



Liberty in Anne Sophie Swetchine (1782-1857)

John J. Conley
Loyola University Maryland

According to Mme Swetchine, liberty is the key good in political society. In her theological perspective, God judges the nations on the moral quality of their exercise of liberty. Liberty alone, however, is unstable; it needs to be allied to other virtues, especially justice: "Liberty has its true rights only when it is grafted onto justice; its proper role is to safeguard justice" (1875: 137). The mature use of liberty only emerges through a careful program of moral formation. The premature exercise of liberty leads to personal and social chaos: "When they arrive at the use of liberty without preparation, human beings engage in exaggerated behavior at liberty's debut. Strong people act with fury while weak people act as cowards" (1875: 141). From a theological perspective, liberty should be conjoined to submission to God's will, set forth in the sources of Christian revelation.

Primary Sources:

Swetchine, Anne Sophie 1875. Pensées, in *Madame Swetchine: sa vie et ses œuvres*, Falloux, Alfred de (ed), 2 vols. Paris: Didier et Cie, II: 75-102. [A digital version of the text is available at the *Projet Gallica* page of the website of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.]

Swetchine, Anne Sophie 1868. *The Writings of Madame Swetchine*; Preston, Harriet W. (trans). Boston: Roberts.

Secondary Sources:

Drozdek, Adam 2011. Madame Swetchine and her Faith, in *Roczniki Historii Kościola*, 3 (58), 39-57.

Martinoir, Francine de 2011. *Madame Swetchine ou Le ciel d'ici*. Paris: Cerf.

Keywords:

justice, liberty, morality, politics