

INTEGRITY is published each month and seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.

Integrity

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FIVE FABLES (continued from page 52)

Even when we remain silent while another speaks, we do not always concentrate on what he says, or try to understand him. Be quick to listen—really listen.

Second, be slow to speak. One reason we do not listen is that we are in too big a hurry to get the floor, or we think about what we are going to say or would have said if it had been our turn to talk. We can never understand the other person if we dominate the conversation.

Third, be slow to become angry. This rule logically follows the previous two, for it is very difficult to become angry with someone we truly understand. If we had more listening, both parties would benefit. One would be more understanding, the other would feel respected, and the result would be happiness for both.

A while back a man in our church became upset over a viewpoint I had expressed. Hearing of his displeasure, I went to see him, seeking peace. By the time I arrived he had had time to stew over it and had decided never to go back to that church again. But we made peace without either of us abandoning his integrity. When I urged him to get up the next Sunday and tell us what he thought about the subject, insisting that he might have something to say from which we all could learn, his “plague of sighing and grief” abruptly ended, although he modestly declined to speak. Once he felt that people would listen to him, giving them the opportunity was unimportant. All he needed was a dose of respect—and that same medicine will work wonders anywhere.

OCTOBER 1976

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EDITORIAL

FIVE FABLES

The September 19, 1976, issue of *Family Weekly* contained a short article entitled "Five Dangerous Ideas Our Children Have About Life" in which Darold A. Treffert, M.D., director of the Winnebago (Wis.) Mental Health Institute, attacked five themes of "The American Fairy Tale," according to which *happiness is*: (1) *things*; (2) *what you do, not what you are*; (3) *having a round soul* (i.e., being just like everybody else); (4) *mental health* (defined as the absence of problems); and (5) *communicating into outer space* (as a substitute for meaningful communication between people). Such ideas are dangerous because they contribute to the swelling suicide rate. The doctor's repudiation of these popular lies is in perfect harmony with sound theology, and I want to comment on the five fables from a Christian perspective.

1. Materialism

Since psychology has replaced religion in the hearts of many Americans, it is gratifying to hear a psychiatrist take up the theme of the destructiveness of materialism. Jesus also attacked our national deficiency when he said, "Watch out, and guard yourselves from all kinds of greed; for a man's true life is not made up of the things he owns." When this warning is echoed from the pulpit, it is most frequently used to induce increased church contributions, which may be valid, but it has a much broader application. Scrupulous tithing is not a perfect antidote to materialism, and our children see many more indicators of our basic attitude than our contribution checks.

One undesirable effect of materialism is pointed out by Jim Reynolds in *Secrets of Eden: God and Human Sexuality*. He says that "our words about sexual purity are sharply inconsistent with our total philosophy of life. Many of us (Christians) are

materialistic, undisciplined pleasure seekers who tend to avoid in-depth relationships. Parents, dominated by lust after power, prestige, success, and wealth, cannot suddenly plead with their spoiled children to practice unselfish sex and expect to be taken seriously or even to be understood." But despite the pleading of psychologists and preachers alike, it is almost impossible for us to see that we have attitudes which are destructive to our children as well as to ourselves.

2. Apathy

In one of the most poignant passages in the Bible the psalmist laments, "I look to the right and watch, but there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me, no man cares for me." Such loneliness is no isolated phenomenon, and we Christians are challenged to make people feel that they count as themselves, and not just because of their accomplishments. "Nothing counts like success" may be another way of saying nothing else counts. For this reason life becomes unbearable to those who fail. And would it be an overstatement to say that the typical church is slow to open its arms to failures?

The neglected psalmist was a victim of apathy, which—rather than hate, Rollo May argues—is the opposite of love. Anything is better than being ignored, which is why some children apparently force their parents to whip them; that is the only way they can get any meaningful attention.

The model of the Christian's attitude toward others is God, whose love (or wrath as an aspect of his love) is clearly demonstrated in the Bible and is the dynamic for a corresponding love among his people. This is illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, at the end of which Jesus asked, "Which one of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor to the man attacked by the robbers?" The force of this question, it seems to me, has often been ignored. The neighbor is not the one who receives kindness, but is

the one who gives it, and by giving it he provokes love in others. Thus Jesus sets the command to love—the part of the law which the priest and Levite conveniently ignored—under the gospel. In other words, we can be neighbors because God is our Neighbor. As John expressed it, "We love because God first loved us."

The divine love for us is stated in the Bible by such words as mercy, pity, compassion, and heartfelt sympathy. That a derivative understanding and sympathetic participation in the destiny of others in all situations is bound upon Christians is supported by enormous textual evidence, but we must be content with one passage: "Since [the ideal high priest] himself is weak in many ways, he is able to be gentle with those who are ignorant and make mistakes" (Hb. 5:2). The expression "to be gentle" represents the Greek word *metriopathein*, which literally means "to moderate one's feelings." The apathetic person has no feelings; the sins of others are of no concern to him. The hostile person has the wrong feelings; he sees only the sin and has no sympathy with the sinner. The true priest is justifiably displeased at the sins of others, but awareness of his own weakness enables him to *moderate* his anger at their ignorance and error. The Christian, then, is sensitive to the virtues and vices of his comrades, as well as to his own weakness, and that sensitivity causes him to be gentle, not indifferent. The implications of this "metriopathy" to happiness in the home, in church, and in society are immense.

3. Conformity

The notion that we all have to fit the same mold is widely disclaimed but commonly practiced, not only in home life, which is often a tug of war over petty deviations and where husbands and wives demand that the alter ego be more ego than alter, but also in schools, which enforce ridiculous dress codes that arouse unnecessary resentment, and in churches, where Biblical unity in diversity receives

ASSURANCE . . .

The tide may cease its roll;
And honey taste like brine;
And lovers forget their stroll;
The trellis reject its vine;
The Alps may go bareheaded;
An ice belt gird Equator;
Vesuvius spew undreaded;
And early come in later:
But God will not suspend His memory of me.

—Robert W. Lawrence

only lip service if it is acknowledged at all. The danger of this externally imposed conformity is that the victims of it will begin to feel—and may even be told—that they do not belong.

The New Testament pulls no punches in dealing with this problem in church life. That there may be distinctive differences among members of Christ's body, not only in personality and cultural characteristics but also in questions of belief, is unequivocally asserted by Paul, especially in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8. He goes far beyond the tolerance level of many of his successors when he insists that in matters of faith "every man must be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Ro. 14:5). His persuasive arguments have been lost on many of us today, who, because of our dogmatism or fear or whatever the reason may be, must squash our brothers' individuality.

According to the professionals, the psychological harm this approach does to children may be seen in the rampant suicide to which it contributes. Marriage counselors can testify to the effect it has on marriages. But the Lord only knows, and we can only guess at, the damage it does to those in the church who try to be just themselves.

4. Problems

If mental health cannot be defined as the absence of problems, certainly suc-

cessful Christian living cannot be judged in terms of the absence of problems. To do so would be to ignore the very meaning and significance of the important Christian virtue of patience, which is the appropriate reaction to frustration, difficulty, affliction and pain.

It has been said that the neurotic builds castles in the sky, while the psychotic tries to move into them. From that point of view, some so-

called gospel preaching is crazy, for it ignores the realities of life. It is not God's intention to translate us from this world before our time, but we are to live triumphantly in this "wilderness of woe." If Paul was "so utterly, unbearably crushed that he despaired of life itself," if his concerns were so great that he "could bear it no longer," then we should expect to have a few discomforts and frustrations ourselves. To say that the real Christian won't hurt or won't despair is not only naive, it is also dangerous. We need *patience*. We need patience. We need patience. Anything less than this cometh of the evil one.

5. Communication

Our society has no greater need than meaningful communication, but how can this vital requisite to happiness be attained? Although it may not have been his precise intention to do so, it seems to me that James gave us the recipe when he said, "Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak, and slow to become angry." But the order is important.

First, be quick to listen. Many of us simply do not listen to others—and we thereby not only withhold from them the solver of many emotional problems (the listening ear), but we also impose upon them the humiliating thought that no one cares enough for them to listen to them.

(continued on back cover)

LEARNING DEFICIENCIES AND CHURCH LIFE

JAMES E. McFARLAND

Aurora, Colorado

A classic reason for rejecting the Bible is that those who profess to believe it are given to confusion and atrocities. Even Christians recognize that "Christianity" does not always manifest Christ. However, most people will admit, either overtly or covertly, that man's nature is the source of all troubles. The various aspects of man's nature, therefore, require the careful attention of those who wish to maintain their religious integrity.

As an Air Force instructor I found that all of my students had reasoning limitations, which I had to recognize and understand in order to overcome them. Such learning difficulties are not only the root cause of political and social divisions, but they are an ever-present source of trouble in religious relationships, with which this paper will deal.

MAN'S REASONING LIMITATIONS

Common Background (Lack of). Another word for common background is experience. The animal part of man is credited with having the least instinct of all of God's creation. Man is born with a minimum knowledge base upon which he must build with experience. One function of an instructor is to use the common part of two backgrounds to establish further or "higher" facts. The closer a student's background approximates the instructor's, the easier it is to complete the student's knowledge. Due to insufficient common knowledge, both instructor and student must make assumptions in order to understand.

Assumptions. Assumptions are not wrong, nor are they "unscientific." They

are cloaked by euphemisms such as approximation, scientific guess, or belief, and they are usually not noted, even though they exist, whether implied by a theorist or inferred by an observer. In their malevolent forms, assumptions are characterized by zealotry, bigotry, and prejudice.

Assumptions are necessary and are used to sidestep "gaps" in reasoning due to insufficient knowledge. This is not negative or bad—we need assumptions to make conclusions.

Sensors. All knowledge is obtained through the sensors assigned at birth, and the sensors thus given are outstanding. The wondrous eye alone provides input for 80% of all facts. The ear takes in practically all remaining information. The senses of touch and taste are extremely useful evaluators, safeguards, and alarms. All information input through the sensors must be processed, not thrown away. A person will use his sensor information, reference his background knowledge, mix in assumption and use reason to analyze, categorize, store, and deduce.

Logic. Logic is the science which describes (correctly or incorrectly) relationships among propositions in terms of implication, contradiction, and so forth. Reason is the action of applying logic to facts and assumptions, and man is considered to be a reasoning animal, despite appearances to the contrary. Logic must be exercised in order for a man to grow and mature. Correct logic must be applied to knowledge and assumptions to get correct results. This does not mean that a person is aware of this creation of

Don't bother to entertain the thought that you have common sense.

assumption by the logical process. Indeed, in most cases, he is unaware of the source and derivation of assumptions. So-called "common sense" is a manifestation of similar backgrounds, logic, and assumptions.

Common Sense. There is no such thing as common sense; rather, it is a consensus. I know, as do most people who fight the sectarian doctrines, that common sense is not in me—I have been told so! "Common sense" is a comforting concept, reassuring to those who refuse to accept another's opinion but can't figure out why. It demonstrates what is so obvious to another person, but what I cannot see, and vice versa. Don't bother to entertain the thought that you have common sense.

The Human Factor. All reasoning capabilities mentioned thus far are ill-used by man because of the "Human Factor."

Lack of common knowledge has caused much heartache. The gifted but lazy, the impatient, the haughty, and the forgetful have overly criticized those who could not achieve. Those whose background is not the same as the achievers are chided.

Assumptions are used in lieu of reasoning. Assumptions about others can kill happiness before it starts or create brotherly love at a handshake.

Sensors are either not used to learn or else are used too much for pure sensuality. Few use the senses for edification and communication.

Logic is usually not used; if it is, then the rules are set up to guide us in our own light. In the end, we all reason ourselves into what we want to be.

It is the "Human Factor" in the process of thinking which causes sectarianism. Not everybody is attempting to do what is right, but many think they are. Those "many" have segregated themselves into groups like "birds of a feather." Some are blatantly dogmatic: "You do not love

God unless you are in our group." Others are recklessly tolerant: "Everybody loves God no matter how one acts."

It is the "Human Factor" which determines the effects of the reasoning limitations. Hence it is each person's responsibility to control his learning faculties and decrease limitation. What is the inevitable outcome of refusing to control and develop reasoning capabilities?

THE EFFECTS OF MAN'S REASONING LIMITATIONS

Emotion. Christians are to be slaves of righteousness, not servants to their passions. Yet those who call themselves Christians find much comfort in being strong and steadfast in the doctrines of their emotions, and most of what they do is based on their emotions. They mistake a "bad feeling" for a doctrinal error. Have we really washed away our sins? Do we Christians sin less than those "in the world"? I doubt it. We have the ability to sin in a way different from "those outside" and feel pious at the same time. We can make our desires our law and ascribe that law to God.

I have heard for so many years, "We have the scriptural organization" or "We don't force anybody to follow any creed." Wrong, on both counts. Most religious groups have the same method, although they vary in severity. This method can be subtle, yet strong, blatant, but effective. The method is SOCIAL PRESSURE in all its nefarious forms. Social Pressure! Ah, how eloquent. It is nothing more than a manifestation of two of man's most indigenous desires: to be accepted and to control. But these come from deeper and more insidious faults: lack of trust in God, with the resulting fear.

Fear. Fear is a subtractive emotion. It erodes trust in God. It does not displace trust like a boat does water, but it destroys it like the ocean washes away a

Deep inside we know that social pressure needs no scripture and that God determines who goes to hell.

shoreline, like darkness withers a plant, or like hate chases away love. Fear is progressive—or should I say regenerative? Fear grips man, and he uses all his resources to remove it. However, only trust in God will do.

Trust in God. But trust in God is just as gripping and progressive. Trust in God will do to fear what fear would do to trust in God. Perfect trust out of perfect love will cast away fear. But which will conquer? Which will rule? The decision is up to man, for he must determine in his mind to trust in what God has said. Yet man seems unable.

Control. Many men are conservative animals; many are liberal animals. In any case, man seeks to maintain the least excitement to his animal nature. Thus he seeks control. Control of a person's environment is the purpose of most of man's efforts. Control extends into man's religion, forming a religion which is usually quite foreign to God's religion, be it "Christian" or not.

Reason for Control. But religion requires interfaces to other people. This is where all trouble begins. The problems begin when man differs from God, then subsidiary problems occur when man differs with man. Back to reasoning limitations: each person has a distinct background, knowledge base, set of assumptions, rules of logic, and quality of sensors. He is thrust into the world. There is little time to adjust. It's like waking up in a carnival tumbling cylinder. I once experienced a fall down a hillside when a tree branch I trusted snapped. I was in complete confusion until after the fall.

Oh, the unknowns! Oh, the changes! Oh, the contradictions! Man wants to grab something—but, that something must agree with him. The FEAR. He must have control! The wind swirls, the rain is blinding, and the thunder sounds. He is

flying through space. No up, no down. No go, no stop. Control is necessary. He does not understand: Control is, was, and always will be in God's Son.

Rules. But man rejects God's control. He makes his own. It is manifested in rules. Be it conformity or nonconformity. Rigorous rules in ritual religion restrain real righteousness. But never mind: If we set up rules to govern, then we can tell if someone deviates. Of course, we haven't found someone to set up the rules, as is manifest by the extreme sectarianism in the name of Christ, and if we did find someone to set up the rules, we would still have problems, for: (1) They need to be recognized by all as God-sanctioned, and (2) they need to be enforced. (I am speaking in man's animal nature, not as a son of God: we need neither.)

Law. How shall we produce a theory that gives God's sanctions to our rules? One way, a most predominant one, is to develop the theory of law. So we grab at John, Romans, James, the Old Testament, and say: "See, Law." Then the last padlock is closed, all light is blocked out, and the souls of men are delivered to torment when we conclude: "See, Law; therefore, RULES (OURS). Q.E.D."

Enforcement. How do we enforce our law? Easy, in two ways: Hell and Social Pressure. What would we do without hell? Oh, the eloquence of social pressure. Thank God and his Blessed Son who have given us these wonderful tools. We do have verses to support us—don't we? But deep inside we know that social pressure needs no scripture and that God determines who goes to hell.

The Wrong of Enforcing Opinion. Men are not wrong because they try to achieve what they think is right, nor are they to be blamed for their imperfection of logical thinking. Rather, men will have much to answer for because they think they

have the right to enforce their opinions. Most people think they don't "enforce" opinions; they have opinions but don't make others toe under. They are fooling themselves. Humans develop opinions and apply every possible tactic to bring others to conformity. Some of the most magnanimous individuals I know have hesitations about associating with others because they have developed opinions.

The Wrong of Opinion. May I ask, what right does a person have to an opinion? (I am asking this in light of God's word, not in light of our relationships.) I have seen individuals study on the subject of deaconesses. They accumulate the facts and magnanimously announce that we don't have to worry anymore. Now they admit that they might be biased and they admit that this is their opinion and they present the facts. But don't question it. Don't say that the facts don't show their point. The question is answered. The answer man has decided. End of subject. Opinions. They are what makes the clergy worthless. They are the

undoing of brothers. They are the ultimate evil.

Summary. I hope I have shown some elements of the present sectarianism. Of course, I could have labeled it what it is—*sin*—but enlightenment is superior. The qualities a man is born with are not sin: i.e., lack of common background, inadequate knowledge base, assumptions, logic, or our sensors. The human factor, the animal nature, the law of sin and death, the spirit of death—they cause sectarianism. Trust in God and trust in flesh are mutually exclusive. Love of God and love of life cannot coexist.

I feel sorry for those who must enforce their laws—they are always in fear of "missing" a law and going to hell despite their diligence. They are like the Athenians with the altar to the unknown god. The Athenians' unknown god was the only God; the legalist's unknown law is the only law. The Athenians could not find the unknown God by their wisdom; the legalist will never know the "unknown law" by his own wisdom. □

REACTION

SPECIAL REPORT ON THE
WARREN-FLEW DEBATE

by JIM SIMS

THE DEBATE OF THE CENTURY?

It was billed by the brethren as the "Debate of the Century." It was, from a more realistic view, not even the debate of the week—the Ford-Carter encounter wins hands down.

Dr. Antony G.N. Flew, the esteemed British philosopher, and Dr. Thomas B. Warren, from the Harding Graduate School of Religion, met in debate on the campus of North Texas State University on September 20-23. The plan was to allow two nights for Flew to affirm the proposition "I know that God does not exist" while Warren functioned in his familiar negative

style. Then the combatants were to spend two nights debating the merits of Warren's knowledge that God does exist.

If you happen to meet some skeptic who says that the alleged debate never took place, you may believe him, if you like. Both men appeared in the arena as scheduled. Each man delivered three twenty-minute speeches on each of the four nights. But no debate took place. Some 4,000 to 6,000 Christians appeared each evening to see their Elijah humiliate the prophet of Baal. They found instead a Nebuchadnezzar in the Christians' den,

pleasantly engaging the lions in polite conversation.

Warren, I am sure, began celebrating the very moment Flew agreed to affirm the sort of proposition that logicians call a "universal negative." The difficulty of such a task is easily seen if, just for the fun of it, you try to prove "There are no invisible men living at the North Pole." Flew agreed to the proposition "I know that God does not exist" only because he intended to do little more than discuss "Why I am more properly designated an atheist, rather than an agnostic." In fact, Flew made a direct comparison between his knowledge that fairies do not exist and his knowledge that God does not exist. He readily acknowledged that the committed believer in either God or fairies would not likely be swayed by the case he would present.

The Case for Atheism . . .

Flew's case for atheism is based upon his methodological starting point. The burden of proof is placed upon those who would assert the reality of the transcendent. Unless there is some good reason to say that there is a God (or god, or gods) then we should not do so. From such a starting point, Flew critically examines the concept of the God of Christianity (or, in this case, the God of Dr. Warren, there being some who would say that the two notions are not always identical). Since Flew says that he finds certain problems, contradictions, and generally disagreeable notions about this God, he concludes that he has insufficient reason to become a believer and is, therefore, an atheist.

Some of Flew's objections to the Christian notion of God are: (1) He is impossible to pick out as an object of discourse. Do we really know what/who we are talking about when we define him/it as incorporeal? (2) It is impossible to verify or falsify the alleged "acts of God." If God answers prayer with a "No," how does this answer differ from no answer at all? (3) There is "flagrant inconsistency" be-

tween the alleged goodness of God and the doctrine of eternal punishment. Even though it may be just for God to punish sin, can justice ever be served by inflicting infinite and eternal torment on those guilty of seemingly minor infractions? (4) The extent of natural and moral evil in the world is inconsistent with the alleged goodness and omnipotence of God. Could not an omnipotent being create a system devoid of suffering for the innocent?

Throughout the contest, Warren challenged Flew to set forth his arguments in terms of symbolic logic. He considered Flew's failure to do so an admission of defeat. But those who have seen Warren perform before know that he considers every argument put forward by every opponent on every issue as an admission of defeat.

Warren's speeches, both affirmative and negative, revolved around the objectivity of moral value, a tirade against evolution, and the traditional argument from design. Concessions on the part of Flew, both real and imagined, were examined and repeated ad infinitum, ad nauseum. Warren frequently praised his opponent's academic credentials and reputation only to ridicule what he obviously considered a pitiful attempt to defend a preposterous cause.

Major Arguments . . .

Complete and precise analysis of all the arguments presented in the debate must await distribution of the full text. However, three major arguments set forth by Warren and repeated a few thousand times during the debate can be summarized, along with Flew's response.

Since he believes that creation and evolution are incompatible, but are the only possible explanations for the existence of man, Warren believes that a disproof of evolution amounts to a proof for God. If man is to be accounted for by evolution, one must argue that human life came by means of birth from some nonhuman animal or by the transformation of some nonhuman animal into a human. Since Flew

conceded that such a birth or such a transformation never took place, then creation stands as the only remaining alternative. And creation necessarily implies God.

Flew did not dispute the validity of Warren's argument, which was given in terms of symbolic logic. However, Flew quite correctly observed that Warren defined his terms and stated his proposition in a manner foreign to evolutionary theory. The result can be neither a disproof of evolution nor a proof of fiat creation.

Argument from Design . . .

Warren also presented his own version of the well-known argument from design. It is legitimate, according to him, to argue from the observed facts of the universe to the transcendent beyond the universe. The presence of design in the universe, particularly in the harmonious functioning of the various systems of the human body, suggests a Designer, just as we know from experience that the presence of cars and clocks suggests designers.

Flew countered with the objections of David Hume. Whereas experience allows us to infer a designer from a car or a clock, we have no such experience of the universe as a whole. The proposed God is unique, and the universe which is said to be his creation is also unique, since it is all there is other than God. We have, then, no experience which would cause us to posit God as the great Designer. Furthermore, even if one did concede that the presence of design in the universe called for a Designer, one would not have a basis for identifying that Designer with the Christian God. The most one would have to concede would be a powerful being capable of manipulating matter which already existed.

The objectivity of moral value was a theme touched on by Warren in virtually every speech. He made much of the fact that Flew stated that before human life existed, there was no value, while at the same time Flew contended that the Nazis, in slaughtering millions of Jews, were

guilty of objective wrong. Warren charged Flew with contradiction. On the one hand he makes value "merely a function of the human mind," but, on the other hand, he holds the Nazis responsible to a higher objective law. Warren contended that the only possible basis for objective moral value was the existence of a moral God.

Flew's response conceded the difficulty of giving a full account of moral value. He did, however, contend that there is no inherent contradiction involved in saying that value is in some sense, but not "merely," a function of the human mind, while at the same time holding to the objectivity of moral value. Using the market value for a car as an illustration, he argued that it would be pointless to speak of the value of the car if there were no humans around as potential buyers. More important to Flew's response, though, was that objective moral value can prove nothing about God. If we say that values are good because God wills them, then we have said only that we worship brute power. If we say that God wills them because they are good, then we acknowledge that God himself is subject to the laws of value and that we are able to say that God is good only because we know of good and evil separate and apart from our knowledge of God.

The Winner . . .

Who won the debate? It is my opinion that neither Flew nor Warren presented an irrefutable case. Their objectives were so different that real debate hardly took place. Flew suggested from the start that few, if any, would alter their allegiance to theism or atheism on the basis of the encounter. Success, for Flew, was simply enabling some to see some of the issues more clearly. His goal was modest, so some success was virtually inevitable.

Warren does not believe in setting modest goals. So intent was he to gain an absolute and undeniable victory, that his appeals ranged from cold rationalism to evangelistic fervor. At times it almost

seemed that his powerful and impressive baritone voice would lead his followers in a few verses of "Just As I Am." To say that Warren was guilty of audience manipulation throughout the affair would only be to state the obvious. But the faith which Warren seeks to impart cannot be found at the end of a syllogism. Warren seems to feel that one can rightfully believe only what one knows. While I would not want to place a strong disjunction between faith and knowledge, I would contend that to identify the one with the other is to pervert the Christian faith.

A Personal Conclusion . . .

Thus I am led to one personal conclusion which I hesitate to put in print, but which I feel some obligation to state. I believe that I am an incurable theist. I believe that it is right and proper, even obligatory, for the Christian apologist to confront the challenge of atheism. But the circus atmosphere created by the brethren and oratorically exploited by Warren made this particular type of event an inevitable failure. Flew was paraded before the people as a prize bull which was bought and paid for, thus entitling the owners to slaughter him in any manner which might seem fitting to them. If I were to have only a choice between Warren's rationalism and Flew's naturalistic humanism, I would sadly and reluctantly accept the latter. In short, if I were to be made an atheist, it would more likely be by Warren than by Flew.

Of course, the brethren don't like to lose debates (and by our own accounts, we never have), so I hasten to add that Warren scored at least a technical victory. Warren attempted to play the game according to the rigid rules of debate, whereas Flew was content, for the most part, to be suggestive and to toss out interesting ideas for consideration. If the bout were to be scored by Olympic boxing rules, Warren would win a unanimous decision based upon aggression and initiative, despite the fact that his sharpest blows were

deflected and the knockout punch never materialized.

Some Questions . . .

Not only do the arguments of the debate itself call for consideration and evaluation, but the whole affair as a "brotherhood event" raises a series of questions.

Isn't it at least a little bit ironic that a people who have generally been horrified of philosophy as an academic discipline should now claim to have the true philosophy of religion? "Our" colleges, almost without exception, do not so much as teach even survey courses in philosophy. Philosophy is discounted as the "mere reasoning of uninspired men," and we are told that the only useful concepts are those for which we can quote a book, chapter, and verse. Why should we now suddenly accept as a hero of the faith one who justifies the ways of God to man with hardly even a literary allusion to scripture? I am not saying that philosophy is useless. I am only saying that before we found a way to exploit it for our own purposes, we always said that it was.

Isn't it even more ironic that this exercise in philosophy was plugged by the brethren as an evangelistic enterprise? Fortunately, the event was virtually ignored by the university student body. Local newspapers gave polite and impartial coverage of the first night, and then mercifully left the fiasco alone. The local Bible Chair director blamed the "spiritual indifference" of the campus. Perhaps the situation is that those who are spiritually inclined know that spiritual interests cannot be served by debate of this kind.

One final question remains. Will the controversy over philosophy be the next issue to divide us? Warren is already on record as favoring excommunication and eternal damnation for all instrumental-musicians, spiritualists, and non-patternists of all sizes and shapes. Will he now sever all ties with those of us who would make more modest claims than he for philosophic enterprises? □

THANK GOD, I'M OK*

RICHARD A. BATEY

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A few summers ago my family and I camped on Lake Geneva just across from the Castle of Chillon. Earlier that day we had visited the dungeon of the castle and had seen Lord Byron's name carved in one of the massive stone pillars. In the evening I sat absorbed in the sunset and in the rosy hue that it cast over the lake and landscape. I recalled the final lines of Byron's famous poem "The Prisoner of Chillon" (1816), written about Francois de Bonnavard, who had borne a lengthy imprisonment for conspiring with a band of patriots to establish a free republic.

At last men came to set me free;
I asked not why, and reckoned not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered for fetterless to be. . . .

My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

It is the chain whose links are forged by habit and compromise, by guilt and fear, by negative feelings and poor self-image that holds us back from a vital and useful existence. These "friendly fetters" to which we cling restrict the creative energy of our lives.

This book is an invitation to enlarge your personal freedom by appropriating the psychotherapeutic value of the New Testament faith. It is written with two specific convictions. The first is that the New Testament contains a joyful message of liberation. The proclamation of the kingdom of God means that people can

*This is an excerpt from Dr. Batey's latest book *THANK GOD, I'M OK* (Abingdon Press, \$2.95), which has just been published. It is used with the publisher's permission.

triumph over the evil powers that frustrate and destroy their lives—traditions and habit, sin and guilt, loneliness and despair, sickness and death. The second conviction is that current developments in the field of psychology offer useful categories for restating the New Testament's message of freedom.

A specific area of popular psychology that demonstrates a remarkably close affinity to biblical theology is Transactional Analysis (T.A.). The similarity between the understanding of the human predicament, whether spoken of as Original Sin or "universal Not-OK-ness," offers helpful ways of restating biblical insights. The New Testament's proclamation of God's grace and acceptance is not unlike the affirmation I'm OK—You're OK that T.A. sees as the outlook of the mentally healthy person. Thomas Harris has observed that: "The early Christians met to talk about an exciting encounter, about having met a man, named Jesus, who walked with them, who laughed with them, who cried with them, and whose openness and compassion for people was a central historical example of I'M OK—YOU'RE OK."

One of the most valuable contributions of T.A. is that it has provided a simple and precise vocabulary for describing the structure of the individual personality. T.A.'s definitions of terms are easily learned and can be readily applied to understanding our personality and interpersonal relationships. The clarity and simplicity of the language has prompted wide popular acceptance. The terminology and the insights that it expresses provide the means for restating the New Testament's message of salvation. This book will suggest a new way to express old ideas with freshness and clarity and to make helpful applications of the Christian faith to daily living. This restatement of the message of salvation in the contemporary idiom holds the promise of a renewal of the experience of well-being and happiness that enthused the first Christians. ■

OLD-FASHIONED MODERNISM

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

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When I began writing about the fellowship to which we are called by God through the Good News I found it difficult to express my growing conviction, based upon my intense study of the new covenant scriptures, as a free man. I had been confined for most of my life in a narrow partisan movement which postulated unity upon the impractical, impossible and unscriptural basis of conformity, and in spite of the fact that we had proved it would not work by becoming the most divided movement on the contemporary American scene, I still did not know how to articulate the real basis for acceptance of one another in Christ Jesus.

While searching for the words with which to express my growing concept that the only genuine reason for receiving one another is that God has received us all because of our absolute trust in and surrender to Jesus, I jotted down the expression, "I will make nothing a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation." The more I thought about it the more sense it made. If one was good enough for God to welcome him into the family, he was not too bad for me to put up with. I was congratulating myself for the vision which produced such a succinct statement when I was shot down out of the clouds. I was casually reading one day from the pen of W.N. Armstrong, former president of Harding College, and there was the exact statement. I had no doubt read it and made a mental note of it without recalling the source. It was like the time I found that one of my favorite statements had been uttered by Aristotle.

Then I got another surprise! Brother Armstrong must have borrowed the state-

ment from Brother F.G. Allen, who produced a volume of "original sermons" in 1886, which he called *The Old Path Pulpit*. In his sermon on "Our Strength and Our Weakness," on page 171, he says, "It follows that we may make nothing a test of fellowship that Christ has not made a condition of salvation. If we recognize those in the fellowship of the Church of God who do not comply with the clearly-expressed conditions of salvation, we break down all barriers between the Church and the world. If we refuse to fellowship obedient believers on account of something which Christ has not made a condition of salvation, we arrogate to ourselves the prerogative of binding on earth what has not been bound in heaven. Hence the whole question of fellowship turns on the conditions of salvation."

I do not know where Brother Allen found the statement to include in his "original sermons," but it is a good one and needs to be considered by every person who loves the Bible more than he does his party. Not long since, in a paper which is dedicated to putting the finger upon every person who pleads for unity in diversity, the only kind of unity available to thinking men, one of the writers cited my statement as an indication of what he called "fuzzy modern-day liberal thinking." It is obvious that he neither knows what is liberal or modern, and has become lost in the factional fog. That is why everything looks hazy and fuzzy to him. The fact is that the pioneer preachers, geared to the revelation of God, had a clearer sense of their task in pleading for oneness than those who have been subjected to an additional century of tradition which has tended to obscure rather than enlighten.

It is doubtful whether Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, J.W. McGarvey, or F.G. Allen would even be invited to speak in most of our congregations today. They might not want to do so after the elders took them aside and gave them a list of taboos which must not be mentioned in the pulpit. Certainly they would not pass inspection and be placed upon one of the college lectureships.

Imagine what would happen if F.G. Allen spoke at Freed-Hardeman College and said, "Our plea for Christian union implies that there are Christians to unite. It has ever been admitted that God has children among the denominations—those who have obeyed the gospel and are serving Him in the spirit of humility. To deny

that there are Christians apart from those who stand identified with us in our work of restoration, would be to make our plea for Christian union both meaningless and senseless."

One utterance like that and the bearded old gentleman would be hounded out of "the brotherhood." The guns of journalism would be trained upon him as a modernist. He would be assailed as a liberal. It would be "Katy, bar the door!" insofar as other invitations to speak are concerned. Even the apostle Paul might have trouble after writing to a congregation like Corinth and expressing a desire to spend the winter with the brethren there. Surely Corinth must have been "withdrawn from" by the other churches in the area! □

REVIEW

by HERBERT A. MARLOWE, JR.

THE GROWING INDIVIDUAL IN A RELIGIOUS SYSTEM

Confessions of a Conservative Evangelical by Jack Rogers. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974. \$2.45, paper.

One of the critical issues which has always faced the church, but which is especially heightened during periods of intensive cultural change, is the question of the growing/developing individual in a religious system. What are the issues this person must face? What are the problems which must be solved? What are the alternatives open to such a person? The church has always had believers who have found the confines of their church too limiting. Martin Luther and Alexander Campbell are two such examples. The church itself, perhaps unknowingly, fosters this growth when it instructs its be-

lievers to grow in the Lord. As long as members take that call seriously, there will always be people whose personal growth takes them beyond the boundaries of their church experience. Problems result because the church, a corporate body, by its very nature cannot progress as quickly as individual members can.

One of these problems which the church must face is the exodus in recent years of those members who possess deep spiritual commitment and outstanding intellects. This issue is certainly a crucial topic for consideration in the Church of Christ. Yet, published literature which attempts to confront the problem on levels deeper than calls for the wayward to repent are rare. With the exception of only a few articles plus the out of print

Voices of Concern there is little literature which would help either individuals or the church understand the issues and problems involved.

Since this vital concern — the growth and subsequent departure of the committed, intelligent member — has been basically neglected by the Church of Christ, one must turn to the literature of other religious bodies for help in understanding the problem. We find such understanding in *Confessions of a Conservative Evangelical* by Jack Rogers.

Dr. Rogers, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written a book in which many in the Church of Christ will be able to see reflections of themselves. Here is a man whose own perceptions of God, church life, and the Bible closely approximate those of members of the Church of Christ. Here, too, is a constructive pattern for dealing with this particular type of religious experience. Rogers' story, as he moves from fundamentalism to evangelicalism, as he finds a religious identity which transcends the conservative-liberal dichotomy, is one which many in conservative churches such as the Church of Christ will find helpful.

Some of the key issues with which anyone moving toward increased openness will have to deal are (1) the Bible, (2) one's personal history, (3) the history of one's own denomination and (4) the options which appear to exist. Rogers' examination of these factors in his own life is most instructive.

His struggle with the Bible is one many will find familiar. He says

The material in the Bible was treated like prescriptions from an all-wise doctor. I took these prescriptions and did my best to force my experience to conform to what I was being taught. Somehow I never really considered the opposite possibility — that my pastor's and parent's experience made them interpret the Bible the way they did. The notion that the Bible recorded the experience of people encountering God was foreign to me. The Bible was like a computer printout from on high. It contained truths, rules, absolutes, universals, all fitted into a

system to be learned and obeyed. That view did not give me joy, but it gave real strength (pp. 19-20).

Reflecting on his personal efforts to be Christlike, Rogers made a statement with which many will be able to identify. In reading Karen Horney's *Neurosis and Human Growth* he was startled to find that

her first chapter . . . described me. Unwillingness to accept ourselves as we are can lead us to endless striving to become an idealized self. I could have defended that as proper procedure. . . . The difference, Horney contends "between healthy strivings and neurotic drives for glory is one between spontaneity and compulsion." I had to admit it. I always was forcing myself to do what I thought I ought, not what I freely wanted (pp. 24-25).

Religious traditions have a particular flavor which can be tasted only by abstinence. Only the believer who can remove himself from his religious tradition can detect the ingredients which truly distinguish it. In the tradition of obsession with proof texts, the Church of Christ is unable to perceive the flavor of bibliolatry. Rogers says, "biblically, the desire for objective human security has often been branded idolatry. Reasonable proofs can be our golden calf" (p. 127).

The process of examining one's personal faith and religious tradition is a difficult one. Part of the difficulty arises from the feeling of being trapped, of feeling there are no feasible alternatives available. We assume that if we don't believe the whole Bible in just the way we were taught to believe it, the only option is to throw it away. Or we assume that the only choices we have are between the Church of Christ and Hell.

This lack of options, lack of alternatives, can mean a withering on the vine of our personal religious growth. Our own religious experience will necessarily be restricted and we will miss the enrichment God offers to us. For the person who has reached this point, Rogers' story is most helpful. For a church trying to understand what is happening to members who change, it is a critical book. □