



Liberty in Anne Sophie Swetchine (1782–1857)

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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:

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