

## Editorial

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Concerned about societal problems, Christian moralists have come to elaborate a theory of society, a theory that supposed that society should be founded not on its own right, but on freedom, thus having in view the issue of religious freedom, property issues and the problem of slavery, issues that have preoccupied the minds of Christian thinkers. Concerned about freedom, which, according to their thinking, should form the foundation of society, Christian moralists first supported the principle of religious freedom or conscience for all people. Athenagoras states, referring to Christians, that “we only ask our own right, we ask not to be hated and persecuted because we are Christians” (Fouillee 2000, 198, note 29). Lactant said that religion is the only thing where freedom has found its place. This, being above all, voluntary, no one should ever be obliged to adore what he dislikes or what does not correspond to his desires” (Fouillée 2000, 198, note 30).

Tertullian, in his turn, talking about man’s freedom of thought, freedom of conscience or religion, said that by forbidding man to choose his divinity, by not allowing him to adore and glorify who he wants, being compelled to bring glory to a divinity he desires, precisely by the fact that his right to freedom of religion is taken away, is why unbelief is favored. He said that no one should be constrained in matters of consciousness (Fouillée 2000, 198, note 31).

After passing through the harsh times of persecution in the first centuries, the Christian Church, through its prominent representatives, spoke in favor of freedom, of individual freedom, but especially freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and expression. Thus St. Augustine said: “My most important opinion is that no one can be forcefully forced into the unity of Christ, that it must be acted upon only by word, that unbelief must be countered only through discussion, that we must overcome only with the help of reason” (Fouillée 2000, 199, note 32).

Doctors of Christianity of the first centuries, although they have religiously highlighted the injustices of certain social institutions, nevertheless have not considered that these injustices should be yet eradicated from this Earth. They set up their ideal of the citadel in the Divine Fortress or the Celestial Citadel, or as St. Augustine called it, *De civitate Dei*, but with all the ideal, the Earth should be the place where justice can be right, thus Earth also becoming the City of Law (Fouillée 2000, 200).

\*Fouillée, Alfred. 2000. *Istoria filosofiei (History of philosophy)*. Vol.I. Bucharest: Odeon Publishing House.