

Mass Tues. 6:25  
St. Edward's Hall  
for G. Behrens.  
Request of Calumet Club.

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
November 12, 1934.

-----  
Religious Freedom--V.

It is some time since Stuart Chase remarked that the park benches must be made increasingly longer. The world presents the sad spectacle of men who economically are so free that they have not a thing in God's world to tie to.

The world presents the still more distressing spectacle of men who academically have not a thing to tie to. Skepticism (or complete ignorance) has cut them loose from the moorings of philosophy and religion. They are on their way, but they do not know where they are going. They haven't their bearings. There is no scale of values. The sophisticated shrug their shoulders and superciliously spout: "It's all a point of view." The ignorant drift. Both are burning up the gas, but neither has a road map. They have achieved emancipation and freedom, but it is the freedom of the rudderless ship!

Liberty that is worth anything is not negative--not mere freedom from restraint--but positive--the unhindered privilege of pursuing a valuable end. There is such a thing as bad freedom, like the freedom to employ men at any price or to contract labor for any number of hours. Such freedom is ruinous, not the controlled freedom of true liberty.

Paderewski, better knowable to the English-reading world because of the late Charles Philips of Notre Dame, was free to regale the world because he obeyed superlatively the laws of his art. Freedom was for him larger liberty because of restraint.

The world depression is a devastating refutation of that unrestrained freedom which sets every one for himself and the devil for the hindermost.

In the case of academic freedom it is not otherwise. Speculation is restrained by certainties. Paradoxical as it may seem, academic freedom is in inverse ratio to knowledge. The more ignorant we are, the freer we are. When we are totally ignorant, then one man's guess is as good as another's. Then go ahead and shrug the shoulders and remark: "It's all a point of view."

But where man can know or does know, do not claim for him the freedom of doubt and skepticism or the worthless liberty to err. Such freedom is bad, ruinous, just like the freedom to make any kind of wage contract at any price and for any hours, just like the freedom which is the opposite of the liberty of Paderewski, the freedom of the ham-actor who is greeted with guffaws and cabbages.

A man is not free to claim that George Washington was born in 1723, or that effects do not require adequate causes; and he is not using his head if, in the name of the grand old blind alley of doubt, he refuses assent to the propositions that George Washington was born in 1732 and that effects do demand adequate causes.

The Supreme Court gives a practical finality to the Constitution and to the Congress. Without it the set-up would be a perpetual debating society, rife with disrupting discord and contention. Christ, after teaching His doctrines, provided practical finality for them by establishing His Church to interpret those doctrines authentically. Had Christ not done so He would have created the set-up of a debating society. It would not be practical.

To fail to investigate the grounds of a world-wide, perennial fact like the Catholic Church, or to fail to obey the Church, is to exercise a bad freedom. Within the precincts of the certainties of God freedom to err is worse than worthless.

PRAYERS: Deceased, Arthur Warrior ex'32; grandmother of Charles Hogan (St. Edward's). Ill, Most Reverend Alphonse J. Smith (Bishop of Nashville) and his sisters, injured in an accident; father of Frank Egan (Lyons); Harry Kenecht, friend of Bob Doyle (Dillon); friend of John Clark. One special intention.