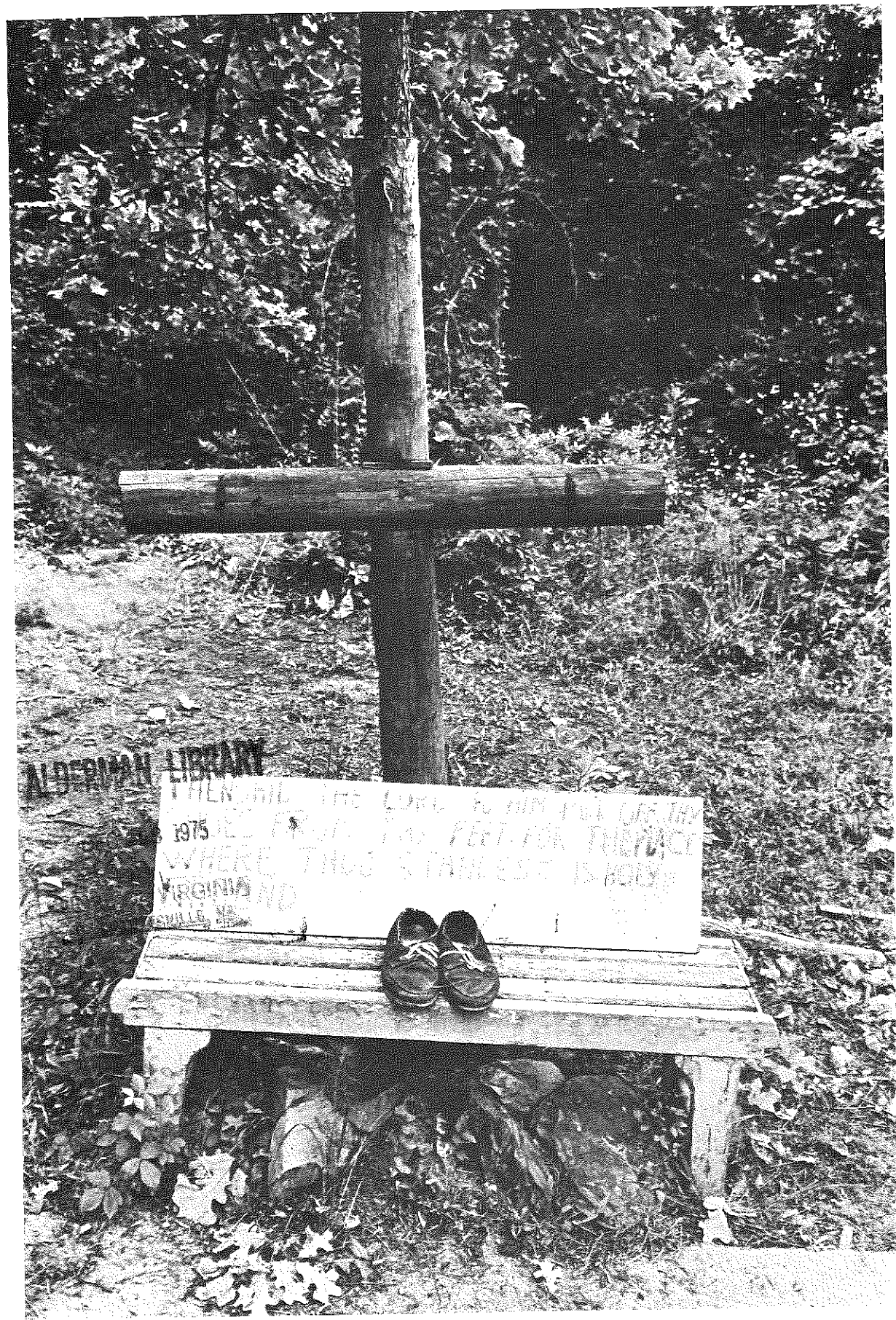


K37

KATALLAGETE

BE RECONCILED



Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen

FALL 1975

5/4

KATALLAGETE BE RECONCILED

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The disciples had gone away to the town to buy food. Meanwhile a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' The Samaritan woman said, 'What! You, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?' (Jews and Samaritans, it should be noted, do not use vessels in common.) Jesus answered her, 'If only you knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have no bucket and this well is deep. How can you give me "living water"?' Are you a greater man than Jacob our ancestor, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, he and his sons, and his cattle too?' Jesus said, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never suffer thirst any more. The water that I shall give him will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me that water, and then I shall not be thirsty, nor have to come all this way to draw.'

Jesus replied, 'Go home, call your husband and come back.' She answered, 'I have no husband.' 'You are right,' said

Jesus, 'in saying that you have no husband, for, although you have had five husbands, the man with whom you are now living is not your husband; you told me the truth there.' 'Sir,' she replied, 'I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the temple where God should be worshipped is in Jerusalem.' 'Believe me,' said Jesus, 'the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship without knowing what you worship, while we worship what we know. It is from the Jews that salvation comes. But the time approaches, indeed it is already here, when those who are real worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Such are the worshippers whom the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.' The woman answered, 'I know that Messiah' (that is Christ) 'is coming. When he comes he will tell us everything.' Jesus said, 'I am he, I who am speaking to you now.'

At that moment his disciples returned, and were astonished to find him talking with a woman; but none of them said, 'What do you want?' or 'Why are you

talking with her?' The woman put down her water-jar and went away to the town, where she said to the people, 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' They came out of the town and made their way towards him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, have something to eat.' But he said, 'I have food to eat of which you know nothing.' At this the disciples said to one another, 'Can someone have brought him food?' But Jesus said, 'It is meat and drink for me to do the will of him who sent me until I have finished his work.'

'Do you not say, "Four months more and then comes harvest"?' But look, I tell you, look round on the fields; they are already white, ripe for harvest. The reaper is drawing his pay and gathering a crop for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. That is how the saying comes true: "One sows, and another reaps." I sent you to reap a crop for which you have not toiled. Others toiled and you have come in for the harvest of their toil.'

(John 4: 7-38)

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

Worship as the gift of God. . . Why was Stephen lynched?

(The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter Seven) . . .

This issue of *Katallagete* was not planned around a given subject.

The articles, however, seem to speak to each other. So perhaps there is a theme. Or themes. Perhaps our writers and readers find subjects in common when they think together about the human condition today. Noted here are one or two subjects touched on by our contributors, with the usual hope that reader will place himself in dialogue with writer.

One is the trend an American psychiatrist recently described as "the politicization of feeling." Another is the lure of contemporary religions. The two are related. Using different prisms, Jacques Ellul and Christopher Lasch describe consequences of this situation. Other consequences are drawn by other writers for this issue of *Katallagete*. To mention one: worship. The Reverend Buell Kazee describes contemporary Protestantism as accurately as anyone who has spoken on the subject in many years. In truth, a great deal of what passes for "worship" in Christianity today — reformed, traditional, or liberal — is not worship in the Biblical summons, but "religious service": grotesque charades, promising to fix everything, using varied and multiplying styles of "religious service." They obscure the reality of worship of the One, True, Almighty God revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Ned O'Gorman and Matthew Kelty relate their experiences with broken lives to the worship of the Christian; Will Campbell has written a homily on worship in the face of the death of a young and loved kinsman.

Perhaps this issue of *Katallagete* is an account of the inner workings of politicization and idolatry, and God's grace as the call to worship.

Yes. To speak about worship today is often little more than a recital of burned-out arguments: the pros and the cons about attendance at scheduled services of organized congregations. Yes. If words about worship are no more than that, then they are no more than that. Nothing more should be said in excuse of the excuses, or to rationalize the rationalizations. Grant all that.

But may there not be more to worship than that? The Scriptures seem disinterested in the question which seems so important to us — barring one exception: whenever schedule, organization, or real estate become idol to the worshippers. There is Amos at Bethel; Jeremiah at the Temple at Jerusalem; John the Baptist, preaching; Jesus, Upstairs; Stephen, lynched; Paul and Silas in jail. The community in Christ. His Body. His Church: surely, worship takes place there. Nowhere else. And that worship "takes place" in God's gift, not in our organization and on our schedule and real estate. Whatever else is "religious service" — even granting these may have a function, somewhere, sometime, in the congregation of the elect. But we identify at our peril worship of the One True Almighty God with schedule, organization, property, or even with the *forms* of worship.

So if there is little worship today of the One True Almighty God, it is time for the implications to sink in. If there is no longer

joy and thanksgiving raising voice and spirit from the congregations of the elect, maybe there is no longer that Body with and within us by His gift, uplifting voice and spirit in joy and thanksgiving.

Worship is the grace from God in Jesus that gives the power of our response to His call to worship *Him, alone*. That is all "liberation" theology should be about: only when worship is God's grace are we "liberated" to be with the neighbor as Christ is with us. All the rest is "religious service". Worship of the One True Almighty God is not a circumstance of our schedules, locations, or geographies. The Body of Christ is the gift of God which has no boundaries by time and space. The Body of Christ frees those who worship in that Body to be with the other as Christ with them. Worship in the Body of Christ is God's call, not our schedules. Though it may coincide with our geography and plans (and it would be foolish to deny that it *may*) . . . *it may not!* Otherwise, the communion of saints is a deception.

Maybe this is all that needs to be said, now. That is, not on principle eliminate, reject, deride, or ignore the steeples and their schedules. Rather, *consider well!* that we may now be in a time when our refusal to keep open the call to worship as the gift from God freed of our times and spaces, geographies and

centuries, is to reject the call of grace and deny worship of the One True Almighty God. And so, reject and prostitute the neighbor. No worship, no neighbor; only idolatry and prostitution and . . . "religious service": idolatry masquerading as worship.

Said another way: why was Stephen lynched? The call to worship is not God's grace sanctifying land, bricks, and calendars.

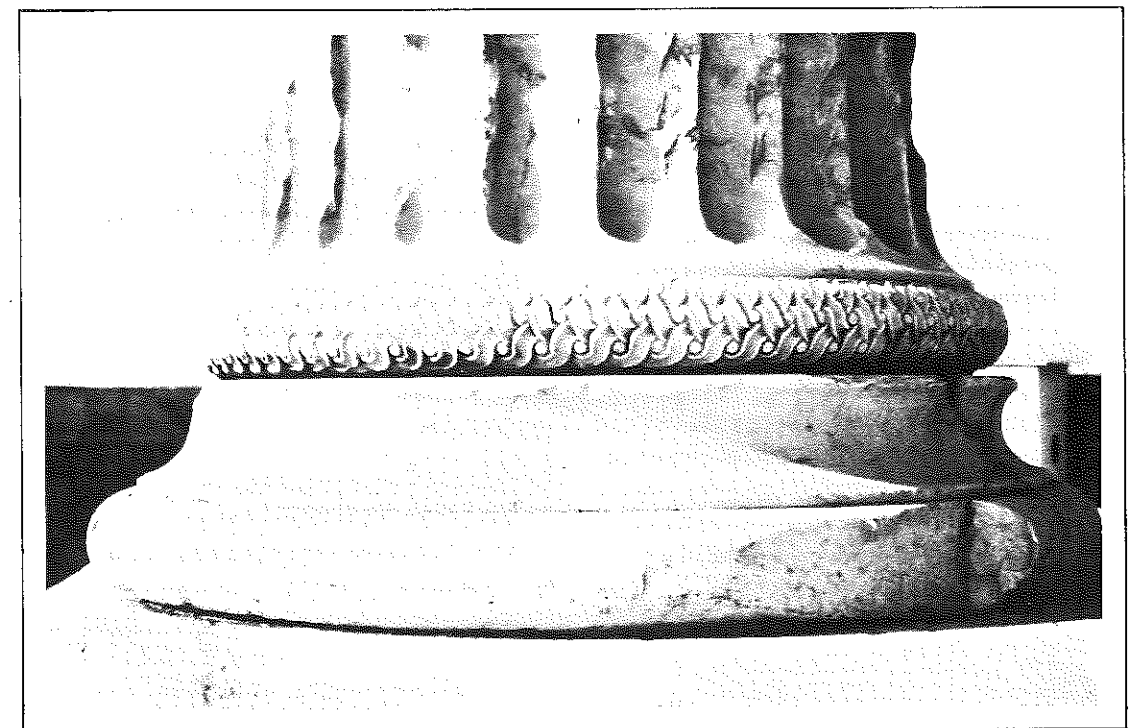
Agreed: no one called to worship the One True God is licensed to forget or ignore the calendar or the real estate or the forms; those called by God's grace are not liberated to worship as or if they choose. A reading of the Gospels dismisses such frivolity, as well as the arrogance of reducing to "religious service," geography and time, the worship of the One True Almighty God.

Worship of the One True Almighty God is neither frivolous nor arrogant. It is the response of the elect through His gift of grace. The center is God who gives Himself to us in Jesus and *thereby* we worship Him in truth and love, for the truth and love are His gift to us.

His joy is our joy: the burdens on us are lifted at the Cross. His thanksgiving is ours: His resurrection frees us to be perfect with the neighbor as Jesus is perfect with the neighbor and with us.

Worship. Joy. Thanksgiving.

JYH



LOYAL JONES AND BUELL KAZEE

LOYAL JONES: One of life's pleasures is an unexpected discovery of something extraordinary.

This exchange with the Reverend Buell Kazee is one such experience.

In March of this year I interviewed the Reverend Kazee on his secondary career as a traditional musician. Kazee is known in folk music circles throughout this country and the world as one of the finest singers of ballads and as one who possesses a unique style of playing the banjo. A native of Magoffin county, in Kentucky's Cumberland mountains, he had grown up playing and singing the traditional music of his area. In 1927 he was "discovered" by a talent scout and cut fifty-six record sides for Brunswick Records. [Forty years later, an album produced by Folkways received wide acclaim and circulation: "Buell Kazee Plays and Sings" (FS 3810).]

However, a call stronger than music had long before taken hold of him. Kazee had begun preaching at the age of seventeen and by the time he was graduated from Georgetown College, Kentucky, he knew that the ministry was to be his life. When the recording company asked him in 1929 to "hit the road" to promote his records, he turned them down. "I was a preacher, not a recording star," he explained. "I knew that the music world was a pretty shallow world."

He was too good a musician to abandon his interest altogether, so he sang and played the banjo on rare occasions but never in association with his ministry or in "religious" sorts of outings. For fifty-seven years he served churches, mostly in Kentucky, preached at revivals, and occasionally sang for other revival preachers. He always kept his musical talents separate from his ministry.

My intention during the interviews was to get around to the Reverend Kazee's preaching career and his religious convictions in order to fill out the sketch of his life. I had looked forward to this, because through the years I have found that those who love and perform traditional music also respect certain traditional beliefs and values, and are not readily influenced by current trends or fads. I knew that Kazee was secure and articulate in his convictions.

Loyal Jones is Director of the Appalachian Center, Berea College, Kentucky. For many years he was Director of the Council of the Southern Mountains. The Reverend Buell Kazee is a Baptist minister who lives in Winchester, Kentucky.

But this portion of our exchanges excited and pleased me beyond expectations. It was the clearest and most confident statement of Christian belief I had ever heard. It was all the more important because it had been shaped, not by a seminary, but in solitude, with the Bible, a few good books, and a lot of prayer and thought. It made clear a quality of faith that I had observed elsewhere among the traditionally oriented people of the Appalachians, a faith which transcends time and fashion.

Knowing his uneasiness that the renewal of "folk music" could slip into yet another contemporary "cult," I was doubly pleased when the editor of *Katallagete* became as interested as I with the direction of the interview and Kazee's steadfast refusal to invoke his manifest artistic talents as an authority for his articulation of Christian beliefs.

This portion of the interview begins where the Reverend Kazee talks about his decision to turn down a job with a Chicago radio station and continue his Christian ministry.

KAZEE: But I never gave it a second thought, once I realized I was going to preach all my life.

JONES: Where was your first pastorate after Oklahoma?

KAZEE: Of course, in college I had been a pastor of some of the churches just on Sundays, you know. The first full-time one was Morehead, Kentucky. I was there 22 years. I gave a musical program nearly every year at the college there at Morehead, and probably had more success there than anybody else, they just ate it up.

JONES: Did you continue singing and performing through all those years?

KAZEE: Yes. I did, but not in big concerts.

JONES: Did you have any problem with your church, your parishoners?

KAZEE: No, not at all. They liked the music, too. But I never mixed it with the church.

JONES: You never played and sang in church? Did you ever do any solo work in church?

KAZEE: Oh yes, I did evangelistic singing with a lot of big preachers all over the country. I'd hold a meeting - if I didn't have a preaching meeting somewhere I'd take a singing meeting somewhere. I worked with the great preachers of the times gone

by. I sang with them. They'd call - just like they do now - for somebody to lead the singing and somebody to do the preaching.

JONES: Did you do a lot of revival work around the country? Were you considered to be a good revival preacher?

KAZEE: Well, I guess I would have to say, yes. I'm more of a man to strengthen the spiritual life of a church than I am an evangelist, although I could do evangelistic work. Evangelism is a broad term. It can mean anything. I'm pretty serious about . . . I take the position that we're in the day of the "light stuff": I don't think the *depth* of spiritual life in churches today is very noticeable. I could have played a banjo in church - oh, I think a time or two I may have accompanied hymns with it in a country church, but I would not put myself in a position of mixing banjo-playing with evangelism, or with church work. Of course, that's what's happening right now. There's Johnny Cash on Billy Graham's program the other night, just whooping it up, you know, and telling all about what "the Lord meant to him" and playing in Las Vegas in the last six months. I just don't see how you can mix it . . . like that.

JONES: I didn't know Cash played out there. That is interesting.

KAZEE: Oh, yes. You see, here's what we're up against now. I'll give you an example. The "Crusade" has taken people away from the church, away from the interest in the church life.

JONES: You mean Billy Graham's Crusade?

KAZEE: Not just his. Everybody's. I could name a half-a-dozen of them. What they want is to move the center of religion from the local church to the Crusade leaders out yonder. Oral Roberts, for instance, is building big things, and this fellow up there in Ohio, in Akron, Rex Humbard, and lots of others. Morris Cerullo and others of them. They want your money, too. They're drawing the money from the churches, the church members, to those "big" things.

There isn't a man or a woman who can appear on Billy Graham's program who hasn't been a great "success" in the world. That is to say, his success in the world *qualifies* him to appear on the crusade program. He has to be a headliner in the world.

I'll give you an example. In Lexington they had a Crusade, the Bill Glass Crusade, a year or two ago. Well, everybody on that Crusade was a star athlete or a star of something else. I don't mean that all this was "sinful," in the sense of immoral or anything like that, but that sort of thing is just not of the Lord . . . This whole worldly thing is going to pass away . . .

Now, one's an athlete. Another's a beauty queen or something else - maybe the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans type. They have to be something pretty spectacular in the world before they're qualified to appear at a Crusade. They had a fellow who was the world's champion yo-yo artist on this program in

Lexington. Now, he came not because of his great Christian life - he was a Christian, maybe - the point is, he was *there because he was a champion yo-yo artist*.

Now I've preached 57 years, and my witness, beside his, wouldn't be worth two cents, *because I can't yo-yo!* You see the difference? You see what I'm driving at? You've got to be a "world figure" and be prominent *with the world* before you can be used in these great Crusades as a witness for Christ. And this is, as I see it, pure sham, because most of the people who are dedicated to Christ in the real sense wouldn't have any time for any of that other stuff.

JONES: What do you think about the individual churches? What do you see as the main problem in church life?

KAZEE: Well, in the first place, you see, success in the churches today is determined by the numbers you can have to follow you and the money you can raise. That's success! For instance, among Baptist programs - the Cooperative Program is a success because they have got the money, and it's growing. If the Cooperative Program were a failure, they'd have to find something else. Or, the fellow who's pastor of a big church, he's got a big following and he's a success.

Now the Bible has exactly the opposite of that sort of thing. And we sing that little song to the children, "Dare to be a Daniel," you know that one? Then, we *dare* anybody to be one . . . See what I mean? . . . If you *were* a Daniel, you'd have to *stand by yourself!* You'd be in the minority, not the majority!

JONES: What do you see as the community church's main function in today's society?

KAZEE: Mainly, preaching God's Word and seeking the lost. This, of course, presumes separation from the world. What has happened to church life is that it's *blended with the world*. The idea now is to make a man "feel at home" when he comes to church. Well, socially, he should be made to feel that way, but spiritually, if he is not a saved man, he should feel like a *sinner*. In other words, the people of God - I don't mean that they should not be friendly or have a "holier than thou" attitude - but there ought to be something that would convict a man that he is wrong; that is, that they have something he needs, but does not have.

When a man came into the presence of Jesus, he didn't find a hail-fellow-well-met attitude, inviting him to close fellowship; he usually felt something like the Apostle Peter, who, when he recognized Jesus, said, "I am a sinful man." I don't mean the Christian people should be harsh. Jesus wasn't . . . But I mean Christianity ought to be far superior to anything this world has to offer, so that a man who is clinging to the world would be inclined to let loose, and say, "I'm wrong." But so much of our church life doesn't *convict* people. We make them feel they could be one of us just like they are. In essence, we say, "Jesus was good. Join Jesus and love everybody, and we'll all be one

big family." That doesn't have much to do with the Gospel message.

Billy Graham is doubtless the world's most popular preacher, but he gives an invitation that nearly anybody who wants to "reform" his conduct could accept. I heard him say the other night what he has been saying all along: "You've got to repent." That's the first step in the Gospel experience, and that was fine. But here's what he said by way of explanation, "and that means you've got to change your way of living." But that's Sam Jones repentance: "quit your 'meanness'!" Repentance may result in a change of conduct, but genuine, *Gospel* repentance is a "Change of heart" toward God, and that is a work of God's Spirit within. But if you tell a man to "change his life," he can come down that aisle and join, and say, "I'm going to do better, I'm going to live better." When you concentrate a man's attention upon *his conduct*, he will "reform". If you concentrate upon *his sin against God* he'll *repent*. And this sin against God is not these things we do in the world - that's not what God's interested in - God can handle that, He can and will forgive that. Christ paid for that. The sin he's guilty of is refusing to let God be his Lord.

Repentance is *toward God*, not toward man. That's what Paul says: "Repentance is toward God." Well, a man can "reform," like Billy Graham says, in the fleshly mind without ever being born again, and that's the crux of the whole matter right there. Repentance is a thing that comes after conviction. If you emphasize a man's sins, he'll "reform," but that's all you'll get. But, if you emphasize his *sin*, his condition, not his conduct, but his *condition*, then you'll get a *change of heart* toward God, plus a change of life.

The change of heart will produce the change of life. And that's what's the matter with the church life of this day.

JONES: I'd like to explore this a little . . . How do you view life and man's purpose and God's purpose, and one thing and another. What do you see as the human condition?

KAZEE: You mean as to conduct?

JONES: Well, I was thinking about . . . Do you see man as the sinner, do you see . . . ?

KAZEE: Oh, yes, man is the sinner. He's born that way, though. Man is born in sin and anything he'll do will be wrong. Oh, not morally wrong - but he is a sinner *against God*, because he refuses to let God do what he pleases with His own - His highest creation.

JONES: You're making the distinction between the sins *of the world* and something else?

KAZEE: Well, yes. A man is, we say, a "free moral agent." And he is a free *moral* agent, but he is not a free *spiritual* agent. *Spiritually*, he's bound by sin, in his heart. "Morality" has to

do with whether he obeys the laws of man - and they're made by people instead of God, you know. Whether he's living according to customs of life: that's morality. That has *nothing* to do with a relationship with God. Your relationship to man is *moral*, your relationship to God is *spiritual*, and that takes a new, a re-creation there. You can be everything the church requires in conduct. The rich young ruler was one of the finest men you ever met. Nicodemus was a fine man . . . and yet he didn't know what it was to be born again. Here, we're talking about a religious, not a *spiritual*, life. "Religion" can have anything in it that custom calls "good."

JONES: How do you tie that, say, to the Ten Commandments?

KAZEE: Well, the Ten Commandments are given not to save anybody, but to reveal how lost you are. They are to show your condition, to drive you to Christ . . . to drive you *as a sinner* to Christ. You couldn't obey the Ten Commandments. They were given twenty-five hundred years *after* man had sinned. They were given to reveal your sin. Paul says the Law was given to reveal your sins. Well, the law convicts you, but it can't save you. That drives you to the Savior.

JONES: Does this mean . . . Do you see a person may be spiritually connected to Christ but still might sin in the earthly fashion?

KAZEE: Why, certainly! And the closer he gets to the Lord the more sinful he'll seem to be in his own eyes, but he may not in the eyes of "the world." His conduct in the world may have improved. But the point is that he'll see sin in his life that he wouldn't have seen had he not had this spiritual birth.

JONES: You say that even after he is born again man is still subject to all the temptations . . . ?

KAZEE: "The carnal mind is not subject to the laws of God and neither indeed can be." That's the reason he has to die, to get rid of it.

JONES: Well, do you think that the Old Baptist, the common man's church, let's say, understood the true condition of man more than a lot of other churches today that are more psychologically oriented? Who seem to think there can be perfection on earth?

KAZEE: Yes, they did. I would never agree that there can be any perfection on earth or in any man's life.

JONES: But isn't there a great deal of guilt built up in this other kind of thinking, that somehow, once you have accepted Christ you ought to be perfect - the *Guidepost* sort of thing?

KAZEE: I didn't give you my book on faith, did I?

JONES: You gave me two books.

KAZEE: Well, I was taught, you know - not actually taught, but gathered or I was under the impression - that now that I am "saved," I must "do better." I had a genuine spiritual experience with Christ. Well, of course, I was failing because I still had all the weaknesses of the flesh that I ever did and that put me in bondage. Paul goes through that in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth chapters of Romans. He went through the same experience. He says, "why, there's the Law saying this, and here I am still disobedient, and when I do good, evil is present with me and that that I would, I do not . . ." I find then a law in my members, the flesh-working-against-the-spirit-conflict.

Now some say that in the eighth chapter where Paul says, "Who shall deliver me from the bondage of this death," and "I thank God through Jesus Christ the Lord," that Paul got the "second blessing" there, which took sin out of him. No! Paul discovered that God was dealing with him now as a *child*, under grace rather than a sinner under the Law. A child under grace! And under grace you confess and God forgives your sin, while under Law you must be executed. Now you're born again, now, you've paid the penalty in Christ under the Law, and you're declared free and raised up in Jesus Christ. You're no longer a sinner under Law, and you'll be dealt with as a child under grace. You've a Father to help you in your weaknesses and sins and to forgive you and cleanse you, and if you rebel against Him he will chasten you, but he won't throw you out. That makes all the difference.

There isn't much of that being preached today. The emphasis now is on *conduct*.

JONES: I know. There is in the modern world, don't you think, a belief that through sensitivity groups, or psychiatry, or psychology, or all sorts of things, that one can somehow put one's life in order?

KAZEE: Yes! Certainly your conduct will improve if you're taught right. A man can be taught right. He'll follow his doctrine. But what we have now is a psychic religion, going on all over the world. I think this is the "strong delusion" that God said He'd send (II Thes. 2:11) after He gives the world a chance with the Gospel, and they won't believe it. It's humbling to a man to have to confess "I'm a sinner and the only hope I have is in Jesus Christ" - for that's where your hope is.

It's not here . . . in the world . . . and it never will be here. You can die and get out of the world. But men don't want to believe that, they want to say I'm going to *do it myself*, I'm going to improve!

Well, when you preach the Gospel, you take away all the *pride* of a man. Man can't improve himself. He'll always be a sinner. But if he is saved, the fact that he's in Christ and knows his salvation is in Christ and he has the spirit of God in his heart which sets him against sin, he'll be against *his* sin against God.

And then he changes his objective in life: instead of getting things here in the world he'll give himself to Christ and find a life which takes him out of himself to something else.

JONES: But don't you see a lot of disillusionment among people who believe that if they do "accept Christ" they will not be subject to the same shortcomings? I see a lot of people in the modern way of instant evangelism, instant conversion . . . I see a lot of disillusionment . . .

KAZEE: Well, there is that now. There's no doubt that we're leaving *regeneration*. We're in the *religion of reform*.

If a fellow can live "morally" better than he did, he thinks he's converted. Well, the fact is, the holier you become, the more you'll see sin in you that you never saw before. If you have the spirit of the Lord in you, you'll condemn it, even though it gets out of hand, even though it may rise up and have its way, condemn it, and, by God's grace, overcome it.

It's a question of where you are, with respect to sin, on God's side or your side. The Lord took care of the *sin* question, as far as the judicial part of it is concerned. I've never been charged with a sin, since 1914, in God's book. But I can see more of it now than I ever saw before! My salvation is in Christ and that is settled, but He is working on my conduct now. One of these days He'll help me get rid of the whole thing, but that is what death is for.

JONES: How much do you see that Christianity has been a victim of cultural change?

KAZEE: Very much. Christianity has adapted to *the group*, the particular group. Oral Roberts is in the "healing" business, and he's just pouring out . . . he wants me to send him a letter and put a little money in it. (All of them want a little money. They have to have it!) They'll tell you about great miracles taking place, and all that. This is not Biblical, as I see it, for this time.

Miracles weren't sent merely to heal people.

I'll tell you why. When Jesus was speaking there in a houseful of people and they brought a palsied man who couldn't get in the door . . . you remember that story . . . they went up there and took the tile off the top of the house and let him down? Jesus said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and some pulled their hair and rent their clothes, and said, "Who is this that claims he can forgive sin?" And Jesus said, "In order that you may *know* that I have the power on earth to *forgive sin*, I say to the sick of the palsy, get up and walk."

Now *that's* why Jesus performed miracles. He brought the dead to life to show that he had the power over death. He didn't do it just to raise dead people, and he didn't heal people just to heal people.

But we're turning to the social benefits of religion, and going out and doing all these things - which would be wonderful if we

could, but we can't reach all of them. I can't save all the dying children in India, I can't get the food over there. I can feel for them and all that and help some. And wherever I can I ought to do what I can. But the point is, *that's* not their greatest need! If I could feed you and clothe you all your life and give you everything you want, *that* wouldn't be your greatest need. I need to get you prepared . . . both for life *here* and *hereafter*.

JONES: And yet the church has made that mistake, hasn't it, by certain programs . . . ?

KAZEE: That's it. The Social Gospel, and it came out of Germany, it came through the seminaries, and that's where it's being preached. And now, today religion is *a thing* . . . to solve the ills of the country.

JONES: But don't you see a parallel between the falling into disuse of the old ballads and the old ways, and in the same thing happening in religion, getting rid of these old-fashioned . . . ?

KAZEE: Sophistication is what it is. But the old truth, the truth that we know as "Amazing Grace" is *back there*. "Amazing Grace" isn't a new thing. You read *back there* in Jeremiah (6:16) at that time he was saying "Come back to the old paths, come back to the old paths."

Now the mistake that people make is trying to live up to the Ten Commandments, and preaching that. They'll say, "Well, I think if you obey the Ten Commandments and do the best you can, you'll be all right." And I'll tell you *that's right!* If a man could do that! But the Ten Commandments were never given to save anybody, and if you obeyed them they wouldn't save you. Because a man has to *be born* divine. Now, I think that God intended to make man divine from the beginning. Adam jumped ahead of Him and got things in a mess. Your sin is not drinking, smoking, cursing, adultery; that is sinful; that's bad; that's by-product. But that isn't sin. The sin is here: God created man to reproduce Himself in human form and glory, but man marred himself. If you looked at your child when it was born and if somebody said it looks like you . . . well, that's the nicest thing they could say. All right. God wanted that. He was perfect but He was lonely. He wanted to reproduce Himself into some other beings who could associate with Him. So He brought man into the world, made in His image. My sin is not the things that I *do* - that's sinful - but the sin that puts me in jeopardy is *refusing* to let God take the thing He created and make of it what He wanted: to reflect *His own* glory. And what He has in mind is a whole company of beings like Himself, to be perfect. And to refuse that is to sin against God. That's where the sinner has to repent. He has to change *toward God*, and he has to yield to God's making him divine. Otherwise, where would God put him?

JONES: Do you pretty well agree with - I guess it's a neo-

orthodox view - that the fact of Christ's dying has saved us already, except that it's incumbent on us to accept that fact?

KAZEE: Yes. Well, I wouldn't go too far with the neo-orthodoxy - it's substitute for liberalism, so it's not quite where we want it. But that's true that . . . Yes! Yes! God has done all that's necessary to make us divine, but He *draws* us into subjection to His will. Our will is bound in rebellion. By His gospel and His Spirit He draws us, so that we surrender to His will. By drawing instead of driving, He gets a son instead of a slave. He forces us to surrender, but like you forced your wife to marry you - by drawing in love. Thus you got a wife and not just a woman.

Now, here we come to the other part that's a little difficult. Why doesn't God get everybody to accept? That's something we don't know. But nobody will ever turn to God except God *draws* him. You say, "Well, I think a man has a right to choose!" No, he has "a right to," but he's *already chosen*. Man's choice from birth is against God, and man intends to have *his* way. He is born with that disposition. So, it isn't a question of what man will choose. Man will never choose otherwise, unless the spirit of God draws him through the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

JONES: You're not talking about "election," are you?

KAZEE: Yes, that's where "election" comes in. I don't know how to explain it, but that's where it is.

JONES: But you believe in evangelism, that people can be touched . . . ?

KAZEE: Of course! I preach to every man salvation. That's what a preacher is to do. Whatever *election* is done, God's doing that. I offer the whole thing to everybody and tell everybody the Truth: that a man can be saved if he will repent and trust Christ. But the will of man is bound by a sinful disposition, and that's the problem. Everybody could be saved if they would, but *the will is bound* and the Spirit of God has to overcome that bondage and draw the man. The Spirit does it by enlightening the man through preaching, through the thing preached "to save them that believe." That's why a man who preaches ought to be under the direction of the Spirit, because he can say the same thing to a man without the Spirit moving him and helping him, and it won't affect the man out there. But if he says it with the power of the Spirit in him it can affect the man.

JONES: If the man becomes more open to the Spirit, do you think God's election is more likely to come?

KAZEE: Yes. But I don't mean that God'll change His mind and say, "Well, here's a fellow I didn't intend to save but I'll save him." You see, here we reach the Infinite, and you and I can't be the Infinite. You can't say, "Well, God knew and therefore

He did." That's some people's doctrine of election. That puts the election *on you*. You just have to face it, that "as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways above your ways." It would be impossible for you and me to grasp God's mind and why He'll do what he does. Now if I reason on a human basis, I don't see why, if Christ died for all of us, God didn't save all of us. Of course, you come then to the limited atonement, where some men say he didn't die for everybody, he died only for "the elect." Of course I don't go into that because I let *Him* run that end of it.

Here's a question often raised: "Is God doing *right* to save some and not others?" Well, I say: "God offers it to everybody, why won't they take it?" It is as strange to me that a man won't take salvation and go to heaven instead of hell, as it is for God to say, "I'll call certain ones and I'll not call others." But God has many ways that I don't understand. I wrap up all of these in Deuteronomy 29:29.

JONES: You mentioned preaching a minute ago. A lot of the old preachers believed they were more or less a conduit for God and that God spoke through them. How much did you depend on inspiration and how much did you depend on your intellect?

KAZEE: You mean in preaching? Well . . . a lot of it is intellectual. But Truth is what reaches a man. If you take the teachings of Jesus you'll see it wasn't this hitting or hammering the pulpit or loud noises, it was Truth that did it. But there is a time . . . the *timing* of the Truth. A man ought to be free when he's preaching. I know that a lot of my preaching is teaching. Teaching is explaining, and preaching is proclaiming. The one is to proclaim it, like you'd drive with a hammer. The Spirit of the Lord can do that. When you're preaching you come to the place where you get the intellectual part of it down. You let the Truth lay before the mind. But, there comes that time when something in you urges you to drive that nail. It's in different persons and different ways. But *I* feel the Spirit when the Truth grips me. If It doesn't grip me It's not going to grip him. Therefore, preaching ought to be done with a close feeling to God.

JONES: Were you considered to be a fiery preacher?

KAZEE: No, not much. I teach a lot, and then I drive the thing in. And I think that's the best way. I hear a lot of effective preachers who will get up there on a certain level and just holler the whole way through a sermon, but I don't do it that way. I just teach, and drive. But when you drive it in . . . it's what you say as much as how you say it.

JONES: You worked on your sermons, didn't you?

KAZEE: Yes, I did. I wrote out sermons for a long time, but I wrote them out so that I could think through them. Now I've got so much in my mind that I have a hard time separating, picking

off parts of it, so that a point in a sermon has grown, maybe, into two or three sermons.

JONES: Another question: Do you think there will be a religious revival or are we bound to just drift away?

KAZEE: No. No. You see, we're in the Gentile age now. The Jew is in dispersion. When Christ came, the Jew refused Him. Well, Paul turned to the Gentiles, after he had first preached to the Jew. After the Jew refused the Christ who came and fulfilled all that the Hebrews had been carrying on, the offerings and everything, after they as a nation refused Him, God let them go into dispersion. They've been in it two thousand years. So this is the "Age of the Gentiles." And until that fullness of the Gentiles comes in, the Jew won't turn to Christ - they will individually follow along, some of them, but as a nation, they won't. But as soon as this Gentile preaching is over, and that's done through the church - there was no church until the gospel was given to the Gentile - as soon as that's fulfilled, then the Hebrews as a nation will turn to Christ. They'll preach the Kingdom, they'll preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

JONES: Is that the time of the Second Coming? The end of the world?

KAZEE: Yes. Or, right close. I think that the Church is becoming worldly, like the Laodecean Church in Revelation - it's neither hot nor cold; it's lukewarm. It's playing the world game of psychology and psychiatry, and the mystical . . . getting into mystical things. And that's what Paul said in Second Thessalonians. He says God will send them "strong delusions" that they'll believe a lie and be damned, (or condemned) and that is what I believe is taking place now. Israel has to come back to Palestine . . . but not what's happening over there now. The coming of Christ is not quite here. Some are saying it can come at any time, but some things have yet to be fulfilled. The church has generally grown cold, it's grown worldly, and there's no *depth* in it. Some have pulled out. That's why I'm conservative, not because I choose that role, but because that's what the Bible promises. The minority has always been right. (Ibsen taught that in his dramas. He said that by the time you get the majority to see something, it's out of date.) Jesus said of the straight or narrow way, "few there be that find it."

JONES: Did you find the ministry a satisfying life? I mean, you never had the desire like a lot of preachers today to get into something else?

KAZEE: No sir, I regret right now that I'm not preaching, although I don't think I'd be able to carry a pastorate simply because it has too much of the very thing we've been talking about. Religion is popular now, it's good business and good entertainment, but it's shallow, nothing rugged about the Old Cross now. Well, it's got some good things in it and a lot of

gospel. But, there's a difference between "good" and that which is "from God." Keep that in mind. A Christian must never ask "Is it good?" You can get "good" in any place, heathen or anywhere else. He must ask "Is it of God?" That's where the Christian's life is centered, and he must not become absorbed with the goodness of the world as if it were the godliness of the Lord.

That's the difference, And the mystery lies right there. Why, I don't think Johnny Cash has ever caught a notion of what I'm talking about. Now, I'm sure Johnny's been saved and all that, but he thinks we're taking religion to *this world* by mixing it with entertainment. When you do *that*, you join the world. Israel tried that over and over. It's just like a camel getting his nose in the tent, see? And when you go in for that it cheapens religion . . .

I think a lot of this mystical stuff today, too, is devil-born. But you understand, the Devil's not mean, he's not got a forked tail and horns; he's a god, he's a counterfeit god, he's going to be as much like God as he can without being God and he wants you to have religion, he wants everybody to have religion, he wants to divide and have all kinds of religion for everybody. The Devil's got more religion going on than the Lord has, and it's "good religion," it has humanitarianism in it, it has morality in it, it's got all the marks that we are looking for as *good* in it. But godliness . . . that's something else.

JONES: That's an interesting interpretation of the Devil. I don't think I've ever heard that.

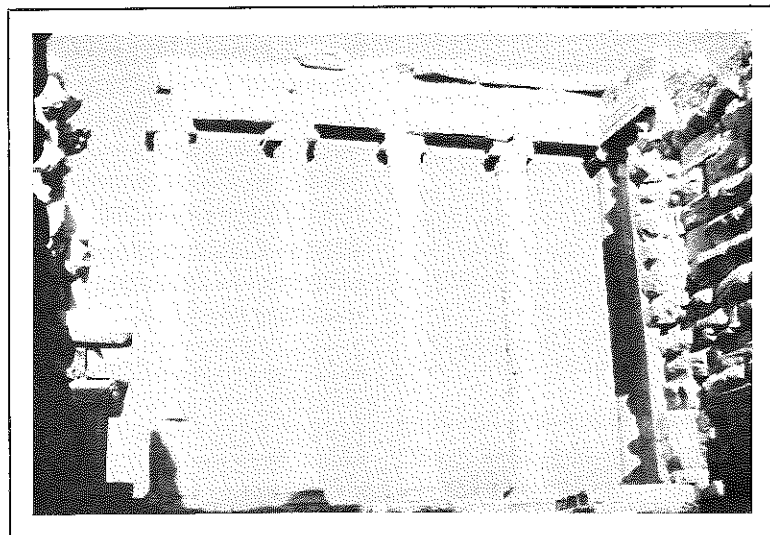
KAZEE: Oh, the old Catholic view of him has the horns and forked tail and red underwear - to scare people. The Devil transforms himself into an *angel of light*, Thessalonians says. He's a god, he's a counterfeit god, a competitor of God, and he's going to be the anti-Christ in a man, incarnate in a man, as God

was incarnate in Jesus. And he's going to set up his rule here and make people think he is God. That's the Anti-Christ, and that's why the tribulation will come; he'll have his mark on everybody.

You see, good, honest people are deceived by Satan: it isn't the fellow who's not honest. He's working on very religious people, the most consecrated religious people . . . That's where he's working. But the deception lies in the devil getting them to believe something other than the Word of God. You have to be guided by *that Word*. But when you begin saying, "I feel this," and "I hear this voice," and "the Lord told me this" . . . Boys used to come into my class and say, "The Lord told me to do 'this' and 'that,'" and I'd say, "What did *He* say?" Well, they'd answer, "He didn't say anything, I just *felt* it." Well, that's where you can get deceived, that's where Satan works, in your feelings and directions. Why, the Lord wouldn't have all these denominations. The Devil fixed that up, you know. "Doctrine" lies at the base of all that. We were divided on doctrine, but now we don't know enough doctrine to keep us divided, so we are melting together.

That's what's happening. Satan now is in the saddle. He's coming to the apex of his reign. And he's going to have all religions melt into one, and it'll look good because man's looking for "good." He can't see *God*, but he's looking for "good." And he's just being deceived. And religious people, very spiritual people, *saved* people, *preachers* that are saved, *God's* preachers, are being deceived by a lot of this. They think they're headed in the right direction. Success now is numbers . . . quantity. How many people? How much money?

How will this stand in the Judgment?



LIFE IN THE DESERT

Matthew Kelty

It would seem that we have come full circle: the religious life which began in the desert is back there once again. Having, over the centuries, moved slowly out of the sands and up to the northern islands by sea, and then from below into the wilderness of Europe, it moved also, gingerly at first, and much later more bravely, out into the world itself, until today, when some of it mingles quite at home in the midst of it.

Meanwhile, something else has been happening, and that especially in our time: the world itself has become a desert. There are not a few who have noted this character of the contemporary scene and it requires no great imagination to see that there is truth in it. In more ways than one, the world we know is falling apart. We witness the disintegration of a way of life that enters into almost every aspect of it.

No one has the vaguest idea what will eventually emerge, of anything at all, for it is much too soon for that. What we are sharers in is the breakdown and collapse of a culture, not yet its rebuilding. Measure the total impact of this century: horrendous wars, weakening of family life, failures in education, disenchantment with the acquisitive society, the pointlessness of much human labor, the ruin of natural resources, the fall of the idol science, the threat of annihilation of the whole world at the hands of men, the loss of spirit, of faith, of God — these are some of the factors that brought man today into a true desert.

And if you have some grasp of the basic monastic experience, the desert experience, the expected follows: an overwhelming despair, a loss of faith, a demonic vision.

Everyone is called to be a monk today; everyone undergoes the desert experience, like it or not. The call is general. The western world is undergoing a deep spiritual experience. And, so far, not doing too well.

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In this situation, an ironic note enters, for now the monk is to enter the world, not leave it. Today, if he seeks to isolate and insulate himself from the world situation, he is not really a good monk. The tables have been turned: everything is the other way 'round.

If anything is needed in this hour, it is men who know their way around in the desert. Men who can understand what is going on, can interpret it, manage with it. Everyone is looking for such people and, sad to say, not finding too many. It becomes clear that not all monks have been in the desert.

So, if the world is under judgment, and it is, so are we. It is a good time. It is refreshing, stimulating, challenging, difficult.

Finding solitude today is no problem. Most everyone experiences a great loneliness, the anguish of being a solitary in a disintegrating world. There is no problem trying to stimulate desire for genuine community: how many there are who are hungry for just that, yearn it more than anything else.

To be a monk in this time, then, is really to be the man of the hour. No man in the Church is more necessary, more useful. The desert is the monk's world and today the world is a desert. I mean *monk* now in the widest sense: men and women in contemplative orders, but also any Christian called in grace by circumstance, by temperament, character, by accident, to enter deeply into the mystery of this era with Christ, to unite with Him there.

The spirit of God is very active. In the midst of all this chaos He is very much present. There is an unbelievable longing for God, for faith, for prayer. There is a passionate hunger for the truth, for reality, for the human person, for a worthy way of living. Some think that the Church does not wholly grasp the situation, at least not churchmen. This lack of response may be cause of disillusionment. "They just don't seem to know what's going on." "There's a whole new scene and they don't even see it." Maybe there is some truth in these observations, yet that

matter does not much interest me. If the charge were true, it would disappoint me, but not that bad, really. I have never found or ever expected to find a totally inspiring, always edifying Church. It wouldn't be human then. My faith in the Church is unbounded and undying. But it is faith, and faith means believing, not seeing. She is the Bride of Christ, endowed with truth, vessel of divine life, God's presence among us: I have never doubted it. Yet it is still human; it always was and it always will be; often enough, too much so; and, notwithstanding, also divine. That is the marvel of it; it is almost beyond belief, but not quite, in the grace of God.

To me, that is not the problem: the problem is rather, what do I do? What is my responsibility, what is my charge, my grace, my call? What others do or not do does not get me off the hook of my own obligation. I do not need a perfect Church to do what God asks me to do. My needs are a little closer to home, a little more realistic, and, also, a little more arduous. In any case, the Church has plenty to offer, more than enough. If I offer what I have as I ought, the Church will be enhanced by it. Faith in the Church is basic, elemental. It must be total, complete, unconditional. This is the first gift and it is all or nothing.

The second gift is more difficult; we must give up the past that is gone. We cling to it, like a woman clinging to vanished beauty. Or vanished years. And men, be it noted, cling as well as women. The past might be summed up in a word: *capitalism*. It is dead and gone. It is finished. The Church is loaded with it; we all are. It is dead and we do not seem to recognize it. We cling to a corpse.

If we are capitalists still, in the face of the judgment of God, we can scarcely be called Christians. By *capitalism*, I mean a way of life, a way of acting, a frame of mind, a style, characterized by push and drive and aggression and self-assertion, and go-getting, and production, profit, dog-eat-dog, get there first with the most — that sort of thing. The cult of the ego. The life of the head, the mind, the brain; the death of the heart. The spirit of strife, contention, argument, belligerence. The urge to govern, to control, to manipulate, to organize, to run, to dominate. An indifference to people, to feelings, to pity, to mercy, to compassion. A climate of intolerance, criticism, fault-finding, superiority. This is capitalism: it's the way you get ahead in the world. It is lethal. It is poisonous. Best of all, it is dying. Already dead. The airline hostess is the perfect capitalist: charming, full of smiles, graceful, intelligent, competent. She greets you as you step aboard as if the plane were her home; she treats you most graciously be you boob or bore. But there is not a whit of truth in it. Behind the cabin door this woman may be bitchy, scheming, conniving, muscling her way to a better spot, a better flight or higher pay. She may loathe the job, the people, the company; she stays on: the money is good, the work light, the privileges great.

There are capitalists in religion. They wear the clothes, they adopt all the customs and routines. They are skilled, highly competent, well-trained. They are charming, personable. But beneath it all may be the schemer, the skilled operator. It is all ego, all self, all shallow and all meaningless.

Why? Because that is the way we were brought up. That's the way of the world. We are schooled in this bright and early in the day. It is in our blood. We do it unconsciously. We are not even aware of it. It comes naturally.

Yes, by dint of hard work you can control it. It is possible to subdue it. It is possible to improve one's style, become even more nice, more patient, more gentle, more sweet. But the underpinning is the same. The power behind it all is the same.

And if I have described a woman, men are just as bad. "Smooth operators," we can call them. They are in General Motors and in chancery offices, suburb and condominium. The most obscure monk in the monastery may operate on the same principles. Should we expect otherwise? He did not come from Mars. In religion, he simply shifts emphasis a bit, but the basic thrust is no different.

Is this why some of the young are not impressed with the men and the women of God? Is it that they do not find them real? No different from the rest? Worse, in a sense, for they should know better.

How do I know? I was there. I was better than the best of them. I know all about it. Know the style better than you. But my world fell apart when I was about forty-five. I saw what I was. It very nearly killed me.

Yes, it is true, a good master is a great grace. Thomas Merton put the old man to death in me. I may as well tell you: it was a dreadful experience, but I was desperate and I knew it was my only chance. I hung on, managed. It was the beginning of a new life. I sympathize with anyone who has the feeling that he is not real, that there is something phoney about him. For one thing, any kind of prayer life is out of the question. And there is a great, deep anguish inside, a constant remorse and regret. And you feel helpless.

After Merton, it was Carl Jung who did the most for me.

Why Jung? Jung was a psychiatrist. He was a disciple of Freud, but broke away from him because he thought his approach much too narrow, too limited. Jung was a very religious man; I think a very holy one. He was deeply hurt by critics who supposed he had no faith. What he did was to study the way religious experience works in a human being. He was not interested in religion as such: he wanted to know how the experience took place. His studies took him far afield into many areas, many eras. His knowledge was phenomenal. And he was a man of great courage. He studied alchemy, for example, considered by reputable people to be so much nonsense, and proved it was a spiritual technique for the mystical life. He studied the role of the unconscious, its relation to the conscious man; dreams; so-called coincidences that happen to us. In the matter of the unconscious he demonstrated that man has within him some sort of inherited wealth of all the past ages, unformed tendencies that express the fruit of man's long historical search for meaning in life: these unformed ideas, sentiments, hunches, often show up in dreams, and remarkably enough, dreams that

are similar in peoples all over the world, from many different times.

What he meant most of all for me was in the area of the desert experience. I had read the old authors and was acquainted with the usual texts, but they never got through to me. I suppose because Jung is a contemporary, used a mode of speech that we are familiar with, in terms we relate to, the whole thing opened up and I began to realize what these ancients were talking about. It was a marvelous awakening for me. Everything began to look differently, Scripture especially opened up.

Jung's description of the shadow — the dark side of the man within — is superb: first experienced within. The meeting (for a man) of the woman within, the anima (*animus* for the woman) is fascinating, deep, essential to understanding celibacy, virginity. How the ego works and its role, how the self, the true person beneath, can come forth and conquer the ego — all this is extremely helpful.

I am no expert on Jung. I have a number of his works with me: I have read a few books on him. I think, nonetheless, that one need not be an expert to get good of him, or to suggest that others may be helped by him. Jung was long neglected in the States, but now has come into his own. I say quite frankly that no author has been such a help to me in the world of the spirit. Yes, there are things we might not agree with. His respect for the Church was profound, yet some of his views are in error. And, interestingly enough, he did not think that Eastern techniques would work for a Westerner in a life of prayer: he said we are Christians in our roots and cannot change that. We can learn from others, profit much from talk with them, but we have our own traditions. Even so, he was much taken with Eastern mysticism and knew a great deal about it. (If anyone is interested in getting an introduction to the thought of Carl Jung, there is an excellent paperback he authored with a few of his co-workers: *MAN AND HIS SYMBOLS*. The book, written shortly before his death in 1961, was not published until after he died. Jung had a dream in which he saw a multitude of people begging him to help them. Jung addressed himself to scholars and to professionals in his field and never fancied himself a popular writer. The dream suggested to him that he summarize his thought in simple language and offer it to whomever would have it.)

I feel that numbers of good people look for help. I have met men and women of God caught up in some ego trap and unable to find a way out. Perhaps what happens is that they have taken themselves as they were and simply applied it all to the religious, the priestly life. There is no real change. Like an airline hostess changing from that silly outfit on the plane and putting on a habit. This is not rare. No laughing matter. People go on like that for years, wondering why things seem so unreal, why there is little to prayer, why they feel so hollow. And they work hard and try hard, but it may all spring from the same source. There is no way out until the ego is broken and the real person breaks free. Nor is this to deprecate amenities, as if tact

and consideration, kindness and good breeding, were of no consequence. They do, truly enough, curb aggression, arrogance, heedless self-assertion, but when they do not flow from the total person, from the human in touch with his depths, they are bound to prove inadequate. And even when they do have some depth, if the whole is put to commercial service, there is something inherently degrading in it, both to the agent and to the one victimized by it. The commercial world knows this well enough, but knows too, that many, if not most, are flattered by it and go along with the delusion that the whole is real. There thus is woven into the fabric of life a quality of perversion. "The customer is always right," not because he is right, but because it pays in the end. The cult of the ego is worship at the same shrine: profit. It is at heart a commercial venture and serves the interests of a false self.

Persons of genuine spirituality are always marked by a charm which is at once original, honest, and winning. Though their social grace may be unlettered or unorthodox, it is warm and human. But when a culture, not merely its commerce, widely divorces externals from the inner man, it becomes all the more easy to fall in line, even to the point of assuming that mere external impression manifests the whole, both the impression we make and the one we receive. It becomes one of the less happy characteristics of such a climate, if one would be honest, to be forced to reject effusions of charm and even candor when one realizes they are no more than commercials. On the other hand, one is torn between sympathy and shame for the person who must sell his suavity to support himself. An old profession has its techniques made common practice. The age-old resentment of the poor against those who do good to them stems from this same experience: the love manifested is not love at all. The poor, being closer to reality, are not taken in by it, needy though they be, and forced to be humiliated. Well-intentioned people enter the life of religion with the very noblest of intentions, yet without realizing it, go right along with the accustomed pattern: only some desert experience can set them free. Yet, in the world or out of it, this process is resisted with vehemence. We need only recall the outrage that often enough follows when one does not take others seriously; that is to say, when one, even inadvertently, exposes the same at work in them. There is a real fraternity of phoniness in which it is agreed that brother does not expose brother under any circumstance, but plays the game valiantly. Some call this loving. Even saints create umbrage in such a context.

It ought not to be necessary to undergo the trauma and the real danger of some sort of "encounter-experience" in order to shake free of this outer shell. The enthusiasts who so heartily commend such methods are so exalted by their freedom that they can scarcely resist doing so, passing over those for whom it has not been so fruitful an experience, not to say an injury to them.

The monastic life would achieve the same end, but more gently, more mercifully, more patiently. In a sense, both are the desert: the one harsh and almost brutal, instant; the other more controlled and, in a setting of love, subject to the *abba* who has been there long enough to know how much the desert must be respected if it is not to overwhelm one. Yet the experience is elemental: without it there is the real hazard that religious life will never amount to anything more than something heavily external. If nothing else, "encounter" and similar practices manifest a passionate desire for truth, for reality, for integrity. In a way, one admires the courage and intensity at work: it reveals as well how firmly fixed to the skin is the powder and paint of the way of the world. As the clown said as he finished putting on his make-up in front of the mirror: "And who of us does not use a little paint?" Who are we laughing at when we laugh at the clown?

It is obvious that in recent times much of contemporary youth created a desert of its own by embracing a style of life that extended into almost every area and went counter to the traditionally acceptable. The trend now reaches far beyond youth. This scene is not particularly tasty, certainly not to those most threatened by it, yet the point made is a valid one, as far as it goes. One says, "as far as it goes," for the desert itself is not enough: it is what is *born* of the desert that matters: out of it can come both good and bad, God or the evil one. It is a time of the spirit: the basic question is: *which* spirit? The desert, after all, can set us free of one delusion only to entrap us in a far worse one.

This is hard, but worth all involved. Jung can help a great deal. I put my finger on a very real point: much of the disillusionment with the Church lies right here. What has happened is that so many young have gone through a very genuine desert experience. Their eyes have been opened. By reason of the chaos of the times and what have you, they have been so shattered and shaken that they are in no way at all impressed with the world that we have taken for granted was indeed not perfect, but still pretty good. It is now coming home to us that it is really something bordering on the atrocious. The call is to reality, a matter of considerably more than will power, good resolutions, grim determination. Nor is this to say that the young or anyone else will pull it off. It is one thing to have had this desert experience, another to make it fruitful. It remains to be seen what they will amount to. They may not carry through. It is not hard to point out failures in others, especially in adults if you are young. It is disquieting, for example, to note an embrace of chaos and a submersion in it, rather than an effort to bring order and beauty out of it.

There is thus every reason for us to be seriously engaged with our vocation, if we be monks. We are needed. I do not say by actual direction, by guidance, by writing, and all that, but by

being. This is the great power in the world. To be real. To be a human. A person. And when a *real* person, a real *human*, is possessed by the faith — that is so great a good in the world, so marvelous a beauty, that its influence and impact are tremendous: nothing can prevent it from *being* so, for no matter where or when or what, God is with such a person and comes through.

The desert experience is the classic for discovering who we are. Our construct-world disintegrates in the emptiness of the barren waste. We see what we are for once. Then comes despair, fear, doubt. Then loss of faith, such as we had. Now the life begins. We begin to believe for the first time in our lives. We begin to live from another level. A great sense of compassion for every human being is born in the heart. The whole competitive complex is dumped once and for all. Now it is possible to pray, to love, to serve. It does not mean no faults, no sins. But the attitude toward them is totally different. Now our vanity is not wounded by them: our brother *is*, *Christ is*: another matter entirely! Now Scripture begins to be an inspiration, not a text. Everything opens up.

A lot of silence and solitude are a great help in all this. Not as a discipline but as an experience. If it is just going to be discipline, then it can be but another exploit. But as an experience, it is fruitful. We are entitled to silence, to solitude. To shy away from silence and from solitude, to make some effort to turn monasteries into harmless fraternities, to so emphasize community that camaraderie is taken for charity, would be an insult to our call in this day. Millions of people undergo a real desert experience, often enough, perhaps mostly, with no faith whatever.

One could not comment on the desert quality of the contemporary scene without making at least a passing reference to obedience. Monastic obedience is seen as an essential aspect of the asceticism born of the desert. The onslaught of chaos and disintegration that follows on that exposure, or as we might put it, the eruption of the unconscious, is so devastating that unless one has one's roots sunk deep into a relationship to a spiritual father, there is a grave danger of disastrous action.

This is not puerility, nor craven dependence. It is a wholesome respect for powers greater than we know. Heresy, for example, is not always merely an intellectual vagary: its often bizarre quality is as much tied to the strange departures otherwise normal people make when overwhelmed with the effects of a chaotic climate or its equivalent. Men truly are "carried away." "Whatever got into him?" we say. "Whatever possessed him?" It might be glib to say that if subjects were more obedient, more willing to submit themselves to guidance and the direction of another — and that not merely on an optional basis but in faith and by virtue of a religious obligation — they might have been spared a great deal. "Being spared a great deal" is a kindly way of saying that they might have

avoided disaster, for it is not to be assumed that following one's own lights is always the road to courage and fortitude. It may also be that of madness. There would be no heresies if those who spawned them were docile to the Church.

Nor is it necessarily the honest way out to say that we lack spiritual fathers capable of guiding us. Monks, too, have been heard to say as much, in a setting rich with them. What is more often lacking is docility and a spirit of submission. In a climate such as ours, to my way of thinking, there is no virtue more called for than obedience, nor is there one more unpopular. Men of good will go wandering off to India to find a guru; wise gurus there have not been unwilling to laugh at this, knowing as well as the next man that there are gurus on every corner, were one willing to submit to them. Obedience within the context of a religious community, defined by vow and rule, may be very much a woman of ill repute these days. I come to her defense. She is a good woman, and unless we take her back into our arms disasters will proliferate.

If a man has no father to whom he is subject in every sense of the word, his pretensions to the service of God in the manner of Christ is open to delusion. So long as he remains superficial and trifling in his religious life, no great harm will be done. But let him make a move into something a little deeper and a bit more worthy of a man and he will find himself caught up in very short order with monsters from the deep that he will never be able to handle. And the first sign that he will not be able to do so is his cocky assurance that he is indeed capable.

This is a climate of darkness and of the dark spirit and the chaos we witness is not poetic fancy. If the evil one is abroad, and he is, it is not that he is new to the scene. He has always been around, only we have not met him, hidden away safely as he was in depths within us, never confronted in an era of serenity and status quo. But the era of serenity and status quo has long gone. The lid is now off. He is about, free, roaming at large. The desert, after all, not only exposes us to the awesome grandeur of God, of time, of eternity, but also to the total human situation. The predictable happens, as monastic lore has long made clear: one "loses one's faith" and one is in grave danger of being carried away by delusions we mistake as the very light of God and of freedom, self-expression, and fulfillment. Or one is tempted to violence, the cousin to despair.

Yet, and let it be said, obedience works both ways. There must be the obedient subject, but there must also be the father willing to command. I would go so far as to say that the father not willing to command, not willing to teach the neophyte the absolute necessity of total response to that command, is doing a disservice to his prospect. The day will come when he will call him back from the precipice and his call will go unheeded. The subject follows another light, a will o' the wisp from a murk that will end him. If a man would not plant cabbages upside down for me, I would have no dealings with him. He is still a boy. In a desert he would be an absolute and total menace, for he would be so seduced by his own vision that obedience to a call to him in that condition would strike him ten times more idiotic than mere irrational cabbage planting.

The vehemence with which such notions are greeted today is small comfort. It becomes clear that the battles will be fought by a remnant, the three hundred who lap the waters of obedience direct, not taking it into their own hands.

This obedience, however, can never be fashioned in the form of a civil or military obedience, even as asceticism undergone for Christ's sake. It is rather the fruit of an encounter with darkness, and the powers of darkness, the forces of evil and is a counter move on the only level that can be adequate, that of faith. Religious obedience establishes one in the life of faith, posits that faith in the practical order. It is *faith* that is the heart of it, not the holiness or wisdom of the authority, the appropriateness of his order. As Christian faith finds in the events of day-to-day an expression of the Providence of God, so the religiously obedient carry this faith even further, on into the explicit and seemingly arbitrary. The only concern is that it be genuine, which is to say, expressed within the limits defined, much as a sacrament properly ministered. Nor is the relationship static, as if the superior were always to resolve all situations. It is a matter of mutual growth in God, maturity in Christ. In its perfect expressions, the two involved are humble before God and his Spirit, seeking His divine will in utter simplicity. In such a scene, the son is as anxious to heed the father as the father is earnest to discern God's work in his son. They are brothers in the search of the truth. In such a purity, God's light comes clear. Classic monastic tradition has always seen the one called to solitude as one called to face the desert alone, schooled in obedience by the monastery: it is not too much to say that a good monastery would bear fruit in solitaries. The basic test, beyond the validity of his call, is the quality of his obedience. If he has no firm grasp of it, it is a derelict abbot who releases him.

What we must reckon with is that the very desert which sets loose the powers of darkness also weakens the faith which is its only effective opponent. It is no surprise, then, that a chaotic time should be a time of little faith, and consequently, of a much weakened esteem for obedience. To relegate all such concerns to monks and to the cloister is to be blind to the lessons of history, naive about our own times. The desert is no longer the monk's domain. It is now every Christian's. The man of God who does not understand that desert is a poor guide to others there and is a peril to himself.

Closely related to the question of obedience is that of reverence for virginity — virginity in the sense of the monastic and religious vow of chastity, priestly celibacy. Virginity is to be seen as a superb expression of the integrated ideal of the human person, rich at once in both head and heart, total human. It does not pass notice that the mass disobedience to the Church centuries ago rejected the religious life and celibacy. It was an endeavor to reject the Church and keep the Christ, to adhere to

the Bridegroom, but refuse His spouse. Disobedience is to give emphasis to one's own mind and will in refusing to accept authority. Its reverse side is to reject woman. When the role of the head predominates, the heart suffers. It is no surprise, thus, to see today both a problem with the authority of the Church as well as with celibacy and with the religious life, vowed virginity.

If the industrial revolution was rooted in the monastery of the Middle Ages, as well may be, capitalism in the sense of private enterprise was surely not. Highly organized communal labor is one thing; the aggressive wilfulness characteristic of capitalism at its worst, quite another. Appropriate to the latter is the role of the all-male man. It is that capitalist spirit that both flounders on obedience to the Church and downgrades virginity.

The rejection of woman is characteristic of disobedience because it is the head refusing to give heed to the heart; it is simple consistency to dismiss virginity in the same breath, for virginity is precisely an endeavor to express in the person an integration of both male and female, the head and the heart. Such an integration was seen as an impossible ideal and was therefore cast out: total dominance given to the head. Man rules, man only. Woman plays no part in it.

The tragedy is that in rejecting the Church, Christ's spouse, we reject Christ as well, for the two are one. So too, in the human person, when the female aspect is cast off, we no longer have a human. We have a half-person, the all-male man.

Faith is never merely a matter of the mind, the head. The heart plays its part also. Both capacities of the person are called into play. Our relation to the Church also, is not merely as to man, Christ, but also as to woman, His spouse. And the two are one. Obedience to Christ is not total unless it includes the Church.

Turned the other way around, it is the woman in each man who turns to Christ, as the man in him turns to the Church: and the two are one. Mutuality is at work.

Protestant rejection of the religious life is a most logical step: it follows directly from disobedience to the Church. Apathy toward the Mother of God follows easily enough. Protestantism has rejected woman, the woman who is the Church: it made the fatal mistake of thinking that head and heart can be separated, man and woman, Christ and His Church. They cannot be. It is impossible. You reject one and you reject the other by the act. We now live in an age of almost total rejection of woman: she has long been ruthlessly degraded, humiliated, and put as far from man as possible. There is now almost total divorce of man and woman. They are poles apart. The catastrophic upheaval of our own times simply points out that the situation is impossible. It is unlivable. The gross spectacle of feminine men and masculine women on display everywhere is testimony of a generation's outraged refusal to bear this division any longer.

It is no joy in this hour to see religious life, virginity, celibacy, in some sort of cloud. Numbers entering religious life decrease. Interest in celibacy is scarcely enthusiastic. And yet it is precisely in religious life, the virginal state, the celibate way,

that a whole answer lies. For here, in terms of the ideal, is expressed the union of head and heart, of male and female, of Christ and His Church, which is at the same time the ultimate human destiny — achieved in whatever measure possible here below as a sign of what is to come. This sign serves at the same time to keep alive the absolute necessity of close harmony between man and woman, all the aspects of the human person.

Its relation to obedience is clear, for it is disobedience that stresses one factor at the expense of the other. The man who rejects obedience is the man who rejects woman, because he, in the act, gives more domain to one dimension than is possible if there is to be balance. In fact, there are men who find obedience degrading, feeling such surrender is weakness, feminine, unbecomingly submissive; perhaps it is more fear of woman, within or without, or both. Or simply the lack of development that mutuality takes for granted as having long since been achieved.

Saint Benedict saw in obedience not merely an effective discipline and a superb practice leading to the development of the genuine person. He saw it also as elemental in achieving integrity. In the celibate this is paramount. That is why failure in chastity is related to obedience, for the same act that throttles the woman within will lead to woman without, since man cannot live without relation to woman. To say that the ideal of integration as expressed in the virginal life can be more happily and more easily expressed in marriage itself is to bypass the problem, for if it is possible to live an unbalanced life as a virgin — as it obviously is — this is no less true of marriage: the fact that two are married does not necessarily mean that they relate and that they achieve full human development as persons. Problems in family life today do not suggest widespread success.

It is the virginal life that gives dignity and honor to marriage by highlighting in dramatic fashion its role not only in fertility but also in the achieving of the whole life, moving it far beyond the merely physical to which it too often descends in a society emphasizing the male at all costs. This is all the more important in an age that has so condemned woman.

If we see obedience as a good school of the heart, teaching us sufferance, tolerance, patience, docility, meekness, we are on the road to total growth. In an age of aggressive self-assertion, independence, the old capitalist package, we may have our hands full. Yet woman must be liberated. But in man's heart is where she is imprisoned, and it is there she must be set free if she is to be free at all. Anything short of that is selling her short for sure.

Artificial birth control is perhaps the perfect symbol of our age. Though it is degrading to man it is primarily degrading to woman and is acted out in her. The uproar that greeted *Humanae Vitae*, also among the faithful, reveals that the degradation is widely acceptable. And what abortion does to woman is beyond our grasp. These expressions of utter contempt for woman will have staggering effects on the human scene, more apocalyptic

than any bomb. This contempt for woman borders on the diabolical. It is seen as a valid exercise of human intelligence in the face of global problems, yet it is tied to a basic disobedience, and disobedience in the desert leads to disaster.

It is clear that these thoughts have relevance to the movement toward liberation of woman. Women are sick to death of being reduced to a sex-object, the idealization of femininity, forever objectified, projected. When man relates to woman in this spirit, he never recognizes her as a person, never absorbs that aspect of her which should become part of himself. He remains undeveloped and he, by the act, refuses to permit her to develop. Women can no longer abide this. Part to this refusal to embrace woman is the gross over-stimulation of the sexual dimension, as if this area were the major, basic, most significant relation of man and woman. That is why in the face of global population problems and serious concern over food for the world, it seldom occurs to a man that proliferation of children might possibly be avoided by the obvious control of the act by which they are conceived. We are, after all, not animals possessed of basic urges that are simply beyond our control. But in an age that cultivated the stylized woman, such a thought does not arise, for woman is seen as nothing less than a sexual partner. It never enters any man's head that if he treated woman as a person, it is just possible that sexual desires might quiet down, and further, that if a culture actually treated woman as person, the unending stimulation of sexual desire that is so characteristic of our own would be seen for what it truly is: something sick.

If one is bombarded forever and on every turn with the sexual aspect, so that these appetites are deliberately and intentionally kept at a peak of awareness, we have an era that obviously manifests an undisciplined adolescence that was never outgrown. To solve this problem with chemicals, or devices, or operations, is as perverse as the basic scene. Few seem to mind. If men, instead, were set on becoming *persons*, instead of males, they might just possibly begin to be able to see woman as *person* also. But a male becomes a person by giving expression to that side of him which the presence of the feminine evokes. If he is deaf to that invitation, it means death both to him and to her, for man cannot live without union with woman. But when this union is seen only as sexual and physical, we have made the basic mistake. This is characteristic of the juvenile: it is a stage he passes through. But to remain a boy all one's life becomes an ideal, for this is the ideal that a sick culture offers.

And this is what woman's "liberation" is about. The only question in the face of this movement's outrage at the horror of something like the "Miss America" beauty contest and similar auctions, is why it was so long coming. When man begins to meet the woman within, he will begin to treat the woman without as a human being, as a person. And not until then.

The extension of liberation to the sanctuary is an interesting

question: one wonders what the outcome will be. Misgivings arise only in the fear that a type of woman with muscle will be prominent in this effort, eager to place themselves in a setting long forbidden. Women clergy heavily marked with so-called masculine qualities would be no help whatever: merely reasonable facsimiles of the current model. That the current model could use some improvement seems a reasonable comment, but the change will come by *persons*, not by one sex or the other. There were abbesses in the Middle Ages who functioned well enough in that capacity by any standard. Further, there were double monasteries presided over by abbesses: such a situation today is both impossible and unthinkable. It is warming to recall that perhaps the most effective public liturgy in the land in our times was arranged by a woman: the President Kennedy funeral; few who witnessed it were unmoved. Nor need it escape us that the least inspiring action in the lot was at the heart of it — the Mass, God love him, God rest him, by the good Cardinal. It is the *person* that matters, not the sex, and the ideal of the person in an integration, not a one-sided exaggeration.

In the little monastery in Oxford, North Carolina, we used to have a few guests join us in the prayers of the Office and at Mass. It was our custom to put a cowl on them; this made them feel part of the community and also gave the group some semblance of dignity and celebration. In the case of women it was helpful also, for the aspect of sex was softened and one shared with them a sense of simply being people before God, neither male nor female. It was a good idea, I think.

Perhaps, too, we ought to interpret Saint Paul's words in a fresh light: the strictures so ill-received by feminists. If instead of confining his advice to the female sex, we were to think of it as for all, men on their part would be counselled to give scope to their *anima* and realize that submission, docility, deference are also human, not merely reserved for women. If past heretics had been more open to this influence within them, we would not have inherited a dismembered and divided Church. We are persons, not sexes, and the call is to integration. Still, it is not all that rare. The Bishops gathered in solemn Council did for sure give vent to their views with ardor and vehemence, but in the end they sat silent in those long, stately rows in Saint Peter's, dressed in long gowns and with mitres on their heads, and duly heard the last and final word from the Holy Father, Christ's vicar.

Saint Paul would have been much pleased.

In this connection it is amusing to note that the men here in New Guinea, in taking part in the dances or sing-sings, wear the woman's grass skirt. What is this if not an indication that in the dance they are neither male nor female, but in some sense another kind of person, taking part in a role that places them in another category, sacred if you will, but in any case all-embracing, integrated.

So long as integration of the male and female aspects of the human person is vaguely associated with homosexuality, then it is clear that we have on hand a style that will make integration very hard to come by, if not impossible. But it will come anyway. The trend is there. That is why we can anticipate a coming time of profound prayer, mysticism, a flowering of art, of beauty, of literature. It is not too much to say that there will be contemplative monks in great number, many poets, priests, prophets. For these graces come only from *persons*, fully integrated people. The artist is such because he is wide open to both dimensions of the human soul and in the tension of the contrast finds inspiration and fruitful endeavor. The half-person, the all-male man, cannot possibly be an artist, a poet, a writer, a dreamer. He is not wholly human. Nor can the woman reduced to a sex symbol: she is a freak.

To say that this is coming is perhaps more possibility than prophecy, for the call of grace and nature may be refused. The tension that rises from the interplay of counter forces is fruitful, but it is also very difficult to sustain: not all artist souls succeed in what is called the business of living. As often as not, their personal lives, for all their gifts, are touched with tragedy or disaster. Nor do all celibates achieve the inner marriage. But if it is arduous enough in any climate, it is far more so in our own. With such negative attitudes toward the feminine, it is no small attainment to achieve integration on any level. Here it is surely true, that a prophet is not welcome in his own country. The matter is made far worse by the lack of faith, for if there be one quality that can make the integrated life a realizable dream, it is faith in God. The difficulties are thus many times magnified for our living in an age of weakened faith, if there be any at all.

The prime and ultimate love that man is called to is the love of God. If society does not provide for this, it ignores the greatest need man has, denies him the deepest happiness. This anti-feminine, anti-faith setting makes mutuality needlessly difficult. Yet this in turn does clarify the situation and point up the obstacles. Societies have been changed, cultures redirected: the breakdown of our own will necessitates the building of a new; the success one achieves in integration, then, is both a personal matter and a common one, for one's own good and the general.

The Church provides the guidance, the light and direction. At the same time, it is light marked with mercy, with an awareness of the hardships involved in response. It is difficult enough to lead a full human life and cope with one's own darkness and weakness. When society itself provides no help whatever, when it resists and opposes such growth, then one is called to the heroic. This is the challenge today: to follow like sheep the sick pattern offered, or to strike out on one's own to lead a life in accord with one's own truth and God's.

Sex is made a substitute for religion, but scarcely an adequate one. Yet one feels the effort being made now to pull off the

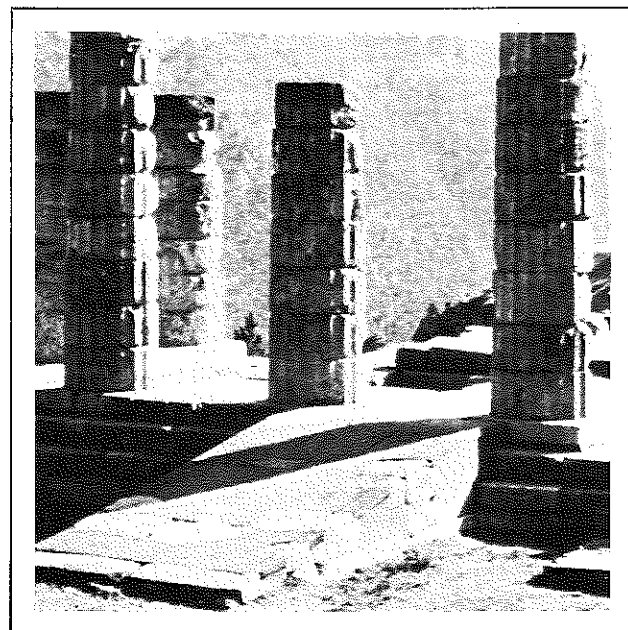
substitution. One fancies the emptiness that would follow if sex stimuli were suddenly turned off in the environment. Mass psychosis would undoubtedly follow.

Further, any inner life always puts one in contact with other forces, dark aspects of human nature. Unless these confrontations are deftly handled, they can overwhelm one. Despair, hatred, violence, wait in the wings. Christ is typical in meeting Satan in the desert, not unique.

All of which only serves to make stronger a contention that the role of the celibate today is more to the point than perhaps ever before. The man or woman consecrated to God and devoted to the life of the spirit is the person most useful as inspiration, guide, example, in the search for the full human life, in no matter what particular context it be placed.

The specific beauty of the monastic life in working out this integration is in its expression of both sides of the human need: a discipline of some rigor and intensity yet in a climate of love and concern; an entry into work which is realistic and demanding, yet controlled and not permitted a dominative role; a program of liturgical prayer of profound beauty and depth, but balanced with expression of private and solitary prayer; a community of genuine brotherly love which avoids both oppressive regimentation and the casualness which would rob the group of vigor, keeping open, as well, the vistas of solitude. A setting of simple beauty and peace, close to nature, close to reality, close to God: life in truth.

That Christian men and women have been following such a pattern of life for almost two thousand years says as much about the longings of the human heart as it does about the validity of the monastic way. □



THE IDEOLOGY OF SEXUAL EMANCIPATION AND ITS DOMESTICATION, 1900-1935

Christopher Lasch

In the nineteenth century middle-class culture relegated marriage and sex to private life, as the family more and more took on the character of a refuge from the brutal industrial order. Marriages were no longer arranged by parents and elders. Formerly courtship had been surrounded by publicity and ritual; now young people were expected to make appropriate matches with little direct intervention by their elders, experimenting with a variety of prospective partners while at the same time preserving their chastity. After marriage the couple was to find each other, and later in their offspring, almost their entire emotional sustenance. In a ruthlessly competitive world, marriage alone was believed to offer the possibility of intimate relationships uncorrupted by ambition or money. The inward-turning family seemed to constitute, moreover, the ideal environment in which to raise children, in a period when one of the principal objects of nurture was to protect children against premature exposure to the adult world.

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Victorian marriage was inherently unstable, however. The domestic ideal exalted womanhood while at the same time restricting the scope of women's activities. It encouraged a new individualism among women while insisting that woman's duty was to sacrifice herself for the good of the race. It condemned arranged marriages on the grounds that a successful marriage could originate in love alone, but on the other hand it opposed divorce, thereby upholding the contradiction, according to critics of the divorce laws, that marriages ought to be forcibly kept together even when they had become emotionally meaningless. The demand for easier divorce, like much of feminism, grew directly out of the logic of middle-class domesticity itself, even though both these movements ultimately threatened the stability of the family. Both movements proposed to broaden still further the area of personal choice, but it was the domestic ideology that had glorified personal choice in the first place. The idealization of married love, motherhood, and domesticity implied greater equality within marriage, easier divorce, and a new emphasis on individuality for women; and it was difficult to resist the logic of these demands without falling back on patriarchal arguments that had been repudiated by bourgeois domesticity itself.

A deterioration in popular understanding of sex contributed to the demand for the reform of marriage and the status of women. The privatization of love and marriage necessarily entailed privatization of sex. Indeed the desire to shield the young from sexual knowledge — knowledge acquired, for example, through contact with servants — had furnished much of the initial energy behind the privatization of the family. One of the results of this process was that a communal, public tradition was lost, a tradition once carried on through public rituals such as bedding the bride or bundling and through crowded and promiscuous living arrangements. Before the nineteenth century, "transmission from one generation to the next was ensured by the everyday participation of children in adult life," in the words of Philippe Ariès. "... Wherever people worked, and also wherever they amused themselves, even in taverns of ill-repute, children were mingled with adults. In this way they learned the art of living from everyday experience." Once this participation ceased, ignorance became common, reflecting itself in rising rates of venereal disease, in the bridal night debacle, and in the whole problem of female nervousness, as it was called, which troubled so many doctors and laymen throughout the nineteenth century, with increasing urgency toward the century's end. "Nothing shows more clearly the extent to which modern society has atomized itself," Lionel Trilling has written, "than the isolation in sexual ignorance which exists among us." By the end of the nineteenth century, the consequences of this ignorance were becoming unmistakable.

Speculation centered on the nervous woman; a great variety of remedies were commended to her attention. Doctors prescribed fresh air and exercise. Mary Baker Eddy proposed positive thinking and psychoanalysis, a new kind of self-knowledge. Feminists, who were also concerned with this problem, attributed neurasthenia to "underemployment." Still another group of reformers, the one that chiefly concerns us here, proposed a new code of sexual ethics, founded, like psychoanalysis, on the scientific study of sex, but openly critical of the prevailing morality. Havelock Ellis, unlike Freud, was not content merely to analyze sexuality and to help individual patients; he wished to liberate sexuality, in the hope that "the delicate adjustment of the needs of each sex to the needs of the other sex to the end of what Chaucer called fine loving, the adjustment of the needs of both sexes to the larger ends of living, may well furnish a perpetual moral discipline which extends its fortifying influence to men and women alike." Ellis's studies had convinced him that the range and variety of human sexuality were enormous, that the distinction between its perverse and normal expressions was to some degree an arbitrary one, and that the inclinations of the participants, not an *a priori* morality, ought to define the limits of permissible behavior. Anything goes, in other words, so long as nobody gets hurt. Education, Ellis believed, could play a useful role in removing sexual "inhibitions." This was the lesson to be learned from psychoanalysis, even by those like himself who denied that

"psychoanalysis is necessarily a desirable or even possible way of attaining the revolution of love."

Both Ellis and Edward Carpenter, who did so much to convert the psychology of sex into a program of sexual liberation, favored many reforms also favored by feminists: coeducation, easier divorce without adversary proceedings, equalization of sex roles in marriage, the economic independence of women. "You cannot truly give yourself to another, unless you are master or mistress of yourself to begin with," Carpenter explained. What set these reformers off from the feminists, especially in a period when feminists were rallying to the slogan, "Votes for Women, Purity for Men," was their passionate advocacy of what Ellis called the "erotic rights of women," to which all these other rights, they thought, were merely preliminary. The object of women's liberation, in their view, ought to be to make women better lovers — and men too, since as Ellis put it, the "wife-problem" was at the same time a "husband-problem." Feminists, on the other hand, condemned the double standard in the interest of chastity for both sexes. They had little sympathy with the emerging religion of sexuality or with talk of love as a "moral discipline," a "revelation," and a "sacrament." Their complaint, on the contrary, was precisely that women were "over-sexed," as Charlotte Perkins Gilman put it.

The tension between the ideology of sexual liberation and feminism, muted in the work of Carpenter and Ellis (which could be acclaimed by a feminist like Olive Schreiner), became much more obvious in the work of D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence's ideas about sexual liberation, like those of Ellis, owed something to psychoanalysis; for that matter they owed something to Ellis himself. On the other hand, the religious, mystical side of Lawrence's thought was more fully developed. Ellis and Carpenter spoke of love as a religion while relying on science and technology to supply the means of spiritual emancipation; thus birth control, according to Ellis, "effects finally the complete liberation of the spiritual object of marriage." Lawrence, on the other hand, equated science with a desiccated rationalism, with industrialism, and in general with "the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanised greed" the destruction of which, he thought, had become the precondition of any human life worth the name. In opposition to these he exalted what he called blood-knowledge, the "resurrection of the body."

From this point of view feminism merely translated into feminine terms the masculine will-to-power, itself an expression of the modern disease. It provided a rationale for sexual warfare, the most characteristic form of modern dissolution. This warfare, and the ways in which it had been raised to a new level of deadliness not only by feminism but by the new openness about sex, were among the major themes of Lawrence's fiction, but they were also central to his own program of sexual liberation, which started from the premise "that only through a readjustment between men and women, and a making free and healthy of this sex, will [England] get out of her present at-

rophy." The prophet and novelist in Lawrence had this much in common, that both saw the sex war as the most compelling evidence of whatever was wrong with modern life. Beyond this important perception, however, the novelist and reformer had little in common, and Lawrence's work degenerated as it moved from the criticism of sexual warfare to the prophecy of sexual liberation.

The degeneration can be traced by comparing the first and third versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In the earlier version Parkin, the gamekeeper, is small, wiry, moustached, and a little ridiculous. The return of his shrewish wife, from whom he has been estranged, results in his becoming the laughingstock of the village and the butt of Clifford Chatterley's sarcastic wit. Connie herself is capable of seeing him as "ridiculous, rather small, rather stiff, with his ragged moustache sticking out and his wary movement. A ridiculous little male, on his guard and wary in his own self-importance!" Parkin is both touchy and assertive about his class origin and about the great social distance that separates him from Connie. They tryanny of class, in fact, provides the central theme of the novel, and the story with considerable subtlety interweaves the themes of class war and sex war. In both conflicts women seem to have gained the upper hand. "The woman, feeling for some reason triumphant in our day, man having yielded most of the weapons into her hands, looks on her masculine partner with ridicule. While the man, knowing he has given up his advantage to the woman and not having strength to get it back, looks on her with intense resentment." Resisting the temptation to play off against the debility of the upper-class male the sexual potency of the proletariat, Lawrence makes it clear that Parkin is hardly more of a match for Connie than Clifford, since she has in her hands the "weapons" not only of sex but of her superior class. Having a great deal of money, she can afford to take a lofty view of its unimportance, triumphantly disposing of Parkin's harping on this subject as further proof of the petty vanity of the male. The best Parkin can do is, in the end, to reject her offer to set themselves up on a nice little farm somewhere, to refuse to be bought off on his lady's terms — but to Connie, this is "a paltry, cowardly way of looking at it! As if I cared who was first or second." Parkin can see, from his lowly position in the social scale, what Connie conceals from herself, that "the very way you say it shows you feel yourself top dog, an' you're going to be top dog no matter who the man is, nor what." His truculence finally provokes from Connie the scornful outburst:

"In my house, if you please, there is no top dog and no under dog, nor any dogs at all. We are human beings, and we let one another alone, and there is no fight for who shall be top dog. We have the decency to remain free on our own levels in my house. And in my house it shall always be so. I understand nothing of the nasty common business of being top dog and under dog."

He smiled silently and sourly [Lawrence continues]. "All right!" he said, "You asked me."

"I'm very glad I did! For now I know," she cried in contempt.

On this note they part. The power of sexual attraction, it appears, can do very little to break down the barriers of class,

especially when class barriers are reinforced by an ideology of sexual emancipation that itself rests on upper-class privilege.

At some point between the first and the final versions of this novel, Lawrence convinced himself, as he put it in the second version, that "class is an anachronism. It finished in 1914. Nothing remains but a vast proletariat . . . and then a few individuals who have not yet been proletarianised." Accordingly, the class theme disappears from the later versions. Far from being an improvement, as Mark Shorer and other critics have claimed, this change is what makes it possible for Lawrence to use the third *Lady Chatterley* as a vehicle for his increasingly vapid pronouncements about the "mystery of the phallus" and the "resurrection of the body." Parkin, renamed Mellors, has been cleaned up by giving him a fellowship to grammar school, fluency in French, and three years in India as an army officer, the combined effect of which, as Connie notes with pride, is to make him "absolutely presentable." A more important effect is that it turns Mellors into a cultural drop-out, a drop-out by choice, who in Lawrence's words "has refused to creep up into the middle classes, when he had the chance." Instead of a proletarian fighting for his manhood with the only resources at his disposal, a narrow and highly conventional belief that the man ought to be "top dog," Mellors now emerges as a member of that privileged elite which has resisted proletarianization — also, incongruously, as a prophet of sexual revolution. Connie for her part is unconvincingly described as "quite devoid of class feeling." The novel ends with Connie and Mellors planning to settle down on a farm — the very solution that was rejected in the first version as a typical self-delusion of upper-class sentimentality, which can afford to despise such things as money and class simply because they can be taken for granted.

The strength of Lawrence's original conception, apart from its ability to depict real people in real social situations instead of as abstractions and mouthpieces, was that it dramatized the complicated interconnections between culture and class, sexuality and class, and exposed the class basis of sexual ideology. While we can understand and even sympathize with Connie's ideas about sexual equality, we can also sympathize with Parkin's resistance to them, on the grounds that sexual equality is likely to be illusory in an essentially inegalitarian society — indeed that programs of sexual equality will easily become instruments of both class and sexual warfare in their own right. In the third version, nothing remains of the social milieu except a running diatribe against industrialism, the brutal regime of technique from which, Lawrence tells us again and again, a few free spirits are privileged to escape, by means of "warm-hearted fucking," to farms in the country.

The critique of sexual combat, which by no means completely disappeared even from the third version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, had special resonance in the United States, where women were superficially so emancipated and where the entire

culture, as innumerable American writers had noted with sorrow, had been feminized by the convention that culture, being essentially decorative and ornamental, belonged to women's "sphere," while the rough work of the world belonged to men. Especially the group of writers and critics who gathered around the short-lived *Seven Arts* magazine, founded in 1916 — by Van Wyck Brooks, Randolph Bourne, Waldo Frank and others — had condemned this sexual division of labor, treating it as a symptom of the underlying divorce between the physical and spiritual, which in turn derived from the domination of American life by two great culturally debilitating traditions, Puritanism and pioneering. "Desiccated culture at one end and stark utility at the other," wrote Van Wyck Brooks in *America's Coming-of-Age*, "have created a deadlock in the American mind, and all our life drifts chaotically between the two extremes." In the absence of what Brooks called "a collective spiritual life," marriage, like almost everything else, became a purely private matter. "Man here," according to Waldo Frank, "was indeed the fragment, the child and the maker of chaos: the instrument of Power, not Love. Along with the greater Whole, marriage faded. Indeed, Protestantism's acceptance of divorce prophesies this dissolution." Marriage was inevitably degraded in a world where personal service ranked lower in status than work in a mill, where material production ranked more highly than "spiritual consummation." "Thus, our women became poor cooks, unsatisfactory wives, neurotic mothers." It was partly in response to this deterioration of domestic life, according to Frank, that American women resorted to the "tool of morals and religion," asserting their dominion over culture, throwing themselves into the moral reformation of society, renouncing their sexuality in the name of social uplift and women's rights. Frank's attack on modern egoism and specifically on the feminine "will-to-power" derived in part from Lawrence, as did his hope that in spite of the excesses of the new woman, "the first step in the creation of a Whole from our American chaos will be the union of a man with this new Eve who was not formed from his rib."

If Lawrence's critique of the sex war showed American critics how to extend and deepen their analysis of the "Puritan's will-to-power" by examining its devastating effects on emotional life, his retreat from his own earlier perceptions already foreshadowed a retreat along similar lines on the part of American intellectuals. What began as a criticism of the split between "high ideals and catchpenny realities," culture and utility, the spiritual and the physical (a split, it should be noted, that was correctly perceived to be bound up with the existing class structure of America), collapsed into a celebration of the "life force" or, worse yet, into a preoccupation with sexual technique. By the mid-twenties the problem of female "nervousness" had resolved itself into the problem of frigidity, and sexual fulfillment was defined more and more narrowly as the "achievement" of orgasm. A rash of sex manuals appeared, and although writers in this period still resorted to the lyrical imagery of Ellis and Carpenter, speaking of the need for the husband to play on his wife's keys, extolling the mystery of sex,

and so on, the view of sex they conveyed was a mechanical view, one that was more concerned with the science of sex than with the art of love. Whatever good advice these manuals may have contained was vitiated by the form in which it was cast and by the assumption that proper technique would somehow translate itself into rich emotional experience.

Lacking any larger social vision, the advocates of sexual emancipation found it impossible to confront the implications of their program for the future of love and marriage. They could not altogether avoid an uneasy awareness that the spread of their own doctrines might make the future of marriage somewhat problematical; for in stressing the need for endless variety, in urging a constant renewal of the excitement of courtship, and in seeking to liberate untapped sexual energies hitherto inhibited by a combination of ignorance and prudery, they were encouraging men and women to demand of marriage what it might have been more reasonable to seek in sexual promiscuity. When they tried to demystify sex by constantly calling it an appetite, these teachers raised inevitable questions about the monotonous diet of monogamy. Some, like Margaret Sanger, proposed, in effect, to heighten the value of monogamous sex by creating an artificial scarcity. She advised married couples to study the wife's monthly cycle and "if possible keep a record" of it, with an eye to confining sexual relations to a certain period of the month, "a monthly courtship and honeymoon." Others thought the "obvious varietist propensities" of the male, in the words of William J. Fielding, could be reconciled with monogamy (an institution the case for which rested not on sexual grounds but on "various economic and social factors") only "by making his sexual experience within the monogamic marriage as rich and wide and varied and experimental as it possibly can be."

Still others — a minority — accepted the full implications of the liberationist position and predicted the demise of marriage. For the most part, however, advocates of sexual emancipation insisted that it could only improve married life. This characteristically American attempt to have it both ways, by softening the contradiction between monogamy and the ideal of sexual freedom, made it possible for those who wished above all to defend marriage to adopt much of the liberationist ideology, to domesticate it, and thus to turn it to their own purposes.

Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver, probably the most widely known and influential of the sexual liberators, shocked respectable opinion in the 'twenties with his advocacy of "companionate marriage." His purpose, however, was to save marriage, not destroy it, by educating people in sexual hygiene, eliminating the punitive features of marriage and divorce law, and drawing a sharp legal distinction between childless marriages and the "procreative family." By allowing the former to be dissolved by mutual consent, Lindsey hoped to prevent couples who were ill-matched or unfit for parenthood from entering more perma-

nent unions and from raising families. In effect, he wanted to professionalize parenthood, disqualifying those who had failed to achieve stable unions. Ultimately the state might license parenthood, he thought, thereby specializing the childrearing function in a given sector of the population and freeing the rest for childless unions based on sexual companionship alone. (Margaret Mead has recently attracted a good deal of attention with a similar proposal.) Under such a regime, made technologically feasible for the first time by the development of cheap and effective contraceptives, "the unfit of the human species," Lindsey predicted, "would virtually cease to reproduce their kind."

As judge of the famous Juvenile and Family Court of Denver, one of the first of its kind, Lindsey had to deal at close range with the "sexual revolution" and its immediate practical consequences. His vivid account of the "revolt of youth" probably made him more enemies, as the bearer of bad news, than his proposals for reform. What he described is familiar enough today but was hardly familiar in the 'twenties — "hard-boiled" young people deeply contemptuous of their elders, high on (alcoholic) drugs, bent on "thrills" and able to afford them. According to Lindsey, the combined effects of affluence, birth control, the constant stimulation of the mass media, and the new freedom enjoyed by women, undermined traditional forms of discipline and eroded the "inner restraint" (particularly in women) that always constituted the most effective defense against sexual promiscuity. Far from celebrating the collapse of these restraints, he wanted to reconstitute them, partly by means of "better education" and partly by removing the stigma from premarital intercourse by the simple act of legalizing it. These were the standard tactics of enlightened progressive reformers and of the therapeutic professions that contributed so much to the development of progressivism.

Like so many other progressives, Lindsey had a low opinion of American parents and hoped to counteract their influence by setting up elaborate programs of sex education in the schools. Just as "Golden Rule" Jones and Brand Whitlock in Toledo had attempted to abrogate whole categories of crime by abrogating the blue laws that made harmless activities illegal, so Lindsey proposed to legalize fornication on condition that it arose in the normal course of monogamous relationship and that proper precautions were taken to prevent unwanted births. In both cases one of the best arguments for dissolving the apparatus of "Puritanical" repression was that the activities in question were too widespread to stamp out and that intelligent regulation and licensing promised better results than prohibition. According to Lindsey, the practice of living together before marriage was already common, and if it often had pathological consequences, these could be attributed precisely to the attempt to stamp it out. In effect he asked that legal processes embodying allegedly outmoded concepts such as "guilt" and "sin" be converted into medical ones. Along with his obsession with health and eugenics, this adherence to a medical definition of crime and social disorder identifies Lindsey as a spokesman for the emerging health industry and its attempt to redefine crime and immorality as ignorance, "maladjustment," and "mental illness"

and to monopolize their "treatment." Again and again he describes his clients as misguided, misinformed, and inadequately educated rather than immoral. "The Juvenile Court of Denver is a hospital," he insists, "a moral hospital. It deals with the sick and crippled of spirit." Like other interpreters and partisans of the sexual revolution, Lindsey hoped more than anything else to promote a "healthy" attitude toward sex — to get people to "take Sex as much for granted as the weather."

Advocates of sexual liberation claimed as allies the new sex researchers, whose statistical surveys of sexual behavior, they contended, gave further proof that a revolution in morals was under way. Yet the most celebrated of the numerous surveys undertaken in the 'twenties, G. V. Hamilton's *A Research in Marriage*, attempted to prove the opposite. A close reading shows, moreover, that it was undertaken as a defense, not a criticism, of monogamy. Adopting the guise of scientific impartiality, Hamilton conceded that the future of marriage was open to a number of questions, but he framed the questions in a way that ruled out uncongenial conclusions in advance.

Is marriage itself a faulty institution? Does it prescribe a kind of relationship between a man and a woman which tends in the end either to impair seriously or to destroy completely the couple's original congeniality and their sexual attractiveness to one another? Or does the fault lie essentially in the kind of conscious and unconscious mental equipment that our human environment tends to build up for us throughout infancy and childhood?

If Hamilton had asked not whether monogamy was inherently "faulty" but whether it could survive in the face of increasing sexual permissiveness, his own evidence might have forced him to conclusions far from sanguine. Fifty-four per cent of his male subjects and thirty-five of the women had engaged in intercourse before marriage; well over twenty per cent of both men and women had committed adultery; and only ten per cent of the men and sixteen per cent of the women objected to adultery on principle. But having given himself only the choice between a "faulty" institution and the faulty individuals who embarked on it, Hamilton could dispose of this evidence by arguing that early "conditioning" created neurotic fears about sex and a gross ignorance of the subject and that if many marriages failed, they failed because the people who made bad marriages were "for the most part cripples whose deformities of psychodynamic organization are easily overlooked by the untrained observer." Posing as one who held "no brief either for or against the institution of marriage," Hamilton argued that it was impossible to come to any conclusions at all until marriage had been "tried out with an intelligently reared generation" — an ostensibly impartial suspension of judgment that had the effect of vindicating marriage by attributing its shortcomings to bad "preparation."

Even more ingenious was Hamilton's theory of the ideological origins of adultery. It was his impression that young wives committed adultery not in response to an overmastering sexual hunger but "out of loyalty to a belief in spousal sex freedom."

What attracted them to adultery was not adultery itself but the idea of adultery. It followed once again that faulty attitudes toward marriage underlay the so-called marriage crisis — in this case, the dream of sexual freedom and variety prompted by the concept of romantic love. It was therefore reassuring to find that ninety-six of Hamilton's two hundred subjects said that they were reasonably satisfied with their marriages and that their attitude toward sex, in Hamilton's words, was "essentially realistic." These findings, according to Hamilton, justified the conclusion that marriage had emerged from his study in "rather better" shape "than might have been expected."

Hamilton's work, acclaimed by radicals as another proof of the breakdown of marriage, can be seen in retrospect as part of a vigorous counterattack on the "new morality." This counterattack had been shaping up for some time, and by the late twenties its principal elements were beginning to cohere. No longer content with an *ad hoc* defense that tried to counter specific criticisms as they arose, the guardians of public morality began to articulate a position of their own, which if it still fell short of anything that could be called a theory of the family, managed to explain away most of the main items in the indictment. With the "revolution in morals" still at its height, they had already won widespread support for the view that "the institution of the family will continue to exist," as the *New Republic* wrote in summarizing the results of a conference on family life. "It is being altered, but is in no danger of being destroyed."

Books like Abraham Myerson's *Nervous Housewife* and Robert and Frances Binkley's *What Is Right with Marriage* make it clear that defenders of marriage proposed to save marriage by executing a strategic retreat — a retreat that was formulated in direct response to the "new morality" and to surveys that seemed to show that it was widely accepted. Hamilton's report revealing the prevalence of adultery, together with V. F. Calverton's ideological attack on monogamy, *The Bankruptcy of Marriage*, goaded the Binkleys into an elaborate reply. These works, they claimed, showed that the so-called revolt against marriage was not a revolt against marriage at all, merely an attack on the "sex-monopoly ideal" with which marriage had formerly been associated. "The belief that marriage is 'bankrupt' . . . usually focuses on the contention that sex monopoly is indefensible or unattainable." The Binkleys themselves put forward certain arguments in favor of sex monopoly, but they knew that those arguments could not counter the opposition's claim that the ideal of fidelity not only was pernicious but, more to the point, that no one observed it — and that this breach, in turn, signalled the breakdown of bourgeois marriage. In order to meet this difficulty the Binkleys had to argue that sexual fidelity no longer mattered to marriage — indeed that "emphasis on exclusive sex possession" actually had a "destructive effect" (notwithstanding their own arguments in its favor). Similarly the "virginity standard" — the requirement that the woman be a virgin at marriage — could safely be dispensed with. "Exclusiveness in sex," the Binkleys argued, "is an ideal toward which [marriage] may spontaneously and rightly strive, but it is not properly a standard to be imposed upon married people,

willy-nilly, from without." Each couple should decide for themselves whether they would consider infidelity as evidence of disloyalty. If this meant a general devaluation of the sexual side of marriage, that was the price that had to be paid for marital harmony in a world where sexual fidelity was no longer imposed from without. Many other writers made the same point. According to Meyerson, "sex is overemphasized by our civilization on its distracting side . . . and underemphasized so far as its realities go," thereby arousing expectations that marriage cannot possibly fulfill. "This is the great harm of prurient clothes, literature, art, and stage, — it unfits people for sex reality."

Another piece of ideological baggage that had to be thrown overboard, according to those who defended marriage in the name of science, was the notion that marriage should be free of conflict and tension. Quarrels, like coitus, should be regarded as a normal part of marriage, events that should be taken in stride and even turned to productive purposes. Quarrels might even have a beneficial effect, the Binkleys thought, if they were undertaken in the proper spirit and rounded off with "an artistic consummation." Conflict could become cathartic, provided that it was "so stage-managed that it will become, in retrospect, a pleasant memory."

It should now be clear why the attack on romantic love played as important a part in the defense of marriage as in the criticism of marriage. Romantic love, it was thought, set impossibly high standards of devotion and loyalty — standards marriage could no longer meet. By undermining "sober-satisfying everyday life," romance wrought as much havoc as prudery, its twin. Both ignored "reality — reality, which is satisfying and pleasant unless examined with the prejudices instilled by the hypersexual romance writer, and the perverted sexuality of the prude." In the minds of radicals and conservatives alike, romantic love was associated not only with illusion and dangerous fantasies but with disease — with consumptive heroines, heroes wasting away with feverish desire, and deathbed farewells; with the overwrought, unhealthy music of Wagner, Strauss, and Puccini. Romantic love threatened both psychic and physical stability. The fashionable talk of marriage as an art conveyed a conception of marriage and the family that drew not so much from esthetics as from science and technology — ultimately from the science of healing. When people said that marriage was the art of personal "interaction," what they really meant was that marriage, like everything else, rested on proper technique — the technique of "stage-managing" quarrels, the technique of mutual agreement on how much adultery the marriage could tolerate, the technique of what to do in bed and how to do it. The new sex manuals were merely the most obvious example of a general attempt to rationalize the life of the emotions in the interest of psychic health. That this attempt entailed a vigorous assault on "illusion" and fantasy is highly significant. It implies a concerted attack on privacy and inwardness, which were perceived as a threat to stability, equilibrium, and "adjustment." Marriage was to be saved at the expense of the ego.

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A LETTER FROM NED O'GORMAN

September, 1975

Dear friends,

I offer these words to *Katallagete* to do with as you please. I am not at all sure they are worthy of publication. I have found the letter hard to write, hard to finish, hard to think of with any assurance of its common sense or vision. So here it is — a meditation on salvation: mine and the folk I work with in Harlem. It is brimful of arrogance, ignorance, and absolutely rotten theology.

I am a Roman Catholic of forty-five years with hardly a day I can remember when I have been touched with doubt. I believe what I am told, I try to obey, and most modern notions about religion, ecumenism, clerical celibacy, sexuality, etc., seem to me absurd, reckless, and un-sacred. Though I have never doubted my Church and her teachings even when they seemed extravagantly conservative, my life has been filled with awesome seizures of the demons, the body's demons, the mind's — but throughout the horrors, grace has raised up out of the ashes the world's sweetness: an achieved life, a clean household, a

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brave and gentle child, the accomplished work, the brandishing of life before the forces of death. The Lord Jesus has saved me, I think from hell first of all, but more importantly he has saved me from myself. It is of that salvation that I will try to write to you about, dear friends, for this will be merely a letter and I beg you to treat it as such.

The gospels are the sea of the spirit where I can navigate if I dare the mystery of the Lord: his storms, his great calms, his august illuminations, the attacks of the many-toothed beelzebubs, the joyous declarations of his friendship, his thunderous musings on judgment and sin. The Church is the barque into which I have climbed through baptism that carries me through this mystery so that I may reconnoitre it, plunge into it, as if some day before I die I might know it as an explorer might, the mystery of the earth: the gospel, the loam of my exile's landscape. The gospels are first of all proclamations of the earth, of its glory and its mystery, its evil and its holiness. I read the gospels from the center of my work in Harlem looking through them into the massive strokes and maimed filaments of a people's agony. But I read them too through a maimed and stricken self, a double reckoning in mind: my salvation and the salvation of the people I have found myself so bound to since I opened my nursery on Madison Avenue in 1966. The gospels are the fissure at the center of the eternal Word where I glimpse the mystery simplified and incarnate.

I come to this letter in such confusion! I found myself asking what kind of people do we find in the gospels? I thought about it. There are no wiseacres there. No comics. No wits. No poets (alas!), artists, kings, philosophers, mathematicians. The Lord knew them well. Some other kind of men needed to inhabit the gospels: the suffering, the dying, the lost, the tax collector, the whore, the sexually incompetent, the finished-off man, the mourner, the widow; man when he begins to see the light, the summer shadows; man when he feels the lift of the frozen plains of his heart; man at the verge of the abyss; man hemmed in by the dark winds. The gospels is the guide toward the Lord for men who know the agony of the extended muscle, the trembling fist, the gnawed tongue. Through the gospels rushes the Jesus of the Testament who brings the foods and swaddling clothes of salvation.

The more I write to you, the more I feel the glory of it all. For you see I did have once an encounter with evil. At Mass, many years ago, I thought of what a friend had suggested to me the night before: that I was not a good man but a debauched one, that in me was the libertine, the sexually moronic poet, but I went nowhere in that delusion, not because I was not drawn to excess and the attendant sloth that still fights for dominion over me, but because I had other things to do — write poems, go to Mass, face my family, earn a living, become a man of letters and, though I did not know it then, become a father. I am not freed from sloth's dominion nor from that charming passage through my life of the sensual braggart but I do think it is marvelous that perhaps the Lord Jesus has saved me.

I write from my desk thirty-one floors up on West 66th Street, in New York City. I watch the Hudson River, the Jersey Hills, Lincoln Center, and Fred Shady's elegant and serene statue of St. Peter, whose net is cast over a pool where two fountains like shattered candles brightly and silently trouble the dusk! All that before me. How blest I am to be here, I think. For this house is the camp of a victory over the forces of evil in my spirit, over the forces of evil in my fancy's world, over the loves and dreadful-loves in my life that had for a time thrown me to my knees in a death-agony. I experience now a sort of hint of salvation. On my windowsill I have put photographs of certain beloved friends: Mark Van Doren, Bob Lax, Cyril Cusack, Sir Herbert Read, Martin D'Arcy, Adolph Gottlieb, Sister Corita, and in a white wooden frame a woodcut of David Jones. I think, my God, how marvelous to be in this room with the sound of my little boy Ricky in the next room playing with his soldiers. For the past year has been a ruckus indeed. I have spent myself on so much rage and senseless tears, on so much fury and drinking. My school in Harlem was dead for six months. I had no money. My school had none. Books lay unwritten, books I had contracted for. Poems scattered about me like uprooted plants. I had my kid. But my heart, my imagination, were dead within me. I was merely the skin of life detached from the marrow, from the fire of life. I wept and crept along the floor, drank and

whored, sniveled and plotted. I was as close to damnation then as I shall ever dare to be. The end was in my bones; the imp gnawed at my skin. But through it all, as I sought the key to my salvation, I found the name of Jesus and that is the glory I am trying to write to you about.

I often find in my work that I am dead with hopelessness. Yet when I am, my life is not. I write to you with an excess of intimacy. How, I ask myself, do I work? How do I act in Harlem if I believed that in the gospels is the secret of how I ought to work and how I ought to act? I think it has something to do with the mystery of salvation. I look about me and find that the folk I work with are cast into a world that despises life: a life that is broken from that saved world I know. My friends there live a life where the day is death, where birth is doom, where love is hate, where lamentation is daily bread, where peace, joy, silence, hope, are alien notions in the grip of dispassionate powers, hard as nails, hot as sun flares.

What do I bring to my work? Oh, I know what I do each day. I bring food, run a school, give jobs and a certain constant feeling for life to the streets, but what do I bring as a man of the Church, what do I bring as a man who has experienced somehow the wonder of being saved? Only this letter and its intimacy lets me think about such a thing! It scares me to find myself writing such thoughts! But Lord, I must go each day into Harlem with more than food and clothing! I must go with an eye toward freeing the children and their families from the horror of history! (All those exclamation points!) I must somehow find the way and the vision to tell the people in the street that Jesus is within *them* to fill them with life, that he is within *them* that they might seek joy and peace and food and shelter. He is within them that they *will* be saved.

Often I hate my days in Harlem. I become impatient with idleness and despair, with lamentation and rage. You see, I think that the Lord came to Harlem in the mystery of his life on earth, as he came to the Jews, to the obdurate, to the abandoned. He came to me as he comes to them and what I must learn to do is to give my people that sense of being saved that I have. How puffed up that must sound. But I am idle, I am sensually vagrant, I am given to fury, I am the master of the arts of abandonment. I think of Jesus so much, of how he must have known that men like me and my brothers on the street would need him, that he must somehow come first to them and give them the news of the gospels: that all men are Jesus' brothers, that salvation is his gift, there to grasp, there to take, simply, as if it were an apple on a tree in a full orchard.

I have terrific trouble in bringing this wonder to my work. Last week, for instance. A twelve year old kid I trusted tried to rape a ten year old girl. Simply locked the door of her room, offered her ten bucks and then proceeded to jump on top of her. Her mother heard her scream and called her husband to

break down the door of her room. When I met the boy in the street the next day I asked him what he thought of what he had done. He looked at me as if I were stone and spat out an obscenity. He walked away down the street, stopping once to smile at me, but it was not a smile, it was a moral scratch across my spirit. He had no sense of shame or sadness, just a resigned, mindless calm, as if a storm had passed through his spirit leaving no wreck, just a twisted lintel, the house intact, but the foundation, touched by the last whip of the fury, had been weakened forever.

I knew when I saw him leave me and go into the street's embrace that I must perceive him with the same joy that I perceive myself.

Salvation is a thing of familial style. I am saved only if I save, a bit, my brother! My salvation is my brother's. At the terminal nerve of my life's dark center was the beginning of my salvation. At the terminal nerve of my brother's in Harlem is the beginning of his. I must celebrate that nerve and bring to it the convergence of all my strengths. The men who beat me, the women who starve themselves to feed their kids, the whores, junkies, transvestites, homosexuals, pimps, thieves, muggers, are God's people, and it is to them that I have been sent.

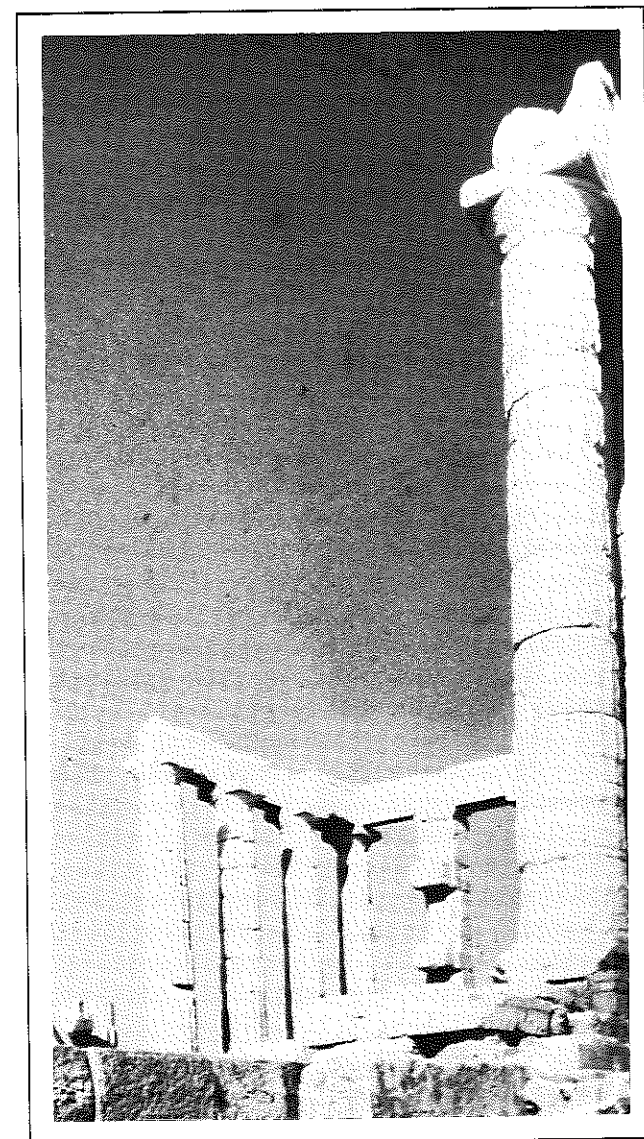
The Lord called me from the depths and I must believe enough in man and in Him to call my brother from the depths. For the Lord called when I was lost and I must try to hear his call to my brothers and sisters on the streets, and with all my energy I must try to make *them* hear it. If I do not, then I have failed and what I thought of as salvation is illusion.

Do, the Lord said, to my brothers, as I did unto you. What he did unto me was to save me.

What I must do, dear friends, is to bring that precious gift to my brothers. It takes an awesome pride to write about it; it takes an almost insane faith to do it.

Love,

Ned



JULY 19, 1959

Will D. Campbell

If blue skies, lenient summer temperature, and an unruffling breeze moving in rhythmic and welcomed spurts off the Louisiana Gulf make for beauty, then July 19, 1959 was a beautiful Sunday. It was the day after my thirty-fifth birthday. All of us, including Webb—still in the womb—had checked into the Holiday Inn in Baton Rouge. Baton Rouge is just seventy miles from Liberty, Mississippi, and we would drive up there on Monday. Near Liberty is where I was raised and whenever I was in the area I always gave an extra day to visit my parents. The folks were getting old and living alone and I felt both duty and desire to see them as often as I could. But for five years there were increasing reasons why I should be somewhat discreet in my visitations. Though no one was even talking at that point about integrating schools or churches anywhere in the state of Mississippi, everyone sensed the gathering storm. And everyone knew that I worked in Race Relations. Therefore, if integration came and I was in the county it would be perfect logic to assume that I had brought it. (The same logic which

would bring one to assume that a surgeon seen in a hospital caused cancer.) Until six months earlier, the urgency to visit outweighed the pressure to stay away.

Joe, my elder brother and best friend, bought our Uncle's old home place just down the road from our parents house. He, who could ill afford it, had purchased it so that the folks would not be so alone and so that our Sister and her family would have a decent place to live. He was also feeling some of the agony of wanting to visit the home folks but sometimes feeling it best to stay away. Since the arrangement with Sister next door, I did not feel uncomfortable in being so close and yet not there. Brenda and the children wanted to swim in the Holiday Inn pool and visit her sister, and I needed to see some people in connection with my work. It started out a real fun day.

Less than an hour after we had checked in Joe was on the phone. We were traveling by car from Houston to Nashville and how he found us from his pharmacy in Meridian I never got around to asking.

"Brother, I have some bad news." His voice broke slightly as

he rambled on about unrelated trivia, seeming never to get to the news which I somehow knew was bad when the phone rang in a motel room where no one except the room clerk knew we were in. He assured me that Daddy and Mamma were all right. So was he, Joey and Julie. It was almost by elimination that he got around to who was not all right.

"Sister's folks were going to church and some of the kids wanted to go early to Sunday School. They sent Will Edward up the highway to tell Daddy to pick up the rest of them when he passed going to the meeting." Then there was silence except for a faint sobbing. (The "meetin'" was an expression our Father had always used for the main church service.) I had to pry the story out. Will Edward, fourth of our Sister's seven children, was riding an English bicycle I had given them a year before — because they had never had one and I had never had one as a child. As he was crossing the road in front of Sister's house a car had hit him. No, he didn't know how badly he was hurt but since I was so close he felt it important that I go on up there as quickly as I could.

Further questions brought no more information. That was all he knew. I called the McComb Infirmary and Sister was able to talk. "The doctor just gives him a fifty-fifty chance of living. We sure do need you, Will. I hate to bother you but come as soon as you can."

"Fifty-fifty" can mean different things. One doctor will use it when he really believes the patient will live and he then appears a great practitioner. Another uses it feeling for certain that death is imminent and he has then already served notice that there is nothing he can do. With still others I suppose it is a merciful way to prepare us for the inevitable.

It was a traitorous Sunday. The beauty of the early morning had turned to forenoon tragedy. I did not get the details until I reached the hospital. The car had thrown the bike and Will Edward onto the hood and his head had gone through the windshield. The jugular had been severed as with a knife. During the half hour period from the moment of the collision to the moment transfusion needles could be inserted into his veins all, or most, of his own blood had been lost. O.B. Honea, the father, and Britt, elder brother, had raced as fast as the four year old station wagon would go, O.B. driving, thirteen year old Britt in back holding his twelve year old brother in his arms, thinking, each of them, what thoughts no one will ever know.

Britt was to Will Edward as Joe had been to me. He was older brother, ever ready to defend and protect against any threat. And best friend. Now he was befriending and protecting him the only way he knew how — holding him cradled in his arms, pressing his body and clothing against the lacerated neck and absorbing as much of the hurt as he could stand. But there was no defense, no protection against the rapid emptying of the vital fluid from his young and strong, but human, body.

He was rushed through everything the country hospital and its staff had skill and equipment to offer. Blood had been replaced, X-rays had been made and the neck wound, eight inches or so, had been closed. And that was all. He remained conscious until

they reached the hospital. No words were spoken but as they placed him on the stretcher he looked at his Daddy and smiled. It was a way he had of doing when he was caught in mischief.

But the smile was not enough. When I arrived I found him unconscious and struggling to free his arms and legs from the restraining ties. The room was filled with relatives and neighbors, some being helpful, some simply satisfying their own morbidity. Sister had not gone into the room, and never did. "I can't stand it. I can't stand to look at him with his head cut off." Some insisted that she do so, saying that she would be sorry *later* if she didn't. And both she and they knew what *later* meant. She preferred to wait until she could see him in his pretty sport coat, bow tie and white shirt he had saved his money to buy a month earlier. And she knew what the circumstances would be. In her mind the consignment was already made. I refused to let it happen. But my efforts to reverse the consignment took only the form of standing by and begging him not to die. There was too much at stake. Too much that was unfair, too much suffering, too much that was cruel, too much agony inflicted over the years on these more innocent than most people.

Lee Campbell. A man called good. Declining years filled with boredom, head held high yet bowed and shoulders stooped from so many defeats, so much worry over the years about his only daughter and her children and the welfare of them all. For six months — since their move to live in the house Joe had bought — there had been joy for him bordering on ecstasy. Every morning two little boys ran eagerly up the road. "What we gonna do today, Granddaddy?" It turned the pages back thirty years. And the return was better than the original for then it had been a matter of survival — making the crops, feeding the pigs, milking the cows. Now it could be fun. Plant a garden with those two boys. Make a little crop with them. Teach them to plow a straight furrow, to make a mule go right or left, gee from haw, giddup, whoa, tie a ham string, what a clivis is, seven inch oliver chill, trace chain, when to plant butterbeans, which land is best for peanuts — all the things a farmer is proud to see his sons learning. And more fun to see grandsons learning it for it is an extension of mortality few experience anymore. Now his reprieve was a sand castle on a drill field, trampled and washed away by the tide.

Lorraine Honea. Firstborn and only daughter. God how much! What's it all about? Seven children in not many more years. Maybe that's too many but it is far from enough if you're talking about giving one of them up. For every offspring is an only child. And what of all her other suffering? Doesn't that even count? The misery, the violence, the unhappiness, the poverty, the loneliness, the . . . god . . . god . . . dammit . . . all of it! Just all of it! She didn't have it coming. And I knew it. And I wasn't going to have it.

And Joe. Four times a day he would call from his pharmacy

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in Meridian. Sometimes more. "Any change?" "How you're holding up, Brother?" Things like that. He could no longer ask about Sister. He had said before he bought the house for her that he simply refused to think of her situation. And each time he called there was the obvious he would state. "If I had left them down there in those damn woods this wouldn't have happened." I could counter with, "Yes, Joe, but something worse could have happened and we both know what that could have been." But that which could have happened was a part of what he refused to think about.

And he could articulate his greater tragedy. "This is the most decent thing I ever tried to do. Everything I've ever done in my life has been somehow mixed up with my own self. I swear, Will, there was absolutely *nothing* selfish in this. I didn't want that land. I just wanted Mamma and Daddy to have somebody close and Sister and her folks to have a nice place to stay." "I know, Joe. I know." And that was all there was to say.

Now his act of selflessness, his act of purity, of nobility had boldly, arrogantly set out to bring us all more suffering than we had yet known.

And Will Edward. Half of his name was mine. The other half belonged to our other Brother, Paul Edward. Put together it belonged to him. And he wore it proudly. A good kid. Pleasant. Always a little browbeaten, yet with a countenance of openness and stability. "Don't die, pal. You're gonna make it little buddy. Come on, man. We're gonna help you, and you're gonna make it.

It lasted three days. Who knows what — shock, kidney failure, rejection of that much new blood. The doctor had been most concerned with kidney failure. I had told him that we would bring in a college friend who was a successful urologist in New Orleans. He said that we would wait another day and see if there were any change. "Why another day?" "Well, lets see if there is any change in the morning."

There was. He was dead.

Even when it came I would not have it. I pumped his adolescent chest with frantic and defiant motions. There had to be something left to do. His breathing had stopped the night before and the pumping motions I had done restored it. Why didn't it again!

It was about five o'clock in the morning. The sun was inching its way down the dreary hospital corridor. I knew that any minute Sister would be calling to check. The telephone was in the lounge far down the hallway but I could hear it when it rang. At just about the time the doctor had arrived, answering the nurse's call to him, the ringing began. My feeble and futile efforts to resurrect a corpse must have been both comic and tragic to one trained in the science of doing the practical thing. He motioned me away and ceremoniously placed the stethoscope upon his chest. He shook his head and walked away. The

nurse said she was sorry, that he was so young. One other person was in the room, a young truck driver and neighbor named Buddy Whittington. I embraced him and he returned the embrace with equal emotion. The phone at the end of the hall was still ringing. And I knew I had to answer it.

"How is he Uncle Will?" It was Carolyn Sue's voice, Sister's oldest child, now in her second year in college. "Not too well, Sugar. I'll be home in a little while." "Okay, Uncle Will." That was it. She knew. And I knew that she would say nothing until I arrived.

Aunt Elna Wells lives a quarter of a mile down the road and since the coming of Southern Bell to the East Fork community she has felt it her Christian duty to listen in on all phone calls on her party line. She means no more harm by that practice than others would mean by stopping on the street where two or more people stand talking. If the occasion is right she will join in the conversation, answering questions one or the other party is not able to answer or offering information they do not have. To her, telephones are a means of visiting with one's neighbors or responding to news of tragedy. As I drove in she was walking into the house with eggs for breakfast and homemade biscuit ready for baking. Somehow in rural, southern culture food is always the first thought of neighbors when there is trouble. That is something they can do and not feel uncomfortable. It is something they do not have to explain or discuss or feel self-conscious about. "Here, I brought you some fresh eggs for your breakfast. And here's a cake. And some potato salad." It means, "I love you. And I am sorry for what you are going through and I will share as much of your burden as I can." And maybe potato salad is a better way of saying it.

Sister was standing in the middle of the front room floor when I arrived. She had not heard but she knew. I had pondered what words to use. I tried to recall some of the things they told us in "Care of the Parish," or "Pastoral Counseling." But when I saw her standing there, the helpless, hopeless, pleading look on her face, I raced far back into my earliest beginning for a resource.

"He just went to sleep." I had mumbled the only words I could think of. I was the only one crying. The others stood around, moving here and there and nowhere, looking at me in stunned silence. After a minute or so Sister turned and moved into the room where the boys slept. Everyone followed. As placid as I had ever seen her she reached under the bed and pulled out a plain little box. Inside was a sack with draw strings which she unloosened. One by one she began to remove tiny, very personal, articles. A pretty rock. A well shined bolt. A glass marble. Dozens of things that were dear to a little boy who did not have access to what the world would consider much, but which had never occurred to him were not much, for no one had ever told him that his precious possessions were less than much. One by one she looked at them, held them up for all to see and put them back. Then into every room gathering pictures. There were faded school pictures of as many different years as she could find and a few snapshots. The most recent one was placed

on the mantle in the parlor. She had not whimpered.

"Sister, you have to cry. Will Edward is dead, and you have to cry." "I'll cry, Will. I'll cry. It was just so sweet the way you told us."

But the crying was slow in coming. News of death seems to carry a sort of built-in mercy. It produces various degrees of shock which acts as some kind of sieve, letting just the amount of consciousness seep through that one can bear at the moment. She busied herself with the pictures and a few other personal belongings. When crop time had come after the move, Daddy had looked all over two nearby towns for the type straw hat he used to buy for us when we were small and working in the fields. They were a sombrero type, round crown with a crease down the front. Not succeeding in the search he found some more on the western style. Since the boys had never known the type Daddy's nostalgia sent him out looking for, they were just as pleased, and wore them every waking hour. Will Edward's hat was carefully wrapped in a piece of cellophane and hung in the hall where it remains to this day. His few clothes were as carefully folded — pants, shirts, socks, underwear, everything, and put in a drawer. Everything he owned was sought out. "He mowed Daddy's lawn on Saturday and Daddy gave him a dollar. Does anybody know where it is?" No one did, so a new search was begun.

At two o'clock the body would be in the parlor at the funeral home. The child who had lived in simplicity would be buried in splendor. The insurance company of the driver had hastily assured us that they were taking care of all expenses. He lay in a bronze casket and upon the finest satin. I had preceded the others to town, though I do not know why. By then I was beginning to go through motions without reason. When Sister, her husband and six remaining children arrived I walked inside with them and ever so slowly we approached the front, each one making certain no one got there either before or behind the others. Sister was not crying. She stood in a silence of reverence and a silence approaching awe. Then there were her voluble, yet subdued words: "Now ain't that the prettiest thing you've ever seen!"

And then the crying began.

I had walked back down the hall and had not heard Daddy and Mamma come in. Suddenly everyone in the room was startled by loud and hysterical words: "What we gonna do today, Granddaddy?" Then a hush spread into every corner and crevice and sideroom of the building. He was repeating words he had heard every morning for six months by two wide-eyed and anxious little boys. Now he was saying them one more time for a little boy who would say them no more. It had been a glorious reprieve. And now it was over. The sounds of grief which followed were totally out of character for this giant of a man who had learned to live with hurt. They were sounds I could not bear. I was no longer priest, son, brother or comforter. I was

a defeated, bewildered, and worn out human being, feeling nothing except that I had been abandoned by whatever I had always leaned on. I moved outside the door just as Joe and Carlyne were arriving from Meridian.

Joe stepped quickly to me and held me in a long embrace. He began to speak to me in quiet composure — he who had always been first to cry. "The actual presence in it all has been too much for you, Brother. You are emotionally and physically exhausted." He told me not to be afraid to cry and mildly denounced the world for being too far gone to weep. I recall his words. "When the goddam world is so callous that it can't cry at *anything* it is awful late in the day of history." It was a time I was seeing a lot of pain and injustice and suffering in the Civil Rights Movement. I did not know then that it was just beginning — in 1959. And I did not know as I heard his words that the country we had each given three years to defend was already moving into a war that would fulfill his prophecy — "... can't cry at anything . . . awful late in the day of history."

He moved effectively into the void I had left, running errands, meeting callers, relatives and old friends with poise and quiet charm.

As the long evening began to wind down Sister came with one last request. "Will I know you're tired. Except for a few hours you've been with him for three days and nights. But will you stay with him tonight. I hate to ask but I'm asking." I said that I would.

Now the wake was over. Everyone had gone to their own houses. I sat in the funeral room with the glow of one remaining light casting a huge silhouette of the bank of flowers upon the wall. Summer moths bumped the windows or dived with instinctive purpose into the florescent light over the door, dropping forever to the pavement below. The mixture of gardenias, roses and gladiolus blended into an indescribable and unforgettable smell.

"Believe it's cooled off a bit." "Yeah. I believe it has." Slowly the realization encompassed me that someone from out of the darkness, six or eight rows behind, had spoken to me. And I had answered. I did not need to turn around to ask the identity of the speaker. I had not heard that voice for a long time. But I knew it was that of a favorite Uncle of our childhood days. In recent years he had been one of the most critical and vocal ones concerning my activities in the civil rights and desegregation controversy, expressing bitter disappointment and displeasure that his own nephew had turned out to be a nigger lover and renegade preacher. I had ceased to visit him when I came because I loved him too much to risk a built-in rejection. He was the one Uncle who would never, and did never, join the church. At revival time he was always the prime subject for conversion teams. While lesser men would offer excuses of how they knew

there were hypocrites in church they were just as good as, or allow that they could worship God in their own back yard, he always listened politely to the evangelistic pitch, thanked the caller but offered no explanation or promise regarding his recalcitrance. It was considered strange behavior.

He moved quietly out of the darkness and sat down beside me. I glanced at my watch. "It's three o'clock," he said. I assumed that he knew of the promise I had made my sister, and had been sitting in the shadows since the last mourner had left, deciding in his own time and in his own mind when I had been alone — though not alone — long enough.

He poured coffee from a lunch box thermos and handed it to me. Until the dawn I sat in the redemptive company of a racist Jesus.

Joe's composure was the same with the morning. I was at once grateful and baffled. For the remainder of the time until the service he limited his ministry to me, never leaving my side. His speech was fatherly and logical. He could discuss the tragedy in all its many aspects and component and unrelated parts but it was philosophical and rational. The hurt was obviously there but something was containing it, pushing it down, masking it, so that he could go on.

It was to be two years before I was to discover, or at least have to accept, that what I had interpreted as grace or strength was in

fact — at least in part — a dangerous killer, a combination of drugs, pills, all accessible from the shelves of his pharmacy, dozens and finally hundreds, whatever it took to keep on going and to live with the hurt of living.

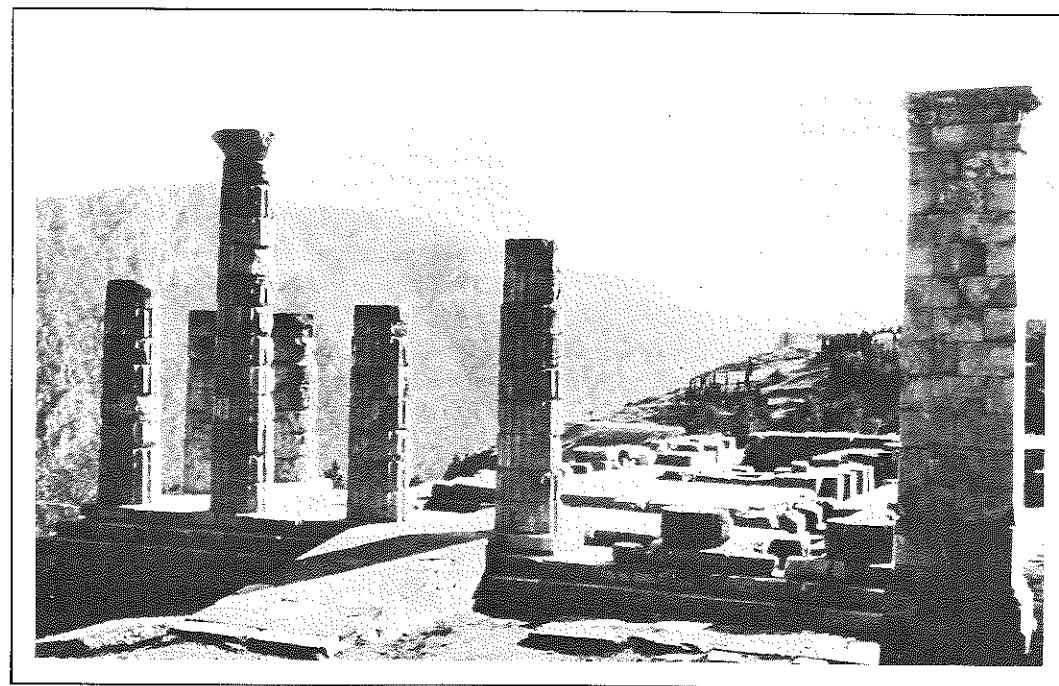
Time takes time — sometimes too long — but it is all we have. The healing was slow in beginning. I tried to tell myself that now was two years hence but each morning awakening brought a new awareness that it was still now. The hurt seems always greater in the early morning. Consciousness provides the resources for protest but the wearying of the day numbs one finally into silent submission. Each new day brought a return of the fifty pounds of melted babbitt in my chest and a renewal of the fight with God and doctors and automobile drivers. But every setting sun meant a little chip of it had spun off into eternity.

The healing really began six weeks after the wreck. At least for me. I was lying across the bed in mid-afternoon, neither asleep nor awake, staring at the ceiling, speaking to no one. Brenda, wife, woman and friend, came into the room, bellowing as she strode.

"Get up! Now I just mean, Get up!"

So I got up.

□



CODA FOR CHRISTIANS

Jacques Ellul

Editor's note: Les Nouveaux Possédés, published in France in 1973, was immediately recognized as a crucial and unique statement about the relationship of the Christian faith to contemporary technological society. It begins with an account of the history and distinguishing characteristics of "Christianism" and "the post-Christian era" and then in detail and with specifics describes "the sacred," its myths and religions which — contrary to mainstream sociology and theology — account for the fact that "we are in the most religious of all worlds, at the sacred heart of a technical universe." We agree that Les Nouveaux Possédés is one of Jacques Ellul's most compelling statements about the nature and direction of contemporary civilization, and about the vocation of the Christian in that

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environment. Moreover, it provides throughout a powerful, albeit seldom articulated commentary on "the religious situation" as the United States approaches its Rite of Bicentennial. We carry extracts from the forthcoming publication of The New Demons by The Seabury Press, translated by E. Edward Hopkin. © 1975, The Seabury Press. Used by permission.

I

We are today in the most religious of all worlds, at the sacred heart of a technical universe. How could it be otherwise? Consider man, or rather, his situation. Here we are, torn between three experiences, in a situation which is conflicting and penultimate.

Our first and obvious experience is that of the most remarkable, glorifying adventure ever known to man — *known* — for the primitive undertaking to utilize fire, to domesticate animals, or to set out over the waters was perhaps not a conscious one. It perhaps was not something which man reflected on, and so he may not have been able to think about himself and admire himself. Now we are entering the sphere of the superhuman, are reflecting on the fact that we are about to do so, and we cannot help being filled with pride.

Our mastery over things, over the universe, and over others is almost limitless. We are breaking open the cosmos and plumbing the ultimate of matter. We are reducing the unknowable to a formula. We are expanding our brain possibilities *ad infinitum*. We are daily increasing our consumption of energy. We are reaching into the sources of life, and are pushing back the frontiers of death. What could be more glorious, more admirable, more astonishing! — and I am using those adjectives in their strong, etymological sense. Frightened at what we are doing, fascinated by the greatness which is seen and recognized, elevated above ourselves — that is the feeling which overwhelms us with joy and hope, and sends us onward eager to know the brimming future.

Yet, at the same time and in the same place, we, the same we, are having another experience, that of atrocity carried to its limit. What upsets us, fills us with anxiety, and sends us into deep trauma is not merely "future shock." It is the unending vision of the most bloody of all worlds. Massacres are a daily occurrence, after we thought we had put an end to that horror in 1945, that we would never again see Hitlerian concentration camps and the holocaust of Hiroshima, that perhaps we were putting an end to *war*. We have discovered the Soviet concentration camps. We have witnessed massacres in India, then those of the Congo, of Biafra, of the Kurds and of the Bengalis. We are living in a world of widespread warfare, sitting on a powder keg, and knowing that one mistake can blow everything up. We are also surrounded by a world of famine.

We *know* and are seeing all that, in contrast to our ancestors, whose surroundings were probably no brighter or reassuring, but who were not aware of it, or at least who learned of it after the horror had passed.

The third factor in our overall experience is the growing conviction that we are faced with seemingly insoluble problems and insurmountable difficulties, and the good apostles of progress fail to console us. There are enormous problems which concern us all, and we are well aware that we cannot put the solutions off onto others: from the problem of famine, to that of overpopulation, to that of pollution. (All the elements of the situation which I am here sketchily indicating, I have studied in detail in my other works. I am not, of course, saying that the problems are insoluble, but that they seem so in the eyes of modern man.)

The situation is made the more difficult by the fact that everything is changing with incredible rapidity. We are swamped by a flood of news which leaves us no time to breathe,

nor any chance to reflect and to put things in perspective. It is also made more difficult by the fact that we are being uprooted from our traditional soil, are turned aside from our known paths, and are going, without any signposts, into an unknown country, which literally is being remade every day before our eyes. We cannot send scouts ahead to explore the road or hire native guides, because the place where we are going does not yet exist.

Under such conditions, how can modern man not fall back on the sacred, on myth, and on the religious? It is not "the religious nature" of man which drives him to that. *It is the situation itself in which he finds himself today.* What recourse is available to man in an unknown country, except to transform into myths and religions whatever is admirable in his experience? The moon of history and the sun of science are our only points of reference. The enigma of the state and the mystery of money endow us with superhuman power. With the coming together of these three dominant factors, how could man not be religious once again?

But why religious? Why that reaction, and not some other? I suppose that is a consequence of man's former habits, of a custom which has come down from the beginning of time, of an ancient reaction of defense and flight, a refusal to know and to will, a search for a refuge and an explanation. At least, in re-creating the religious and the sacred, man is recapturing an ancient experience. He is in gear, once again, with a known movement.

All is new, but it is still possible, even so, to pick up one end of Ariadne's thread. One can still hope to resolve the unsolvable by the worship of a supreme power according to the original formulas, and to alleviate the horror by sacrificing to a divinity which stands ready to help.

The initial mistake of those who believed in a world grown up and reasonable, inhabited by people who controlled their own destiny, was essentially to have a purely intellectual view of man, or indeed of a man who is purely intellectual. Just as *Homo oeconomicus* was thought to be a mechanism perfectly obedient to his own interests, so adult man is an organism perfectly obedient to his conscience and his reason.

However, being "nonreligious" involves more than intelligence, knowledge, practicality, and method. It calls for virtue, heroism, and greatness of soul. It takes an exceptional personal asceticism to be "nonreligious." All of us have known great atheists, genuinely strict ones, who didn't deceive themselves about a god. For them, atheism was an honor, the highest form of human courage. They maintained those heights only by a constantly renewed act of the will, stretched to the limit against every suffering, and finally death. This is no easier today.

So where do we get the idea that modern man, the average man, he whom we adjudge to be atheistic, indifferent, and irreligious, has achieved those heights? In the routines of a society of comfort, of moral flabbiness, of an absence of willpower, of debasement, what is there to prepare a person for lifting himself to the heights of atheism's rigorous virtue? What readies him for that merciless clarity about himself and about the

world, which irreligion always involves? Where do we see the spiritual greatness, the morale, the quality of exactitude, the rigor on which criticism of myth and the rejection of the sacred are always based? It takes men who are hardheaded with their feet on the ground.

I do not see them. Everything points to the opposite. We see people on a bed of ease, and wishing no other happiness for others. They whimper at the slightest danger, the slightest suffering (look at the leftists!). Flabby skepticism and exuberant disdain are not enough to produce an adult man and an irreligious society. We can rest assured, to the contrary, that in the current psychological tendencies, in the absence of any character-preparation for facing up to great progress and great tests, in the transfer of human energies to the exclusively cerebral, in the collapse of the will in favor of the imagination, in the rejection of all self-discipline, the only way of escape is into the social and the religious. Everybody since Bergson has proclaimed the need for a soul-supplement. All right, we have it in the new religions.

But in taking that course, in making his world bearable and in giving himself the impression that he is able to live in it, man closes the trap on himself. He provides the most complete confirmation ever of the Marxist analysis of the religious phenomenon, without, of course, meaning to. What Marx so admirably described is not historical but prophetic. He was not really assessing the first religions, but the last, not the religion of Islam, of Judaism, or of Christianity, but modern religion in the developed capitalist countries, in the socialist countries, and in the underdeveloped world.

Now, more than ever before, man is enslaving himself to things and to other men through the religious process. It is not technology itself which enslaves us, but the transfer of the sacred into technology. (We must avoid a misunderstanding. Technology being what it is, the sacred is *inevitable* and impossible to reject. Man is absolutely not free to sacralize or not to sacralize technology. He cannot keep from reconstructing a meaning for life on that as a basis.) That is what keeps us from exercising the critical faculty, and from making technology serve human development. It is not the state which enslaves us, not even a centralized police state. It is its sacral transfiguration (as inevitable as that of technology), which makes us direct our worship to this conglomerate of offices. It is not sex which is wicked and which perverts us. It is the ideology of repression, and at the same time equally the ideology of the liberation of man through sex. That is when man enters a mystique still just as infertile.

So the religious, which man in our situation is bound to produce, is the surest agent of his alienation, of his acceptance of the powers which enslave him, of his adulation of that which deprives him of himself by promising, like all religions everywhere, that this self-deprivation will allow him finally to be more than himself. That is how it works with drugs. As always, this process of alienation combines with dreams and the imaginary, with a transference into the world of imagery.

It would be helpful to have a detailed analysis of the similarities and contrasts between the "primitive" world of myth and the world of news and productions broadcast by the mass media, between the society of spectacle and the world of illusory pictures such as ours. The world of pictures from the technological apparatus overruns man. It engrosses him and satisfies him, while preventing him from acting effectively. The world of myth, perhaps, was created from within, and as a transposition having coherence as its aim, together with an explanation of the natural environment. However, those two elements are not foreign to the myths of our day either. We indeed have to act, but in the place where it is possible, and in the delusion that we are changing the world and life. Everything denied us must indeed be projected onto the utopian sky, everything which, perhaps, we shall never lay hold of.

Alienation and illusion — that is the modern religion. Should it be destroyed then?

Ah! How simple that would be if it did not involve man! How can we forget that that is the very thing which keeps him alive, which enables him to accept his difficult situation in this society. We must indeed be prudent! It was not through perversion that man fabricated anew this mythical matrix and this sacred topography. It was not at all through stupidity, but because of the impossibility of living in this tension and with these conflicts. It is easy to accuse man of cowardice. That solves nothing, for it all happens outside the limits of the intentional and the conscious. As in the primitive religions, man is feeling this threat to himself, this sense of being cornered, this need to have to change everything. He feels his lack of means at the same time, so he looks for a way around the problem, for a protection, for a solution, and all unknowingly.

To destroy those shelters, to close those escape routes, would be precisely to drive the great majority of people to insanity or suicide. Only the most energetic, the most intelligent, and the most clearheaded would be able to survive, only those who, when they are cornered, have the temperament to fight back, to break impasses and settle questions. They are few in number. Could one, by desacralization, cause almost the totality of the people to go under?

Desacralizing could be done only if, along with it, one supplied a reason for living adequate really to sustain life, and an answer really satisfying and clear. The answer and the reason for living must go together. May the person who cannot supply this enlightenment allow the rest of civilized, modern, and scientific humanity, be it Chinese or western, to sleep peacefully in its religious dream.

I

*The punishment reserved for unreason
and the abandonment of the self is pre-
cisely unreason.*

—Spinoza

Surely the confrontation at the present time between Christianity and our western technological society is very valuable and instructive. It is true that Christianity, mongrelized since the seventeenth century, has been in need of a sort of cultural revolution, but the true cultural revolution came from the theology of Karl Barth and not from the current pitiful efforts. It is possible that Christianity may be passing through fire from which it should emerge purified, but that is not at all certain.

When people preach the transformation of Christianity into politics, when they urge us to join with communists, for example, just as Christians joined formerly with monarchists or capitalists, when they affirm Christian pluralism as the only Christian possibility, without stating the strict counterbalance of unity and truth, when they present atheism as one ingredient in faith, or even Christian faith as an ingredient in atheism, and this as something to be desired, as something excellent, not as a tragic necessity, a testimony to our powerlessness to live the faith, then I think we are in the full process of reintegrating secular religion into Christianity, or of the absorption of Christianity by secular religion. At the very moment when one claims to be freeing Christianity from the religious hodgepodge which has burdened it for twenty centuries, and from such religious mistakes as the belief in miracles, or the unconditioned authority of Scripture, or the formulation of the name of God, one reintroduces religion. This is not done in the traditional idiom but, as always, in the contemporary idiom. Thus the theology of the death of God is, above all, a theology of the modern religionizing of Christianity.

That theology, in fact, is based on a certain number of beliefs, taken as uncriticized and unverified postulates and treated as genuine axioms. Thus the world is secularized, modern man is come of age, and everything is integrated into "the cultural." This primacy of the cultural over everything else, this subordination of Christianity to the cultural, past and present, is the *ad hoc* expression of the myth of history. Out of this comes an odd reversal: whereas it was Judaism which "invented" history, whereas faith in Christ is what gives meaning to history, we, completely enslaved by the myth of history, have come to think that everything is integrated, inserted into history, and that the truth of Christianity, the revelation, is in reality dependent upon history.

The second pillar of this theology is the myth of science. But, in addition, this entire theology of the death of God is based afterward on the popular beliefs and passions of modern man. To the extent that one takes these beliefs as criteria, one arrives at the conclusion that, since man no longer believes in the biblical God, this God was merely a human construct. It is a wonderful pretense in order to make room for the modern religion. We void what has been revealed on the ground (which is true) that it was mingled with the religious. Meanwhile we open wide the gate to all the current beliefs, and are quite prepared to welcome them. What we have voided is not only the religious, but also the absolute of the revelation.

Christian intellectuals are so imbued with all the modern myths, they live so much in today's sacred, they participate so much in all the rites, all the beliefs, especially those of political religion, that they fail to realize that, there too, it is a matter of religion. That is the fate of all those who live in a myth. They are incapable of assessing it as myth.

We have to come out of it. This can be through the passage of time, which wears down belief and enables us to step back from the object of myth. It can also be through a shock, which jars one into another orbit of thinking, of interpretation, and of belief. Such had been the shock of Christianity with regard to the ancient myths and religions. Today, however, it is, rather, the shock of science which is driving us out of the Christian orbit, and is opening up to criticism the myths and religions of Judeo-Christianity, as though we were emerging from the religious cosmos.

The fact of the matter is that the theology of the death of God, as a justification of the actual current situation and as a cover for the process of increasing worldliness, is the best way to reintegrate the religious into Christianity, for, in their critique, these theologians focus on the religious which is outmoded. Then they start to apply that critique to the contemporary religious. They are so dominated by this sacred and its beliefs that their one problem really is how to incorporate these into Christianity.

In order to accomplish this, they claim to continue the theological criticism of religion such as Barth had carried out, or also the sociological scouring which I had undertaken. We often heard it said that "Barth stopped half way," or in connection with me, "There are areas which have escaped Ellul's sociological critique." I am supposed to have stopped short through timidity. The valiant modern theologians want to go all the way. This going all the way does not consist in doing away with the "religious surplus" of Christianity, but rather, with the *very center* from which the critique of the religion is possible.

This is the heart of a revelation, the "extra" point, on the basis of which it is possible to view all the rest, since it is transcendent. It is the nonplace, the unlocated place which enables us to locate the rest. It is the never-achieved prospect in relation to which everything has its place. No serious critique of current religion can be made if there is no transcendent, for every religion necessarily is lived as the pure and simple truth by those who are within it.

Quite obviously, that is just what modern man is living; and the modern Christian as well, whenever he lowers himself to the condition of the average person by voiding the specific character of Christianity. To make Christ's self-emptying the central doctrine, on the basis of which, alone, everything is to be judged, including the remainder of the revelation, is to assert that the specific character of Christianity is precisely not to have any. It is to preach being steeped in the world, and, if this world is religious, it means adopting the religions of the world.

I must not, of course, be made to say what I am not saying. The great passage of Philippians chapter 2 is *one* of the central texts. It is the most complete expression of the Incarnation and the Cross, *but taken alone*, and in isolation, it gives a view of the revelation which is just as false as the Decalogue taken alone and treated as the center and heart of the revelation. The theology of the death of God does not want to see the irreducibly different character of the biblical revelation about God (God as the Almighty Creator, etc., not just as humbled and crucified man, etc.), and everything that all the other religions have been able to say about God.

It is this irreducible which makes the transmission of the *kerygma* and witnessing about God difficult. It is not at all the outmoded quality of the God-notion in a different cultural context. Yet the modern theological trend does away with the irreducible, since it proceeds essentially by reduction. That is the great method and approach. There is the reduction of the multiplicity of textual levels to structures. There is the reduction of the complexity of the message to a single theme. There is a reduction of the multiplicity of facets of the revelation to a single aspect. There is a reduction of the revealed to the cultural, a reduction of the cultural to the political, and a reduction of the two dimensions to the one horizontal dimension, etc.

The reduction process is the *antirevelation*. It also consists in favoring whatever we find suitable about God, and eliminating the impractical. But by that very fact, one makes it impossible truly to desacralize and seriously to do away with religion. Every reduction goes along with the acceptance of the sacred and of the religious, for it is indeed true that the revelation of the living God is desacralizing.

When God enters the picture he destroys man's sacred. It is true that he secularizes (and, to be sure, that he opens the door to man's action on a secularized nature), but one forgets that it is the word of God which secularizes, and not philosophy, science, or technology — that this word of God is independent of our analyses, and that either it is given in the Bible and in the Incarnation or it is just our imagination. It is forgotten that in this word of God there is attestation of man's sin, of the rupture between man and God, of man's situation within evil. To void that, to reduce it is, on the one hand, to render the remainder of the revelation completely meaningless, and on the other hand, it is to prevent oneself any longer from seeing modern man's sacralizing, for this man creates a sacred for himself and finds himself a religion only in order to counter the prior situation. To deny that situation is to accept, without seeing it, the religion

created by man in an uncritical manner. Any critique could be applied only to outmoded and dead religions of the past, which man has abandoned because they no longer do him any good.

So we can say that the "secularization" stemming from the rejection, or reduction, of the revealed truth is the opposite of the desacralizing of things and of religions stemming from the revealed truth. It is the opposite because the first secularization is never anything but the enthroning of new religions.

Here we encounter Harvey Cox's childishness, when he sings the praises of scientific exorcism: "Exorcism is that process by which the stubborn deposits of town and tribal pasts are scraped from the social consciousness of man and he is freed to face his world matter of factly" (*The Secular City*, p. 134). And science, of course, is the great handmaid of exorcism — as though he had never heard of the house which was swept and garnished. Scientific exorcism, like psychoanalysis, is in fact the very remarkable operation whereby one sweeps the heart and mind of man, airs it out, and cleanses it. Then, when the house is empty and open, seven other demons come in to take the place of the one. Consequent upon this scientific operation, modern man is much more religious, much more dependent, much more sacralized than ever before, and more insidiously so.

What we have just said concerning secularization/desacralization can be repeated in connection with religion. Everything being said about the opposition between the revelation in Jesus Christ and religion is right enough, but it is the revelation, not science or reason or modern culture, which destroys religion. Furthermore, there is no overlapping of those two procedures. There is, rather, a strict antinomy. The elimination of the traditional religions by modern culture is a process which creates new religions, and that is all.

In other words, modern Christian intellectuals, theologians, journalists, and clergy have made a gigantic mistake in their interpretation of the contemporary world, and that, in turn, leads to a gigantic mistake in the orientation of Christian and church action.

It seems to me that throughout the history of the church there have finally been three phenomenal mistakes, on which all the rest hangs. I am referring to mistakes more fundamental than the heresies, which were differences in the manner of explicating and understanding what was revealed. What I am thinking of has to do with mistakes concerning the relations between the church and the world, concerning the church's situation in the world. The difference is as follows: in navigation, one must make an observation, calculate the declination and drift, plot the course, and read the compass. If the compass is off, everything else is off. Whether one prefers sails or motor power no longer matters. In either case, the course is not what had been intended. Such, in my view, is the difference between mistakes of orientation and heresies.

The first such mistake can be listed as Constantinism. This

must not be taken merely as an acceptance of the state and an agreement with the political power. From the outset it is an orientation toward wanting to win over to Christianity the rich, the powerful, the control centers — which necessitated the creation of a neo-Christianity.

The second such mistake can be called the cultural mistake. It is the incorporation into Christianity of all the cultural values. By that action, Christianity becomes the receptacle for all the civilizations of the past, the establisher of culture and a synthesis of the philosophies — which necessitates the elaboration of another neo-Christianity.

The third such mistake is the one we are now making, that of believing that we have to locate ourselves in a world that is lay, secularized, scientific, and rational, and that we should build a neo-Christianity in those terms.

(Excursus: One example of the results of this mistake is given us by the uncertainty of judgment concerning the "Jesus phenomenon" and the "Jesus revolution." Among Christians of good will we frequently encounter two kinds of positive assessments. One says: "Once again it is 'the world,' the 'neo-Christians,' who are bearing witness to what Jesus really is. Whereas the church has mummified Jesus and dogmatized the gospel, it is the neo-Christians who are discovering, over and above all the Christian rubbish, what the word is. They will make it live again in their heartwarming experiences. The Christians should learn a lesson from the pagans. Christians should withhold all judgment on these undertakings, because their appraisals are dictated by their sclerotic ideological definitions and the narrowness of their dogmas. This rediscovery of authenticity should shake you up." The other says: "After all, if these revues, these excesses, seem to us a bit strange, and sometimes painful, still the gospel is being set forth and the name of Jesus is being proclaimed. It's good that it be done by those outside the Church. In *Godspell*, after all, it is simply the Gospel of Matthew which is being directly presented on the stage. How can we fail to see it as a 'witness'? God uses every means to have his word heard. The person listening to these plays is also hearing a word of God, so let's not criticize."

I have to say that those two arguments should be taken very seriously, for they both express a truth. However, they cannot be accepted unconditionally and as such. After all, we always find, throughout the course of the history of Christianity, queer movements undertaken in the name of Jesus and the gospel. For example, there were prostitution movements for the purpose of spreading the gospel among the customers of the prostitutes who were charged with "witnessing," and a lot of other things. It isn't enough that the name of Jesus be pronounced, and the Gospel story told, for the action to be in the slightest degree a witness to the truth. I am fully prepared to hear a new presentation and a new language. I am prepared to have my theology and the traditional church called into question, but I absolutely refuse to do so in the presence of just any extravaganza or just any declaration. The fact that they come from neo-Christians is

no guarantee of the validity of such undertakings.

There is the little problem of the tree and its fruits. When I see that the chief fruits are, on the one hand, the accompanying of this gospel with drugs and pansexualism and, on the other hand, the making of large sums of money and the building of commercial capitalistic enterprises, I am obliged to say that I reject the content of these statements because of their inward orientation and consequences. When I observe that everything is based on ultramodern publicity, on the exploitation of sensuality and suffering on the part of the people who make use of it, I say absolutely *No!* to this pretense of a message.

When Christians were wondering about that prophet of the transformation of the gospel into a religion, which is Billy Graham, I said *No!*, because he was using the most modern methods of propaganda. His entire witness was falsified, vitiated, and changed by the very fact of the technical means of propaganda. Here we have the same problem. I readily grant that people may eventually be reached by these revues and posters. That doesn't prove a thing, for in fact God does make use of everything; but when Hitler in his speeches appealed (quite frequently) to the "Almighty," I often heard it said: "You see, he isn't as bad as all that. He is calling upon God, and it may well be that he is sent by God." It is possible that God may have made use of him. It is possible that people may have heard some word of God in Hitler's speeches. I have to say that that does not at all suffice for me! Hitler was demonic in spite of his invocations of God (even if he was sincere), and I say exactly the same thing here. We must firmly resist the "Jesus revolution" and the Jesus parade.

The virulent criticism expressed in the film *Tout le monde il est beau, tout le monde il est gentil* should be enough to show what is really behind this low prank about the gospel and the name of Jesus. Once again, what makes me reject some beneficial "novelty" is not a dogmatic image of Jesus Christ, nor rigid catechetical truths, but the alloy of money and pornography. That is what forces me to say that it cannot be genuine, and if it isn't genuine, then it is diabolical, for the devil is the perversion of the word of God in order to lead people astray. It is utilization of the word of God so as to have man do or think the opposite to what God expects. It is the utilization of the revelation (and the imitation of that revelation) for something quite other than the glory of God (and in writing this I am, of course, supposing that the diabolical exists also in the churches).

Before phenomena of this nature, Christians must abandon their timidity and guilt feelings. They must once again be able to say that what is diabolical is diabolical. In so doing, to be sure, they must always be ready to listen as well to the criticism which the devil directs at the church and at Christians, for he is quite clear on that subject. But he is still the devil. This gigantic politico-commercial enterprise of the Jesus phenomenon has nothing to say to us except, in fact, that we have no right to make Jesus Christ the prisoner of the established church, that indeed the truths of the revelation are not hidden to us and can be revealed to the "simple" (but the producers of plays and the publishers of best sellers are not simpletons!), that finally every new presentation of the gospel differing from our tradition we

should receive, examine, discern its spirit and, in the face of that, make our criticism and receive its criticism of us. But having done this, faced with the Jesus phenomenon, we can conclude in all serenity: let the dead rejoice with the dead.)

But the first question concerning this gross error in the assessment of our times concerns its origin. Surely the psycho-intellectual soil was prepared for it. Political, scientific, and technological pressures, the upheavals (of various kinds) in our society, and dechristianization, all prepared Christians to follow that path. But the trigger, the "reason," and at the same time the justification, for following this conformist trend was the dissemination of Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Surely one has read into these passages more than they say explicitly, and has separated them from the corpus of Bonhoeffer's work, whereas what we should do is to interpret them on the basis of that work, in which case they lose part of their impact.

But, after all, the letters are there, and indeed they offer a diagnosis of our society and a Christian orientation which appear to me fundamentally false. If our western world is sacral, the thinking of modern man is developing in terms of myth, and if the secular religions are triumphant, then we need to ask whence comes the great mistake of Bonhoeffer.

To begin with, how can he say that the modern world is not religious, that man is becoming adult and rational, when he himself lived in the midst of the most formidable mystical, religious, and irrational outburst that we have known for three centuries? It is a mysterious blindness. Whatever respect one might have for a man who put his life on the line in political action (which, to be sure, he had to carry out), whatever admiration one might have for a theological work of the first order, however cautious one ought to be in speaking of an authority considered indisputable by Christian intellectuals, one cannot help saying that he was mistaken, and wondering about that incredible blindness.

It seems to me that there can be only three explanatory hypotheses. One is that he was greatly troubled and traumatized by his arrest, imprisonment, and interrogations. That would be nothing against him. In spite of his spiritual greatness, he could very well have gone through a crisis of discouragement, uncertainty, and perhaps even panic. From then on, his famous "questioning," the calling into question, the new theological problematic, did not come from his faith or from any special lucidity, but from his troubles as a prisoner, from the fact that he was virtually condemned to death. Secondarily, that brought about a false view of the world.

A second explanation is that, with complete clarity, he may have felt that nazism, and the period in which he was living, was simply an accident. I can understand this on the level of purely political and sociological appraisals. This wave of fury was only one wave in a worldwide tidal movement in the opposite direction. Hitlerism was only an epiphenomenon without special

significance. One had only to let this wave of fury go by, and his country would come back afterward to the modern world, the basic nature of which was nonreligious, adult, etc. After all, such mistakes can be excused. I personally made a similar mistake when I believed with all my heart in the formula we came up with in 1944: "From Resistance to Revolution." It is nonetheless a terrible misunderstanding, and nothing is to be gained from passages based on such an error. The unpardonable people are those who, ten or twenty years later, use those thoughts as a basis for a new theology, a new way for Christians to be present to the world, a new ecclesiology.

Finally, a third explanation is that Bonhoeffer's attitude was prophetic. That is to say, it was an affirmation of the faith in the face of the reality, a proclamation of the message notwithstanding the events. A declaration is indeed prophetic when faith returns to its foundation despite the obvious. The negation of the religious character of Hitlerism, even the refusal quite simply to see it, could only be faith's surpassing of the circumstances. "You imagine that the situation is such and such? By no means. In truth it is quite other than that, and here's how . . ."

To be sure, the ardent admirers of Bonhoeffer are tempted to adopt this interpretation. What bothers me, however, is first of all that the prophetic attitude is generally an affirmation of the unshakable revelation and the certainty of faith in the face of the obvious political situation, or of the questions raised by events. Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, would seem to be going in the opposite direction. What we have is a calling in question of the faith, of theology, of the church (which can perfectly well be prophetic) in the name of a certain new fact of society. I cannot see that the prophets would ever be oriented in that direction (especially when they were harshly attacking the rituals and religions of their own times).

Another thing which bothers me is that the prophets generally received some confirmation of their political clearheadedness. They had seen through appearances, and more profoundly than other people. Ten or twenty years later, their interpretation was confirmed (which gives rise to the whole rationalistic explanation by historians of prophecy *post eventum*). In the present instance, however, nothing that Bonhoeffer says about our society is confirmed. That is why I still question the reasons for this attitude of Bonhoeffer, which may be accidental. It seems to me a mistake to build on such dubious foundations.

Without getting into the fundamental debate on the mistaken interpretation of the modern world by Christians, I would at least like to raise three questions.

The first relates to the fuzziness and the conceptual uncertainty of the statements about the world's being grown up. What do you mean by "world"? — by being "grown up"? In connection with the secular city, the terms are empty and lack precision. It is hard to believe that our society could be characterized by the few features listed by Harvey Cox. The "world," is that the society? "Adult man," is that a reference to man in himself? In that case, I don't know what it is we could be talking about. If we are

talking about really living people, then there should at least be some serious analytical study of their behavior, opinions, etc. But one is content with general statements. And then, what is "an adult"? It's a little too easy to reply, "He who has killed the Father," or, "He who takes his destiny in his own hands." A lunatic neither does nor claims to do anything different from that.

My second question has to do with the future of this declared secularization. It is too easily forgotten that throughout the course of history there have been other periods of secularization. China has known at least one long period of secularization, and Rome as well. That can seem odd, accustomed as we are to the reassuring vision of the Roman Pantheon. The fact is that in the fifth century B.C., during the transition from kingship to republic, there was a powerful laicizing trend in Rome. To be sure, it was not a laicization based on scientific knowledge, but it was nonetheless real. This secularization and laicization that we are reveling in are not the first. Only our ignorance of history allows us to think that.

A wave of that type is speedily absorbed every time. It disappears into the sand, leaving only some foam to be scattered by the wind. The laicized societies have inevitably become religious once again, but religious with a difference. Only a telescoping of history, a conceited ignorance, and a sketchy survey would allow one to characterize the whole history of humanity as religious up to the eighteenth century. We need only ask ourselves what will be left of the period of laicization and secularization, from about 1880 to 1930, for man to consider in the year 3000 (if our society is genuinely committed to a neoreligious phase). Our experience is not unique. Secularization is always an intermediate stage between a religious society on the way out and the appearance of a new religious structuring.

My third question has to do, again, with the death of God. It may be perfectly all right, in the intellectual domain, to abandon the "God hypothesis." Scientific honesty and intellectual rigor would have it that we no longer speak of God today. (But is this really a scientific requirement, or is it, as for Galileo, a partisan extension of the scientific method? It isn't so simple as the disdainful eliminators of the "stopgap God" think, when they would exclude him, step by step, from his domain as fast as science develops!) So at least the question ought to be raised whether, with this change in intellectual premises and scientific presuppositions, there is necessarily involved a change in the relationship to the revealed God, a different way of explicating the faith, a need to adapt Christianity to a world supposedly grown up, and finally, a mode of Christian life and faith no longer commensurate with what had been known before. I see no inevitable link, no logical consequence, from the one domain to the other. The theologians of the various currents of "new theology," in the wake of Tillich, Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, etc., seem to me mostly to be giving way to panic.

This flagrant error and panic entail a no less flagrant con-

sequence. If in fact we are faced with a secularized and desecralized society, with man grown up and demythologized, etc., then we need to change the biblical message, the expounding of the faith, the church's presence and Christian ethics in those terms. But what if that view of the world is false? In that case, this whole painful structure we see going up before our eyes rests on thin air, for the reinterpretation being attempted is not derived from the facts themselves, but from our *interpretation* of the facts. We must realize that social facts and historical events never act of themselves, but only through the interpretation placed upon them. If the latter is basically false, it entails reactions, statements, adjustments, and interventions which are also false, hence out of tune and inappropriate, which is always catastrophic, and often mortal for the group that has thus interpreted the events incorrectly. If perchance our world is not in fact secularized, laicized, and grown up, but rather, is sacral and religious, what will be the consequences of our Christian efforts at adjustment?

First of all, it is obvious that Christians are letting other religions grow and develop, and since the latter are nothing other than "fantasy interpretations" of what people are factually living, with technology, economic growth, the expansion of political power and of the institutions of the state, it is obvious that people will more and more fall away from Christianity and turn to the new sacred. The phenomenon of dechristianization goes on apace, but it is *no longer* a dechristianization resulting from science and secularization, but from the derivative growth of a religion of the world which occupies the former secularized universe.

When that happens, Christianity sustains a double loss of impact. First of all, it doesn't even imagine itself capable of entering into conflict with the new sacred. It fights nothing which seduces, captivates, wins away, fascinates, and hypnotizes modern man. To the contrary, it plays its part through its renunciation, since, on the one hand, it accepts, blesses, and legitimizes the facts (techniques, politics) on the basis of which the myths and religions are blossoming, and, on the other hand, it in no way contests the enticing power of those "ideologies." It is putting up an off-balance fight and mounting great battles against windmills. Modern Christianity is incapable of tackling the current false and seductive spiritual forces. It prefers to assail those of yesterday, which are already dead.

In the second place, Christianity is losing its impact through endless self-criticism, a self-criticism which is just as false as its attacks. There is, in fact, no end to criticism of the parish, of morality, of theology, of the language, etc. It is a criticism based on what one *imagines* to be the reality of modern society, but since one is mistaken about that reality, the enormous amount of work means exactly nothing. Even if the method were valid (to criticize Christianity and the church on the basis of a point of view of the world held to be true), it would still at least be necessary to have a correct view of this world and of this society. But now, if one were to become aware that this point of view of the world is one of a non-Christian myth, or of a non-Christian religion, it is obvious that Christians would be unwilling to

make their *mea culpa*, their self-criticism, on the basis of that point of view. They would be unwilling to do so precisely because they have been assured that it is a nonreligious point of view, and that is the very reason why it seems valid to them.

In other words, Christian self-criticism on the basis of science, history, and sociology can be perfectly valid. But in making such self-criticism, Christians must not imagine that they are thereby penetrating the culture of our western society, or that they are in the slightest degree in tune with the average person living in that society. The latter understands nothing of scientific language, though he believes in the ideology of science. The consequence is a complete absence of interest on the part of non-Christians in all the braggadocio, swagger, and grandiloquence of Christians over their *aggiornamento*. Christians can vote for the pill, revolution, abortion, free sex, and the marriage of priests; and against imperialism, unequal opportunity, etc. They should be aware that that interests no one but other Christians, who are congratulating one another.

The man in the street chuckles a bit, and he definitely is not tempted to enter a church or believe the Christian word. The militant, of course, is happy to have an ally, but he isn't at all interested in whatever is Christian about him. From then on, this mistaken appraisal should normally lead to the disappearance of traditional Christians disheartened by the changes of which they have no understanding, and by the lack of any new Christians coming in. The more Christianity is modernized, the more it will lose its place, and the more the last Christians will be isolated. The proponents of the new hermeneutics and the neo-Christians will very shortly be the most lonely people in our society.

We mustn't delude ourselves about the "dialogue with non-Christians." Who are the non-Christians in question? If we look around us in France, we note that they are always *former Christians*, such as G. Mury and R. Garaudy. If they are prepared for dialogue, if they are interested in what is going on in the churches, that is because they have received a good, solid Christian training, and have, since their youth, been alerted and warned of these problems, but the others completely scoff at it.

Insofar as Christianity remains a *religion*, it is on a par with other religions. It talks with them as equals, and can attract people for religious motives. The same would be true today. For the people of the West at the present time — seized with anguish and fear, with the prestige of science, with the fascination of almightiness, with the frenzy over consumer goods — if Christianity is to make contact with them, is to find them where they are, it must be more *religious* than ever. It must *recover* its authentic festivals, its mystic ecstasies, its mystery, its sacramental rites (I am not saying it should keep the same rites and mysteries), its sacred priesthood, its supreme, undisputed authority, its miracles, its timeless way of life. It must banish discussion, theology, criticism, democracy, and the incognito. In so doing it will enter the lists and get into the race with the other current religions, and with no small chance of winning. It will gather many new converts into the fold once again. But be not deceived. It will be a case of a *religious* revival. I have tried to show that certain bold moves of "the new theology" are

unwittingly tending in that direction.

If one does not adopt this line, then it has to be understood that Christianity is a *break* with our society, as it has always been a break with the world, of which our society is but one aspect.

But the situation is complex. It is true that the church and Christianity live on a cultural past which needs to be criticized, not in accordance with the imperative of science and the maturity of modern man, but in accordance with its own inherent critique, in accordance with the power native to the revelation, and which periodically bursts out of the ecclesiastical and theological covering placed upon it.

Conversely, if one adopts the line indicated above, one is not likely to reach an agreement and a mutual understanding with our society and our contemporaries. To the contrary, this Christianity coming back to its own origins (not necessarily those attested by modern exegesis!) will be even less grasped and understood, for Christianity's self-criticism involves, by the act itself, the rediscovery within Christianity of what remains the most completely incomprehensible for man, and at once the critique and the rejection of man's religious paths, modern as well as ancient.

Apart from an unfortunate spirit of syncretism or of resignation, there is no reason to consider that our times are the dawn of the Lord's promises, promises now taken up and fulfilled by man himself. Faced with the religions which man sets up for himself, the only Christian attitude possible is one of struggle and elimination, not in order to substitute a Christian religion for the others, but to get man out of the religious trap from which he is far from emerging! In other words, it is a resumption of the struggle of the prophets and of the early Christians.

What? Desacralization? Demythification? Demythologizing? Dereligionizing? Isn't that precisely what all the intellectual Christians are saying today? Isn't what I was writing on that subject thirty years ago now banal, a well-established opinion, an obvious commonplace? Everybody's doing it, and it is no longer especially interesting. To the contrary, I contend that that represents a great misunderstanding. When I was setting forth the need to desacralize and demythicize, I was viewing the realities of the world from the standpoint of the truth of the gospel, whereas the path now being taken is one of demythicizing Holy Scripture and of dereligionizing the church from the standpoint of the truths of the world. As far as political and social realities are concerned, that is easy. Let each day take care of itself. The world is desacralizing itself through its own drives.

The prophetic message now goes about like this: "Our Yahweh is a concentration of our dreams, desires and hopes as Jews. Happily, the chariots of the Chaldeans, the agricultural techniques of the Egyptians, and the commerce of Tyre will enable us to realize those dreams. Thanks to them, we can attest that our Yahweh is not so false as all that . . ." The message of the first Christians now is: "Our experience of the resurrected Christ will be able to be attested thanks to the unification of the

world (as by Rome), and his universal Lordship will be concretized thanks to the means of communication and the mass media. If he is the Son of God, that is because in this new universe we can easily unite all peoples, and his resurrection is merely the symbol of the Augustan identity which fulfills the designs of God . . ."

That is the diametric opposite to what the entire biblical message cries out to us. The power to desacralize is solely and uniquely the power of the Gospel, of the word of God contained in Holy Scripture, and of a Word preserved in its text, of a Word which we have no need to demythicize, to dissect, to come out with, because in its form, inseparable from its content, it conveys the only possible truth, through an actualized decision on the part of God (here I remain ultraclassical, since classicism is the only possible outcome in the face of the gods of this world). It is the Word which demythicizes, provided we leave it in its integrity and do not pretend to demythicize it, in the name of what? It is the Word which desacralizes the church as fast as the sacred keeps coming back. It is the Word which destroys that religion which would smother the faith and the revelation among Christians.

But that is on condition that we leave it its freedom, and neither cover it with the wrappings of tradition and theology, of moralities and rites — making a mummy out of it — nor expurgate it, cut it to pieces and scatter it, like the *membra disjecta* of Orpheus — making an experimental corpse out of it. All that is necessary is to let the explosive power of the word act, just as it is. There soon takes place a self-cleansing of the church and of Christians, but provided we take that path.

This cannot help being accompanied by the work of desacralization and of secularization against the gods of the present world. That means seeing to it that technical objects are never anything but objects, reduced to utility, measured with a cold eye, and scorned for their always base usage — being sure that they in no way give meaning to life. It means seeing to it that technology is nothing more than an ensemble of means, which need to be put through the mill of truth, an ensemble of useful procedures, interesting of course, but which do not enrich life, do not open a door to spiritual progress, and in no way characterize man.

It means seeing to it that science is one possible representation among others of the world in which we live, and never is the key to truth. It means working to see that the state be strictly lay and secular, refusing, in consequence, to accept any political ideology put out by it, whether Gaullist, or communist or democratic. It means looking upon it as a useful manager, acceptable, of course, as administrator, but *ne sutor ultra crepidam* ["Let the cobbler stick to his last"]. We reject the nation-state structure, and the state-providence role, whether it be as an object of adoration, of confidence, or of hope. It means seeing history as an interesting novel of the human adventure, and nothing more. Nothing more — not the great goddess who enables us to live.

So we must be iconoclasts, but not of the statue of Jesus Christ nor of God. For in the destruction of those statues, a conjunction

of forces is at work. On the one hand, as we were saying, the word of God is taking the matter in hand, but the world is also on the attack. We can only applaud the destruction of the divine idol fabricated by Christian traitors, a destruction wrought by Nietzsche and Bakunin, but we don't have to resume their accusations or dance a scalp dance around the true God of Jesus Christ. That the God envisaged by Voltaire and that envisaged by Bakunin are dying is well and good, but we have to take into account that this in no way refers to the God-creator of the cosmos, the God working miracles in answer to prayer, The God of Sinai, God the Father, the Almighty God, transcendent and sovereign. To claim to do away with that God in the name of Nietzsche's critique is, on the one hand, to apply that critique where he did not apply it, and on the other hand, to confuse this God, who is the God of Jesus Christ, with the rationalized idol of Christian lukewarmness.

Iconoclasts, yes. That really means destroying the gods of the world which Christians see without observing them. It means standing up to them while taking them for prince charmings — gods of the stadium, of consumer goods, of utility, of money, of efficiency, of knowledge, of delirium, of sex, of folly, of revolution, of agnostic learning, of politics, of ideologies, of psychoanalysis, of class, of race, gods of the world calling for unheard-of holocausts. The person who attacks the biblical God in order to demythicize him and desacralize him, instead of attacking these divinities, is giving millions of people over to death, not only to spiritual death but also to physical death. That is where Christian responsibility rests.

Millions of people are suffering from hunger, but there are millions of people who are dying from the divine power of political ideology. The person who takes the political route in order to save people, so that people should no longer be exploited, should no longer be victims of war, that person is the surest guarantor of exploitation to come and of further wars, for he is given over to the worship of the political god. If he is not Christian, he cannot do otherwise, and is not responsible. If he is Christian, he is responsible. I am saying that it is the Christian cronies and companions of the communists in 1944 who are responsible for the millions of victims of Stalin, holocausts of the political god. The same is true today with Mao. It isn't a matter of political choice. It is a matter of the worship of a god and of a sacred calling.

Precisely as Jean Brun emphasizes, demythologizing "should be applied, not to the myths ordinarily attacked, but to the very attempts which pretend to deliver us from them." The former myths are known. They are recognized as such, and are no longer dangerous. Once recognized as a myth, the latter no longer means anything. It is childish for Christian intellectuals to sing their paeans to myths which no longer exist, and the biblical myths first of all, while the truly living myths are those not recognized as such. That is when prophetic lucidity, coming from the Holy Spirit, should enable Christians to designate them and earmark them. Again, to be sure, it is important not to reject the power of the Holy Spirit in advance, and then pretend to make Scripture contemporary and vital through hermeneutics. If Christians do not fulfill this role, no one will.

It will be said that the old revelation serves no good purpose in the newness of our times. Modernity has nothing in common with the biblical period, so, for the very purpose of fulfilling that role, why wouldn't the biblical message have need of refreshment, rejuvenation, and renovation in the direction of modernity? And that is indeed the problem. Should the message be remodeled, or is it meaningful as it is? I am surely fully cognizant of the novelty of this age, yet I am immediately struck by the modernity of the biblical proclamation. When Scripture tells us that man is dominated by the spirit of power and of conquest, by the spirit of independence and surfeit, that he wants to put together a world for himself, and himself alone, to the exclusion of God, that he wants to exploit the world for himself, and that he proclaims, "Where then is God? What can this inoperative, unseen and illogical God do?" — is that indeed an old-fashioned speech in need of being demythologized?

Doubtless the Bible calls that attitude pride, sin, a break with God — and condemns it. The modern world, on the other hand, is convinced that finally, in this manner, man will realize his potential, fulfill himself, mature, become adult, and take charge of his own destiny. But has the Bible ever said anything other than that? It says, in fact, that man thinks to take his own destiny in hand when he makes his own law for himself, when he kills God, and fabricates for himself gods according to his own measure, "who walk before us." Christians, no doubt, instead of preserving the judgment of the Bible concerning this attempt on the part of man, have given their allegiance to the attempt itself. They approve the secular city and triumphal man, responsible in his own right and to himself, and attaining, finally, his majority.

Has the Bible ever said anything other than that the people of Israel were constantly brought to give their allegiance to that conquest of man by himself, that almost inevitably they gave approval to the political power, to the amassing of riches, to the advance of wisdom (science), and that that is where they put their success? They associate themselves with human conquests. I see nothing new, relative to the biblical elucidation, either in the amazing advance of science, technology, and contemporary politics, or in the attachment of Christians to those marvelous successes. The judgment which Scripture brings to bear on these efforts and accomplishments is in no way a product of a cultural atmosphere stemming from a sacral environment with a religious distrust of every conquest on the part of man. To the contrary, it is the product of a rejection of that cultural environment. It is a rejection of it, both as a sacral, religious milieu and as an expression of man's will to power.

The forms have changed. The problem remains the same. The proportion of human success is incommensurate with the minor successes of the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, but the meaning of the primary judgment is the same. The difficulty man is getting himself into is the same. There is no need for the response to go through demythologizing and the death of God. It is available immediately.

That is why I both agree and disagree with Rudolf Bultmann's famous formula: "If formerly the Word of God had to snatch the word 'God' from idolatry, today it has to snatch God from anonymity and pseudonymity" (*Foi et Parole*). I agree, because it is indeed true that the modern gods are no longer known explicitly by the name of God, and there is no need to snatch God from that confusion. To the contrary, it is a question of restoring the specificity of the name of God out of undifferentiated anonymity, and of reaffirming the uniqueness of the God of Jesus Christ in the midst of the idols. I disagree, however, because this can be implemented only by a clear and open fight against idolatry.

Idolatry has not disappeared; far from it. If there is no need to withdraw the word "God" from idolatrous confusion, there is a need to give it meaning, by denunciation, challenge, and accusation against the veiled, hidden, and secret gods, who besiege and seduce all the more effectively because they do not openly declare themselves as gods.

It is clear that the task facing Christians and the church differs entirely according to whether we think of ourselves as being in a secularized, social, lay, and grown-up world which is ready to hear a demythicized, rationalized, explicated, and humanized gospel — the world and the gospel being in full and spontaneous harmony because both want to be nonreligious — or whether we think of ourselves as being in a world inhabited by hidden gods, a world haunted by myths and dreams, throbbing with irrational impulses, swaying from mystique to mystique, a world in which the Christian revelation has once again to play its role as negator and destroyer of the sacred obsessions, of the religious phantasmagoria, in order to liberate man and bring him, not to the self his demons are making him want to be, but to the self his Father wills him to be.

At the mention of a struggle of faith against the modern idols, which are the real ones, I immediately hear indignant protests: "So here we are, being put back into the mind-set of the Middle Ages. Ellul is inviting us to take part in a crusade against the infidels and at the very least, to adopt a completely superannuated apologetic."

That would be a total misconception, not only a misconception about my thinking (which is not serious), but a misconception with respect to the realities. Crusade and apologetic are, in fact, institutions specific to the age of Christendom. There cannot be a crusade unless there is a *Christian world* facing a non-Christian world. There cannot be an apologetic unless the non-Christian is included in the problematic of the obvious posed by the Christian. No longer are we in that situation. To suppose that it is still possible to have a crusade or an apologetic is to be out of your mind.

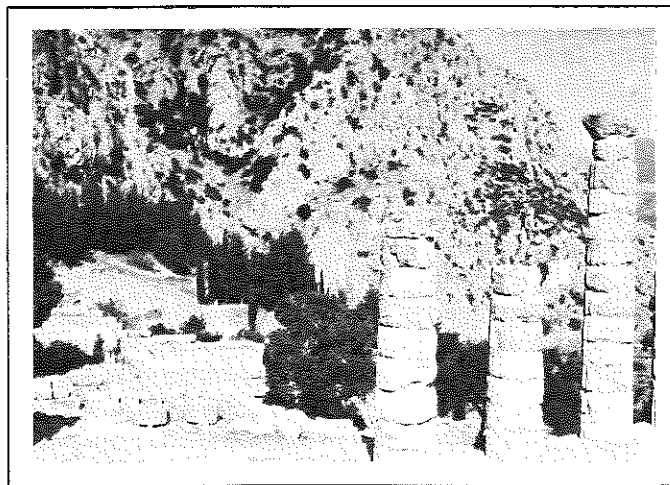
What I am talking about here can have no more to do with crusade than did the rejection of "Caesar" during the first century of Christianity. I can't imagine the few faithful in Corinth or Rome launching a crusade against the army of the

Princeps. We have come back to that stage. The fight of faith lies ahead of us. It is necessary, if we believe that there is truth in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, as set forth in Scripture.

Surely that implies that the modern religions and the modern sacred are errors or lies. Of course, if we feel it necessary to reject all distinction between error and truth, that is our privilege, but then, for goodness' sake, let's stop talking about Jesus Christ, who is designated as the Truth. If need be, we could recover "Christianity" as an "ism," and make it into a nice amalgam of anything we please but that is not what the Bible is talking to us about.

The fight of faith to which we are committed is not a fight against man. It is not a question of destroying him, of convincing him that he is wrong. It is a fight for his freedom. Reinserted into a sacred, a prisoner of his myths, he is completely alienated in his neoreligions — this brave "modern man." Every religion is both necessary and alienating.

To smash these idols, to desacralize these mysteries, to assert the falseness of these religions is to undertake the one, finally indispensable liberation of the person of our times. □



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