauline dialectic of salvation history as uniting Hegel's dialectic of the Logos and Kierkegaard's dialectic of existence.

En effet, le mouvement dont elle trace l'épure vise à réaliser la synthèse des deux opposés, Païen et Juif, dans un troisième terme, le Chrétien qui est unité de l'homme avec Dieu et par conséquent aussi unité de l'homme avec l'homme et avec la nature. En même temps elle indique que le mouvement entre ces deux opposés présuppose la reconnaissance d'une "différence qualitative absolue" entre liberté humaine et Liberté divine, et ne peut s'accomplir que dans l'Instant ou la foi seule peut affronter la "contradiction absolue" de l'existence.⁷²

He perceived this synthetic dialectic as functioning through the rapport of liberty with the transcendent, in the context of historical reality. He believed it secretes the antidote capable of protecting us from the idolatry of the pagan and the error of the "pharisaic" Jew.

Hegel and Marx sought to explain the genesis of human society by means of a dialectic which excluded the influence of the transcendent. Kierkegaard opposed them by means of his dialectic of existence and its call to faith in the

⁷¹Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 46.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 46-47.

Incarnation. His subjectivism kept him from applying the dialectic to the social or rational order. Fessard attempted to show that the dialectic of the pagan-Jew brings together the "absolute thought" of Hegel, the unity of man and nature envisioned by Marx, and the paradoxical faith of Kierkegaard.

Il y a plus. En face de ces dialectiques par lesquelles le chrétien cherche à acquérir l'intelligence de sa foi, la raison s'est de son côté efforcée de se comprendre elle-même et son histoire, en utilisant les données de la Révélation au profit d'une genèse rationnelle de l'humanité qui évacue le Transcendant ou dénature son insertion dans notre histoire. De cet effort, les dialectiques de Hegel et de Marx sont les témoins et le fruit. A quoi Kierkegaard a opposé sa dialectique de l'existence pour restaurer l'originalité de la foi en l'Incarnation du Christ. Mais, inspirée par le subjectivisme luthérien, sa tentative ne pouvait dépasser "l'individu existant" pour s'épanouir sur le plan social et rationnel.

Or, à condition d'être interprétée et approfondie au moyen des dialectiques de Hegel, Marx, et Kierkegaard, celle du Païen et du Juif devient capable, à mon sens, de définir une cime où le Savoir absolu visé par le premier comme l'unité de l'Homme et de la Nature projetée par le second, se réconcilient avec la foi paradoxale du troisième. De sorte que, à celle-ci, Hegel apporterait l'assise rationnelle, comme Marx la portée sociale, en même temps que chacun d'eux recevrait en retour de Kierkegaard ce qui lui manque: le premier la liberté de sujet existentiel, le second l'ouverture au Transcendant.⁷³

In summary, in 1956, Fessard first dealt with human freedom's centrality in a dialectical situation in his book on the Exercises of St. Ignatius. In 1957, he stated, in a

⁷³Ibid., p. 52.

review of Jeanne Hersch's book, Idéologies et réalité, that man's dignity is in his openness to the transcendent, and that the structure of the individual free act can be exemplified by the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. In the introduction to his book, De l'actualité historique (1960) he saw the Ignatian dialectic of the free act and the Pauline dialectic of salvation history as uniting Hegel's dialectic of the Logos with Kierkegaard's dialectic of existence. He attempted to show that the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew brings together the "absolute thought" of Hegel, the unity of man and nature envisioned by Marx, and the paradoxical faith of Kierkegaard.

CHAPTER III

The Debate: Criticisms of Father Fessard's Theories

When De l'actualité historique was published in 1960, it was reviewed by competent scholars, and was reacted to and against by those who disagreed with its contents. Principal among Fessard's opponents were the Thomists who had been attacked on several scores. These were their rigid adherence to Thomas' philosophy, while not creatively fostering its growth through contact with modern thought; their exegesis of the Pauline dialectic of the pagan and the Jew, especially in the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians; and, the lack of philosophical basis for their interest in and cooperation with the French progressivist movement, which was sympathetic toward Marxism.

A first response came after the initial publication of the essay entitled "Theologie et Histoire" in Dieu Vivant 8 (1947). It was a long and learned article by J. Isaac, O.P., called "La Notion de dialectique chez Saint Thomas,"¹ which, while it did not address itself principally to Fessard, took

¹J. Isaac, O. P., "La Notion de dialectique chez Saint Thomas," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, XXXIV (1950), 485-506.

up the use of dialectic in St. Thomas and refuted Fessard's attempt to call Thomas to his side. Fessard dealt with its accusations in the avant-propos of De l'actualité historique, but Isaac's relevant statements will be re-presented here.² He argued that the dialectic along with rhetoric and poetics is for St. Thomas the logical science of the process of demonstration. The dialectician must establish the rules which act as guide in our logical explorations, and exercise the art of discovery in all areas.³

There is a well known distinction between the demonstrative syllogism of which the premises are certain, and the dialectical syllogism which proceeds from propositions commonly accepted, or admitted by at least a few scholars. The results of the latter may well be opposed or abandoned after further research.⁴

Isaac asked why St. Thomas was able to place metaphysics on the same plane as logic, and to say that metaphysics also proceeds from our rational constructions. Is he an idealist? The reason is that St. Thomas refuses to confound our rational elaborations with interior reality --

²Other theologians who sought to answer Fessard are J.-Y. Jolif, O.P., M.-M. Cottier, O.P., Charles Journet, and M.J. Nicholas, O.P. Fessard's book was reviewed by Edmond Ortiques and Henri Rondet, S. J.

³Isaac, "La Notion de dialectique," pp. 496-497.

⁴Ibid., p. 499.

even while he fully agrees that one may attempt to shed light on the world by means of them. Isaac felt that there is an apparently impassable gap between the meaning of the dialectic in St. Thomas and what it means in modern philosophy. He declared that the change from one understanding to the other is due to rationalism with its confusion of the real and the logical orders, and to idealism with its identification of thought and of being.

In a note,⁵ he observed that Fessard alluded to the Thomistic use of the term, calling it the demonstrative science par excellence, the unique science in speculative matters, but ignored the extensive understanding which he hoped to provide through his article.

A reaction to Fessard's book came in 1960 from the Thomist, Jean-Yves Jolif, O. P., who took exception to Fessard's belief that St. Thomas did not concern himself with history.⁶

The principle issues in Fessard's work which Jolif questioned were his apparent misunderstanding of the Thomistic categories, his use of the Hegelian system despite its intrinsic contradictions, and his appeal to the supernatural

⁵ Isaac, p. 505.

⁶ Father Jean-Yves Jolif, O.P., "Saint Thomas, Le Père Fessard et l'histoire," Lumière et Vie, IX (September-October, 1960), 123-144.

as a corrective for what is really a philosophical problem. Jolif quoted those statements of Fessard to which he objected. They were the belief that scholars formed in scholastic discipline find themselves unprepared to cope with modern historical questions; that Thomas did not treat the concept of history except in a marginal way; and, that Thomas works from two categories of being, natural and rational, not considering the historical to be such a category. This situation, according to Fessard, leaves scholastic scholars at a loss before Marxism, and imprudently open to progressivist ideologies. Jolif felt that Fessard took his point of departure in evaluating history from Hegel, rather than from Thomas, hoping at the same time to supplement the thinking of Thomas by the creation of a category of historical being. Fessard, according to Jolif, accepted the validity of the categories of natural and rational being, seeing them, however, as the interpretation proper to a stage in philosophical reflection, a stage which must surpass itself and verify its own truth by reflecting on the category of historical being. Jolif believed that a theology of historicity relativizes the categories of natural and rational, that Fessard put them in a kind of exterior juxtaposition, whereas their rapport should be thought of as dialectical, or ordered in a certain hierarchy which itself constitutes a progressive "englobement"

or expanding reality.

Mais aussi, au nom de ce même rapport, il faut ajouter que la théologie de l'historicité relativise la théologie du naturel et du rationnel. Entre ces trois dimensions de l'être, en effet, on ne saurait concevoir un simple rapport de juxtaposition, qui les laisserait extérieures les uns aux autres et qui permettrait d'en parler indépendamment les uns des autres.---Mais en réalité les trois formes de l'être ne sont pas ainsi extérieures les uns aux autres; il faut penser leur rapport sous une forme dialectique; disons plus simplement qu'une certaine hiérarchie les ordonne entre elles, et que cette hiérarchie elle-même doit être comprise comme un englobement progressif.⁷

Jolif felt that Fessard was correct in believing that history can only be explained by a dialectic which expresses the reality of man before a Totality which is trans-historic. He did not feel that he was right to call on Christian Revelation, embodied in the pagan-Jew couple to unveil this dialectic for us.

Il est donc parfaitement exact qu'on ne peut interpréter l'histoire sans recourir à une dialectique qui exprimera le rapport de l'homme à une Totalité trans-historique, à Dieu. Mais nous ne croyons pas que le P. Fessard ait raison de demander à la révélation chrétienne de nous dévoiler cette dialectique et de voir, dans ce couple Païen-Juif, la réponse adéquate et unique au problème surgi de la pensée hégélienne.⁸

In order that a category might be interpretive of history, it must express a development which is present in the totality of history. Fessard's position demands that the conversion

⁷Ibid., p. 126. ⁸Ibid., p. 134.

of the Jewish people be an eschatological event. Fessard tried to demonstrate that this is so, but his interpretation remains a theological opinion, admitting the possibility of a contrary opinion. He gave us a possible interpretation of human history from the Christian point of view; it cannot be offered as the Christian point of view.

St. Thomas believed in the possibility of a philosophy of history, as can be seen from his research on politics. Fessard saw historical intelligibility as stemming from the revealed pagan-Jew doublet. Jolif concluded that this solution is an intrinsic questioning of the value of philosophy as opposed to faith.⁹

He accused Fessard of not having proposed for us a dialectical interpretation of history, but of having reduced the historic to an abstract and atemporal dialectic. He felt that Fessard's use of language was not always illuminating and was an artificial attempt to force political reality to fit his categories.

In 1960, M.-J. Nicholas, O.P., made a careful study of the categories of "l'histoire," "l'historique," and "l'historicité" in response to Fessard's book.¹⁰

⁹Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁰Marie-Joseph Nicholas, O. P., "La Théologie et l'histoire," Revue Thomiste, LX (1960), 485-508.

He dealt with the issues in a manner similar to that of Fessard's other Thomistic critics, i.e., he saw a place for history in the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas; he viewed Fessard as basically Hegelian, and Hegel as incompatible with an ontology. Nicholas held that Fessard created a theology instead of a philosophy, that his method is destructive of an understanding of the nature of man and therefore does violence to the concept of supernatural. Finally, he saw Revelation as given in history and not by history. He began his study by showing the distinction between real and rational being, and then stated that the historic is part of the real and therefore of the natural. It is foolish to suppose that it has no place in St. Thomas' ontology.

Car il est bien certain que l'historique fait partie de l'être réel, c'est-à-dire de l'être qui a une nature et mérite en cela le nom de naturel. L'historique, c'est, au sein de l'être "naturel," la catégorie de l'"existentiel" et aussi du "devenir" dont il serait ridicule de prétendre qu'elle n'est pas au coeur même de l'ontologie aristotélicienne reprise par saint Thomas.¹¹

Nicholas agreed with Fessard that the theologian knows the finality of history, but this revealed knowledge is very indeterminate. He accepted each man, and humanity, as renewing the mystery of Christ. Fessard saw this supernatural

¹¹Ibid., p. 487.

dialectic of the Christian and of history as exemplified by the pagan and the Jew. Nicholas agreed that each event of history, as well as the individual choices of men, in as much as they are revelatory of human nature, must be viewed by the theologian from higher wisdom of humanity's relationship with Christ. From this point of view Nicholas allowed that Fessard's dialectic of the pagan-Jew is helpful, even while it appeared to him that it is artificial and excessive to bring everything within its scope. But, he stated, what is essential to Fessard's thought is the attempt to discover the structures of human historical being from the dialectic, or the immanent logic of its development, to construct an ontology in which human nature is not seen from the viewpoint of an atemporal nature, but a nature which is essentially historical.

Mais ce qui est essentiel à sa méthode, ce n'est pas de porter un regard théologique sur une histoire tout entière habitée et conduite par le Verbe incarné: c'est de découvrir les "structures de l'être humain," et par là la "dialectique," la logique immanente de son développement; c'est de constituer une ontologie où la réalité humaine est envisagée non plus seulement sous l'angle d'une nature intemporelle, mais en tant au contraire que cette nature est essentiellement historique.¹²

This, according to Fessard, is to adopt the Hegelian

¹²Ibid., p. 506.

dialectic of history, correcting its basic flaw by substituting the Mediator, Christ, for the notion of mediation.¹³ Nicholas could not accept this for Thomism, because he did not see how Hegel's concept of being and spirit can allow for the transcendence of God. Hegel's Spirit actualizing itself through the events of history is not the God who is eternally actual and immutable. To use Hegel's concepts and vocabulary is to speak equivocally.

Nicholas objected also to what seemed to him to be a destruction of the meaning of human nature, and with it the concepts of nature, essence, and being. Why oppose nature and history by calling man "essentially historical" or saying that he is essentially a "becoming of himself?" Man is what God has made him; he has his own proper essence. Without this, how would one describe the Incarnation, in which Christ took a human nature -- or explain grace, through which man shares the divine nature?¹⁴

Nicholas' third and final reason for rejecting Hegelianism, (he was not rejecting the concordance of history with faith and theology) was that he saw an inevitable confusion of the natural and supernatural. Fessard's use

¹³Fessard, De l'actualité historique, pp. 112-114.

¹⁴Nicholas, p. 507.

of the pagan-Jew dialectic makes the whole of history supernatural, and does not give sufficient weight to natural causes, be they social, political, or economic.¹⁵

Fessard replied in a single letter to the articles of Nicholes and Cottier.¹⁶ Cottier's article is cited on page 85 of this paper. Fessard's letter was written in 1962. He retorted that while he proposed a dialectic which was similar to Hegelianism, its spirit was not Hegelian. Actually, it was more Blondelian, Pauline, or Ignatian. He was not merely speaking of the movement of concepts toward fulfillment, but of human liberty before divine freedom. He only wished to actualize the theology of St. Thomas for our own times, and to do this by employing the dimension of time.

Nicholas would have approved of this wholeheartedly, but stated that he still believed that the category of "historicity" which is Hegelian, cannot be acceptable because it is too closely related to monist immanentism and a philosophy of "becoming."

¹⁵Ibid., p. 508.

¹⁶Gaston Fessard, S. J., "Correspondance," "Revue Thomiste, (with a response by Father Nicholas), LXII (1962), 85-90.

Mais je continue à penser qu'on ne saurait emprunter à Hegel la catégorie d'"historicité," même pour la transposer dans l'ordre surnaturel, parce qu'elle est liée chez lui à un immanentisme moniste et à une philosophie du devenir bien plutôt qu'à son "protestantisme."¹⁷

Charles Journet entered the discussion of Fessard's book with something more than interest.¹⁸ Journet's chief objections to Fessard's thought were the following: Fessard reduced the Jewish people to a moral category; he distorted Journet's own division of theology. Journet believed that Fessard's ideas would cause a relativizing and rationalizing of doctrine; he felt that Fessard altered the teaching of St. Paul. Journet took up the question of the time when the Jews will be converted (cf. Rom. 11), and replied that the answer can only be conjecture. What is certain is that it is the Jews, Paul's own race, the people of the Promise, who will be converted; it is not a Kierkegaardian category which will turn to Christ.¹⁹ Journet quoted Fessard at length, allowing him to set forth his own ideas on the dialectic of the pagan-Jew. Journet commented on the

¹⁷Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁸Abbé Charles Journet, "L'Actualité historique de Révérend Père Gaston Fessard," Nova et Vetera, XXXV (1960), 218-239.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 220-221.

passages chosen. He stated that we have here the key to universal history, that he admired the ease with which Fessard enriched St. Paul with an "ontology of history."

Voilà, donc saint Paul tel qu'en lui-même enfin la dialectique le change. Ce n'est pas tout. Un coeur hanté par Hegel et Kierkegaard que peut-il faire de mieux que de dialectiquer ce qu'il aime? Les Exercices spirituels de saint Ignace auront leur tour...²⁰

He saw a trace of Pelagianism in the virtue of the converted Jews, a bit of betrayal perpetrated on St. Paul

Journet explained a basic disagreement with Fessard. It was his unwillingness to see the Jewish people, who are always loved by God, because of their Fathers and because God's gifts are without repentance, absorbed into a moral category.

C'est ce peuple juif, c'est son existence historique propre, que nous nous refusons de résorber dans des catégories morales, celle si l'on veut du pharisaïsme, et de dissoudre dans la dialectique kierkegaardienne du devenir-chrétien. Nous croyons encore, avec toute la tradition, au mystère de la permanence historique de ce peuple juif en vue de sa future réintégration.²¹

The Jews' destiny as a people is part of the mystery which St. Paul preached.

²⁰Ibid., p. 224.

²¹Ibid., p. 227.

A major article criticizing Fessard's position appeared in Revue Thomiste in 1961. Its author was M.-M. Cottier, O. P. The article's purpose was to study Fessard's use of the Hegelian dialectic.²²

Cottier objected to Fessard's attempt to use the Hegelian system, supplementing it with those of Marx and Kierkegaard. He believed that to apply a theological solution to the basic incoherences of these ideologies it to relativize, and thus reject, philosophy. He felt Fessard did not advert to the fact that for Hegel reality itself is dialectical; therefore he could not escape Hegel's idealism. Fessard did not see that to accept Kierkegaard is to reject Hegel. His use of the pagan-Jew dialectic constituted a dangerous transposition from the natural to the supernatural orders, and his use of the lesser dialectics of master and slave, and man and woman was artificial. While Cottier believed that the Thomists must work toward a theology of history, he did not see how it could be on the basis of an ontology.

Cottier explained that Fessard attempted to outline the system which will take over at the demise of Thomism, hoping at the same time to answer Hegel, Marx and Hitler. He made

²²M.-M. Cottier, O. P., "Hégèl, la théologie et l'histoire," Revue Thomiste, LXI (1961), 88-108.

use of three dialectics, those of Hegel, Marx and Kierkegaard. No one of these three is directly consonant with Revelation, and Fessard appears to be a prisoner of Hegelianism when he makes the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew their integrating factor.²³ Cottier accused Fessard of applying a theological solution to a philosophical problem. Fessard appeared to accept the philosophies of our era without questioning their intrinsic validity. This relativizing of philosophies, a historicist stance, is what Cottier believed was at the base of Fessard's work.²⁴ It is really a rejection of philosophy. Would that Fessard had made clear his use of, and dependence on, the Hegelian dialectic in such a way as to show that for Hegel the real is itself dialectical. Hegel's logic was adapted to this belief. From his idealist position, Hegel was led to confound the Logos (human and divine) with the real. The real became a method, and the method became a law of "being." In using the Hegelian method, one must be aware that it is not purely instrumental.

Le Logos hégélien est métamorphosé conformément aux exigences d'un réel lui-même dialectique, auquel en définitive il s'identifie. Mais précisément parce que dans l'optique idéaliste qui est la sienne Hégel est amené à confondre le Logos (à la fois humain et divin) et le "réel," le réel devient méthode et la

²³Ibid., p. 90.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 91-92.

méthode est transmuée en loi d'être. Il n'est en conséquence guère possible d'user de l'instrument hégélien sans faire sienne l'optique métaphysique fondamentale qui a dicté, pour ainsi dire nécessairement, la création d'un tel instrument.²⁵

Fessard's introduction of the supernatural did not obviate the confusion of the real and ideal orders. At the same time, can it really be called a Hegelian dialectic, Cottier asked in the sense of a philosophy of immanence, when one attempts to distinguish the dimensions of the real, and to introduce the supernatural as also "real"? Fessard's supernatural dialectic runs the danger of becoming a kind of "gnosis" by means of its alignment with the Hegelian "savoir absolu" or absolute knowledge. As Fessard understood the dialectic, its revelatory character made it participate in the "highest wisdom," superior even to theological knowledge. This absolute wisdom for Hegel was manifested in history. Fessard saw history as primarily supernatural, the ground on which human and divine liberty meet. This transposition causes the dialectic to become the mystical wisdom of the Saints; knowledge becomes dependent on the options of liberty, and choice determines truth.²⁶

Cottier stated that Fessard's whole system is based on the dialectic of the pagan-Jew which Fessard saw as a

²⁵Ibid., p. 93.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 93-94.

permanent structure of history. Thus, he placed the conversion of Israel at the end of time. This, however, is only a theological opinion and is subject to debate. The dialectic of the pagan-Jew was given a metaphysical value by Fessard.

Cottier believed that Fessard used the term dialectic in an equivocal sense. He stated that Fessard proposed a series of schemas which are essentially imaginative. The schemas themselves are less proper to the thought of Hegel than they are like the archetypes of Jung.

La réduction aux schémas représente un premier temps; ensuite, il n'ya plus qu'à laisser se combiner entre elles, selon une logique toute algébrique, les diverses "dialectiques," en définitive, c'est toute la réalité qui est invitée à entrer dans les cadres préfixés d'une pensée relationnelle.²⁷

The man/woman, paternity/maternity, filiation, and even to some extent master/slave rapports of Fessard were explained in a manner which, contrary to the rigorous path of philosophy, was systematically metaphorical. Even the dialectic of the pagan-Jew could only subsist by means of a change in the significance of the terms, that is, an equivocation whereby the converted pagan ceases to be pagan in the eyes of Christ, for whom there is neither Greek nor Jew. Fessard's couples are reminiscent of the fundamental human relationships. Psychoanalysis has illumined these relationships for us.

²⁷Ibid., p. 101.

The supernatural schema of the pagan-Jew is added to the series of human rapports. The series does not appear to be explanatory of history. The categories of pagan-Jew tend to become the constitutive elements of all human existence. Doesn't Fessard's method amount to a repetition of schemas which are always identical?²⁸

Cottier asked what Fessard meant by an "ontology of history." Did he mean, as Hegel did, that existence should be historicized? Since he needed the support of the supernatural, would one have an ontology? What is the relationship of the natural, rational, and historic? Cottier agreed that the Thomists must work toward a philosophy of history; he doubted that it will be on the basis of an ontology.

The last of the critical articles on Fessard's work was written by Edmond Ortigues and appeared in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale in 1961.²⁹

Ortigues began his study by showing us that Fessard's two volume work can only be fully understood in the light of Jesuit moral theology. He showed that Fessard was influenced

²⁸Ibid., pp. 101-105.

²⁹Edmond Ortigues, "Reflexions sur la théologie de Gaston Fessard," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, LXVI (1961), 1-2, pp. 312-325.

greatly by a moral view of Revelation, which sees it as redemptive activity. This is opposed to a static conception which views Revelation as information which we have received from God. Ortigues believed that Fessard's Jesuit training was clearly evident in his method of theologizing. In Jesuit theology each moral problem is defined by three elements: 1) a particular situation or case of conscience; 2) the case must exact a judgment and free decision; 3) the decision must follow the principles of theology. The case in point in Fessard's book is the question of the priest-workers and the doctrines which undergirded their cause. The title Fessard gave to his study, Realité historique (sic) (De l'actualité historique), illustrates a reversible liason between action and the language of men, between lived reality and human reflection upon it. Thus, moral theology becomes "réalité historique" or the "sign and the thing," speculative and moral theology become homogeneous. In reintegrating moral theology within the scope of speculative theology Fessard encountered St. Thomas (who had placed it there), but encountered him in such a way as to infuse into it the militant theology which was his own heritage into it. Fessard's inspiration was profoundly Ignatian.³⁰

³⁰Ibid., pp. 312-314.

Fessard's theology was based on the pagan-Jew dialectic which he found in St. Paul. Fessard chose to make it the exemplary foundation of an ethic of the faith rather than of a Christology. Ortigues believed that his whole discussion with the Thomists revolved around this point. Following Hegel's conception of the "communication of idioms," (which is present in the Incarnation and sacred history) Fessard operated from a biblical perspective which is primarily Augustinian and stresses the "opera reparationis" (works of reparation). The Augustinian view accepts the revelation of God as inseparable from the redemption of men. Thomists tend to see the unity of Scripture in the "revelabile" or the "what" of Revelation. For those who stress Revelation as a work of Redemption, it is this redemptive character of divine Revelation which constitutes it as a dialectic.³¹

Ortigues criticized Fessard's use of the dialectic of master and slave, and of man and woman, saying that Fessard left the nature of the conflict in the first obscure, and displayed a confusion rather than a dialectic in the second.

H. Rondet, S. J., reviewed, but did not criticize Fessard's book.³² He stated at the end of his work that

³¹Ibid., pp. 317-318.

³²Henri Rondet, S. J., "De L'actualité historique," Recherches des Sciences Religieuses, XLVIII (1960), 578-587.

theologians who desire to progress in their science and apostolic effectiveness should read and reread Fessard's book. He believed it might mark a turn in the history of theological method.

Two final statements about Fessard's work, each of them taken from brief references to his book made in R.S.P.T. will close this chapter. The first, which appeared in 1962, asked if the dialectic of the pagan-Jew could ever account for the totality of supernatural history, or contain within itself the dialectics destined to account for natural and human growth.

La vraie difficulté paraît être la suivante: la dialectique du Juif incrédule et du Païen converti peut-elle rendre compte à elle seule de la totalité de l'histoire surnaturelle et peut-elle inclure en elle les dialectiques destinées à rendre compte du devenir naturel et du devenir humain?³³

The second reference stated that we still lack a good philosophy of history, and that if Fessard's work remains problematic it is principally for this reason.

Dans le débat toujours ouvert sur la théologie de l'histoire, c'est d'abord une bonne philosophie de l'histoire qui nous fait défaut. Contrairement à ce que certains semblent croire, ce n'est pas en commençant par affirmer qu'une telle philosophie est nécessairement vouée à l'échec qu'on rend la tâche des théologiens plus aisée. Si l'effort d'interprétation de l'histoire du P. Fessard demeure finalement si problématique, malgré tout son intérêt, c'est

³³B. Montagues, "Anthropologie Philosophique: Bulletin de Philosophie," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, XLVI (1962), 720-721.

sans doute parce qu'il omet cette étape préalable d'une intelligibilité philosophique de l'histoire et veut voir dans le couple biblique du païen et du juif la clé de l'histoire universelle.³⁴

Geffré declared that the theology of history is still seeking its object and its method. It is not sufficient to substitute for it the biblical couple of the pagan and the Jew.

³⁴Geffré, "Théologie de l'histoire: Bulletin de Théologie Dogmatique," R.S.P.T., XLVII (1963), 130-131.

CHAPTER IV

Critique of Fessard's Ideas and Those of His Critics

The question which underlies all of Fessard's studies is the meaning of history and the guidance of men's free choices in shaping history. He saw clearly the distinction between a purely natural history or evolution, and a peculiarly human, that is, rational and free, creation of the course of events. It was his contention that truly human history is not possible unless it has a meaning which transcends the visibility of natural life, and the intellectual and psychic possibilities of human life (see supra., p.6). He believed that man is not man because of his relation to the visible world and his peers, that it is intrinsic to the human reality to have a destiny which is beyond the human. The question is not whether a purely human nature could exist; it is whether in this present world it does exist. Fessard's answer was no. This was because he saw man as truly himself only when in relation to the Father through Christ (supra., pp. 8-9). Conversely, the world is not meaningful except in so far as it was created as an external expression of the Father's creative love, that is, of His Word. This was a position held in faith, and was never intended by Fessard to be a philosophical or historical

assumption (supra., p.59). There was ample political and existential evidence to support his thesis that the human, which is not in creative relation to the transcendent, will regress to a level lower than human; but Fessard's belief in the transcendent meaning of life and his conviction that this meaning is in terms of Christ were founded in his Christian faith. He was in search of a theology of history. This theology he conceived of as an analysis of the structures of human historical being, and the discovery of the dialectic in virtue of which this being might engender a supernatural life.¹ The desire to work toward the creation of such a theology raised, for him, the questions of the possibility of human historical being and of the use of the dialectical method. These are philosophical questions, and Fessard contended from the beginning that there can be no adequate theology of history until its philosophical underpinnings have been constructed (supra., p. 14). However, his conception of a category of historical being, and his supposed acceptance of the Hegelian dialectical method, met vehement opposition -- especially from Thomists.

Fessard stated that human reality is being increasingly conceived of as essentially historical despite the existential

¹Fessard, De l'actualité historique, p. 112.

and phenomenological emphasis on immediate and individual experience. This human, historical reality is viewed more and more as an ontology. In Fessard's thought, there exists for modern man a category of historical being which deserves to be recognized by philosophers and theologians in addition to the traditional Thomistic categories of natural and rational being (supra., p. 28). It was not his intention to separate historical being from the categories of natural and rational being; he saw it as participating in them, and as necessary for them to be totally understood. It is for philosophers and theologians to determine the exact rapport among these categories. (supra., p. 28). Fessard believed there is also need for a fourth category, supernatural history, in order that human historical reality might have ultimate inward coherence and meaning. In speaking of this fourth category he left the realm of philosophy for that of theology. The Thomists, especially Jolif, Cottier and Nicholas, were quick to pick him up on this (supra., Chap. 3). They argued in the following manner: The category of historical being relativizes the categories of the natural and rational being. What is effected is an exterior juxtaposition of categories. Fessard's "etre naturel"-historical being -- is not the same concept as Thomas' "ens naturae," or being of nature. The natural-rational opposition of Fessard is the result of

question. Thomas and Aristotle were not unaffected by their own times, nor totally uninterested in the idea of history. This can be seen from their interest in time and in political and social issues. It remains true, however, that a keen interest in the dynamic development and the evolutive progress of the natural world and the human race, are more peculiar to the 19th and 20th centuries than to any others. This is largely due to the influence of science and technological development on the world of thought. The present age is most conscious of the total growth process.

Here it is worth noting that not only philosophical thought, but also the views of the common man, are thoroughly historically conditioned today. This is the way modern man thinks of himself and his world.

History as a Dialectical Process

The second major criticism leveled at Fessard was his use of the concept of a dialectic of history. He was accused of Hegelian relativism and rationalist idealism. The particular dialectic which he stressed, that of the pagan and the Jew, was cited as a theological solution to a philosophical problem (supra., p.77 et seq.). This last accusation bears careful consideration in that it is partially true. Fessard did not intend to construct a philosophy of history; he lamented its absence. He did, however, without creating such a needed philosophy, proceed to a theological explanation of history which presupposed it.

Was he adopting a Hegelian dialectic? He said no. Perhaps that is too simple an answer. The Hegelian dialectic of Absolute Spirit's realizing itself through the process of historical development is criticized by Christian philosophers because the Hegelian absolute is not God. It is the Spirit behind a purely rational and ultimately predictable process of becoming. To this extent, Fessard was not Hegelian. His Absolute -- from the beginning -- was a theological absolute, God. (supra., p.59 and p.65). Even in philosophical terms, the Transcendent accepted by Fessard was totally free and beyond the scope or control of the human rational process. Because of this, Fessard cannot be accused of Hegelian

idealism.

The question of relativism might admit of a different conclusion. Did Fessard, even unwittingly, accept the relativism usually associated with idealism? To see reality as historically conditioned, and to accept the possibility of a category of historical being would seem to necessitate the acceptance of a certain relativity with respect to reality. To conceive of the historical process in terms of a dialectic of man with the Transcendent, for Fessard God, almost demands "relatedness" between free "beings". This implies a kind of relativity. Does the relativity or change implied in a dialogic relationship mean imperfection in either party in the dialogue? Would this relativity destroy the concept of Absolute and deny the existence of God? It is conceivable that dialogue, the dialectical process, of man with the Transcendent could mean change in both parties to the dialogue without implying previous imperfection in the Transcendent.

At this point, it would be well to realize, that while the total Hegelian philosophy is questionable, most modern thinkers have studied Hegel with enough sophistication to view his thought as at least partly valid. The rationalism inherent in Hegel's work has been discarded by many, while the fact that history is affected by a certain relativity is rather generally accepted. The term

"relativity" no longer carries, for most thinkers, the negative connotations which it once had, and it is no longer viewed as inextricably intertwined with rationalist idealism.

A Study of the Dialectic of the Pagan and the Jew

The final section of this critical chapter will discuss Fessard's exegesis of St. Paul, then, respectively, his view of pagans and Jews as existential or moral categories, his opinion that the pagan-Jew dialectic is a synthesis between natural and supernatural history, and his assertion that it is a means by which to evaluate present ideologies and decisions.

Fessard's Exegesis

Fessard based his opinion that the conversion of the Jews would take place at the end of time on the 11th chapter of Romans, particularly verses 12-15. He believed their conversion must be a parousial event if his dialectic of the pagan and the Jew was to be valid. The following translation of them is taken from the Jerusalem Bible:

Think of the extent to which the world, the pagan world, has benefited from their fall and defection -- then think how much more it will benefit from the conversion of them all. Let me tell you pagans this: I have been sent to the pagans as their apostle, and I am proud of being sent, but the purpose of it is to make my own people envious of you, and in this way save some of them. Since their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, do you know what their admission will mean? Nothing less than a resurrection from the dead.

Fessard cited other chapters in Romans in support of his opinions, especially chapter nine. He felt that chapters

two and three of Ephesians evidenced a fundamental antagonism between Jews and pagans, and called the polarity between the two groups "the mystery" which Paul exposed. (See supra., p. 46.)

Fessard's critics -- Jolif, Journet, and Cottier -- responded that his interpretation of St. Paul was a possible one, but could not be more than opinion. Their reaction was valid. Fessard's reasons for insisting that the conversion of the Jews will be a Parousial event appear to be founded more on his conviction that pagans and Jews are seen as moral categories by St. Paul, than on accepted scholarly exegesis of the Pauline texts.

The Jerusalem Bible, published in English in 1966, interprets the "ressurrection from the dead" spoken of in Rom. 11:15 in the following way:

This sentence has been variously interpreted. The meaning seems to be that if a comparison may be drawn between the conversion of the pagans and 'the reconciliation of the world' (the first stage in the redemptive plan), the conversion of Israel will be such a favor from God that it could be compared only with the final resurrection (the second stage). If this is true, Paul is thinking of the general resurrection at the end of time; but he does not say that this is to take place immediately after Israel's conversion. On the other hand some translate 'life from those who were dead'.²

²The Jerusalem Bible (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 285.

Pagans and Jews as Existential Categories

There is no doubt that Fessard viewed Jews and pagans as moral categories, (see supra, p. 37). In 1947, he wrote that the historical people with whom St. Paul worked became existential, historical categories even for him. He accused the Thomists of sacrificing St. Paul's belief by their new exegesis, which placed the conversion of the Jews within time, rather than at the end of time.

In 1960, Fessard asserted that the New Testament, Christ, and the Church, could not be the fulfillment of the Old Testament if the antithetical roles of Jews and pagans were not central (supra, p.46). He cited Benoit's exegesis of Ephesians and Benoit's conviction that Jews and pagans were commonly understood in the Bible to be the two categorical groups which constitute humanity. Fessard went further and called them truly historical categories in the Kantian sense of a priori forms of discursive consciousness (supra, p. 47).

Fessard's use of Benoit was not a strong support for his position, because Benoit's article appeared in 1937. In 1960 it was outdated. His conclusion that Benoit's term "categories" had the same meaning as his own remains conjecture.

Similarly, when Fessard saw Peter and Paul as symbolic representations of the pagan-Jew dialectic, (supra, p.50), he was drawing a conclusion which is possibly true, but not necessarily the intended meaning of the scriptural writers.

On the other hand, while Fessard's exegesis of Paul cannot be conclusively defended on the grounds of scientific study, it is unlikely that he was totally wrong when he stated that, for Paul, the two peoples became paradigm symbols of humanity.

Fessard may be defended also for citing the two peoples as symbolic of a struggle which takes place within each individual (supra, p. 38). He foundered, however, when he concluded that the "unbelieving Jews" were "rejected" by God. This opinion could not be substantiated today. Vatican Council II, and the theology it inaugurated, are explicit in negating such a position.

To Journet's credit, in 1960, he reacted in a manner which was realistic and theologically avant garde. Journet insisted somewhat heatedly that the Jews were to be viewed as a real people and not merely as a moral category (supra, p. 84). At the same time he refused to allow that God would ever repent of His promise and gifts to the Jewish people.

Vatican II's Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions has this to say.

As holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews in large number accept the gospel; indeed, not a few opposed the spreading of it. Nevertheless, according to the Apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for He does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues. In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him with one accord."³

The American Catholic bishops, through their Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, called for:

An acknowledgment by Catholic scholars of the living and complex reality of Judaism after Christ and the permanent election of Israel, alluded to by St. Paul (Rom. 9:29), and incorporation of the results in Catholic teaching.⁴

Cardinal Bea, in *The Church and the Jewish People*, states:

Can it, perhaps, be because their persistent incredulity has led God finally to reject them? St. Paul categorically denies any such conclusion: in spite of everything, in spite of the majority's lack of faith, God has not rejected his people...⁵

³Walter M. Abbot, S. J., ed., The Documents of Vatican II: Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (New York: Guild Press, 1966), pp. 664-665.

⁴Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations. (New Jersey: Seton Hall University, n.d.), p. 8.

⁵Augustin Cardinal Bea, S. J., The Church and the Jewish People (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 93.

Finally, Gregory Baum, writing on "The Doctrinal Basis for Jewish-Christian Dialogue declared:

The destiny of Judaism is not to disappear and give way to Christianity; Judaism continues to exercise a positive role in God's plan of salvation. This saving presence of God in Jewish religion is the source of its extraordinary vitality and its resilience against all adversaries.⁶

⁶Gregory Baum, "The Doctrinal Basis for Jewish-Christian Dialogue," The Ecumenist, VI (May-June, 1968), p. 151.

The Pagan-Jew Dialectic as a Synthesis Between the Natural
and the Supernatural Orders

Fessard spoke of the synthetic character of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew in his study of Féret's book on the conflict between Sts. Peter and Paul over the Law. He saw Sts. Peter and Paul, their disagreement over the "Judaizers," and their final compromise, as an example of his dialectic. He viewed their final agreement as exemplary of the synthetic character of the dialectic, implying that the dialectic worked a synthesis between the individual positions of the two men. He also inferred that their personal concordance was a part of the total historical dialogue, an example of a synthesis on a historical as well as a supernatural level (supra, p. 52).

Two key texts, written in 1960, are explicit about the role of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew as mediator between sacred and profane history (supra, p. 60). In them Fessard defends his use of the natural couples of master and slave, man and woman. He asserts that these natural couples are fulfilled and elevated by the supernatural dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. The latter dialectic is mediator; it unites sacred and profane history; it is the synthesis between the natural, human couples and the transcendent.

In the introduction to De l'actualité historique (1960) Fessard described the Christian as the third term or synthesis

of the pagan-Jew dialectic (supra, p. 70). Apparently, for Fessard, the Christian is also a moral category, because he is seen to be the unity of man with God, of man with man, and of man with nature. In this sense, the Christian becomes the synthesis of the pagan and Jewish positions. He also embodies a synthesis of the natural and supernatural orders.

It seems reasonable to suppose that Fessard would not have insisted that the individual Christian is, in fact, what his vocation might ideally make him. The question of the complementary vocations of Christians, as well as the "anonymous Christianity" of pagan unbelievers arises at this point. Can such a clear distinction between the vocations of pagans, Jews, and Christians be drawn today, even on a purely speculative or exemplary plane?

When considering modern philosophies of history, Fessard saw his pagan-Jewish dialectic as a synthesis and corrective of the thought of Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Marx. (supra, p. 71). His analysis appears to oversimplify the divergence between the three systems of thought, reducing their differences to their incorporation, or lack of acceptance of the supernatural.

In 1960, Fessard insisted that there should be no difficulty in distinguishing the natural from the supernatural in his thought. He never intended a purely natural dialectic;

his dialectic of the pagan and the Jew was central to a theology of history (supra, p. 49). He repeatedly defended the supernatural character of the pagan-Jew dialectic. For him, transcendent divine liberty makes it possible for human liberty to transcend itself (supra, p. 49).

Fessard's critics objected to his belief that the pagan-Jew couple offers a synthesis between natural and supernatural history, on the grounds that he was confounding the natural and supernatural orders. They accused him of offering a theological solution, one directly from Revelation, to questions which were essentially philosophical. Jolif accused him of Hegelianism (supra, p. 75). Nicholas saw an inevitable confusion of the natural and supernatural orders, and Cottier saw his use of the dialectic as a rejection of philosophy (supra, p. 85). Geffré declared, in 1963, that if Fessard's work remains problematic, it is principally because we still lack a good philosophy of history (supra, p. 92).

It is true that Fessard lacks the foundation of a good philosophy of history from which to theologize. The result is a theology which appears artificial and oversimplified. However, it is also true that Fessard was struggling to come to grips with the need for a good philosophy of history,

one which would incorporate the valid insights of modern thought, especially that of Hegel. Here he asked for help, but met with more criticism than creative cooperation.

The Dialectic of the Pagan and the Jew as a Means of Evaluating
Present Situations

Fessard believed that his dialectic of the pagan and the Jew before Christ provided a means of evaluating present ideologies, and of illumining situations of choice. He applied it to the study of Nazism and Communism. Writing in 1960, he asserted that the essence of an ideology can be known from the way it relates to Christianity and/or Judaism (supra, p. 41). He stated that Communistic atheism is a perversion and inversion of Judaism (supra, p. 43).

On this final point, Fessard's critics objected that his use of the dialectic of the pagan and the Jew to evaluate present societal situations was excessive and artificial. Jolif and Nicholas both made this observation (supra, pp. 78 & 80). Cottier observed that Fessard's introduction of the lesser dialectics of the master and slave, man and woman was based more on psychology than on philosophy (supra, p. 88).

These criticisms seem justified even though it is true that individuals and the nations directed by individuals, must choose either a self agrandizing (idolatrous) or an honest stance before reality.

Let us summarize in order to conclude the present

study of Fessard's dialectic of the pagan and the Jew. His exegesis of the Pauline texts is questionable. His view of pagans and Jews as moral categories was not intended to be rigorously applied to individual Christians, Jews, or unbelievers. However, it is artificial, and anti-Semitic in tone if not in intention. In the light of modern ecumenical thought, it minimizes the dignity and importance of the continuing vocation of the Jewish people.

Fessard's use of the pagan-Jew dialectic as a synthesis between the natural and supernatural orders fails, primarily because he lacks the foundation of an adequate philosophy of history upon which to build his theology. Again, the dialectic is artificial when applied to the whole historical-supernatural process. The same is valid when the dialectic is used as a means of evaluating present historical events.

Fessard's major contributions are his attempt to incorporate in his philosophy and theology the valid insights of the modern philosophies of history, and his efforts toward the creation of a theology of history.

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