

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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BARRIERS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

JOSEPH F. JONES

My previous editorial message on personal growth asserted the necessity of freedom to grow, to become more complete and mature human beings. But for many of us reared in the church and in Christian families there has not been this freedom so essential to a creative and wholesome growth in Christ. We recognize that there are barriers—hindrances of a personal nature, but also restrictions of a social and institutional nature. Perhaps it will be helpful if we identify more sharply some of these hindrances to our own personal development and the fruitful maturation of our children.

The basic *need for personal security* is deeply rooted in the human self, and since this need is met with reasonable satisfaction in the old, the familiar, the traditional, it makes constructive use of new freedom a rather difficult task. The Galatian Christians were finding it difficult to accept their new freedom in Christ, and the temptation lurked ever near to regress to the old, the staid, and the security of the traditional (Gal. 4; 5:1). College freshmen often reflect this same conflict; having been conditioned for years with teachers giving daily assignments, they find it difficult to accept a new freedom with its associated responsibility to set their own pace of study over

an entire semester. It is simpler to be told what to do each day than to use freedom responsibly. Babies are not always as pleased about being weaned as are their mothers; it means new freedom but added responsibilities. And many Christians resist the new freedom in Christ to grow and become, because the old is so comfortable and security-producing.

Then the *need for structure* is stronger and more evident in some lives than in others. And this may at least slow the growth process. Students in college will often ask the professor, "Do we have any assignment for tomorrow?" Some persons work better within a structured framework and find it difficult to utilize freedom effectively. Christians may feel this need for structure and be uncomfortable with any significant amount of freedom to change. The frustration of some Christians at this point is very evident when the format of worship is modified. I have personally observed individuals who experienced trauma with any significant modification of the worship order. They were decidedly uncomfortable with unstructured time in the worship for personal meditation and prayer. This is a most understandable reaction, yet one which can be overcome; but the regrettable thing is that often such emotional

reactions get camouflaged under a charge that the church is becoming unbiblical in changing the worship! Some must have hymn books to sing every song, although they have sung them since they were children. Many Christians feel far more comfortable with the preacher giving all the answers, rather than raising questions which stimulate intellectual pursuit and spiritual questing.

Perhaps one of the most insidious barriers to personal growth is the *presence of fear*. Lurking deep within may be the fear of consequences when I learn more fully the nature of God's truth, His will for my life. What cherished prejudices might I have to relinquish? How might new insights into God's truth require a significant modification of attitude toward others—other religious groups, races, my own brothers in Christ with whom I may differ? Might it be possible that growth in understanding of truth would require me to love and accept others whom I have long since rejected and refused to share the fellowship in Christ? Deeply rooted fear may thwart my growth because of the possibility of rejection by others. The need to be accepted by others (especially certain important persons from our perspective) is another deeply rooted dimension of human personality. That my growth may lead such persons to reject me can definitely stifle my honest effort to experience any expansion of my spiritual horizons.

It should be obvious that our *personal, cultural background* may present a formidable barrier to any significant growth. Nevertheless, we often are victims of this very cultural blindness, unable to see that our feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and convictions are products of the culture (family, church, community) in which we shared our development from childhood into

adulthood. Our attitudes toward persons, truth, church, fellowship, male-female relationships, are all culturally conditioned; and the need to perceive that we are products of our cultural context is imperative, for then we can begin to reassess ourselves in the light of God's truth. Without this candid recognition of how we have become what we are, life can be terribly fixed, our attitudes unchangeable, and our positions on any issue most inflexible.

An educator friend of mine, the former dean of Westminster College, summed up much of what I have tried to express about personal barriers to growth when he gave a graduation address on "The Grief of Learning." Growth, he suggested, can be beautiful, at times ecstatic, often consciously rewarding. But more often than we care to recognize, it is a *messy, painful process*. The baby cutting teeth is not always pleasant for the family; nor are his efforts to feed himself without a certain degree of sloppiness. Lack of neuro-muscular coordination at certain stages of our physiological development can be irritating, frustrating, sometimes downright embarrassing. But the end of such a painful and often messy process is the reward of adulthood; and hopefully, some degree of maturity, although even adulthood has its continuing "developmental tasks."

So with our thrust for spiritual maturity may we commit ourselves to Jesus Christ, that regardless of the personal hindrances and barriers to our spiritual development, we will seek His grace to sustain us in moments of discouragement and bafflement; his love and power to assure us amidst our fears of what growth may mean in behavioral change; and His Spirit to fill us, so we may realize that life characterized by "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22). □

A CURE FOR COMPLAINERS

HOY LEDBETTER

"I haven't heard any gospel preaching all week" was the complaint of one critic after a friend of mine had attempted to induce faith in Christ by expounding the Gospel of Mark in what was advertised as a gospel meeting. His criticism was surprising since Mark entitled his work *The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*. Evidently opinions vary as to what constitutes "gospel preaching," but it seems to me that one could hardly do better than to gather his material from a scribe who was divinely prompted to set forth the basis of the early church's declaration of faith in God's Son.

I used to have a lot of trouble with the fact that Jesus so often ordered people not to tell anyone about him. I could not understand why he would not welcome publicity from every source or so dazzle his contemporaries with mighty works that they could not keep from believing in him. But God has his own way of doing things, and he is considerably wiser than we are.

Most of us are victims of an unholy impatience with the distance between the formulation and the realization of our ideals. We are unwilling—to put it in Christian terms—to take up a cross, with the humiliation, frustration, rejection and suffering it implies. We see this weakness very often in marriage, where one finds it possible to love only the *ideal* spouse; the real one is intolerable, and the cross which precedes glory in the home is too much to bear. This same fault plagues the church. The ideal church is, of course, nonexistent. But even its approximation

doesn't just happen; it only comes with a struggle, a cross. Being unwilling to accept this fact, many church members are chronic complainers, and not a few flit from one group to another in a futile search for the ideal (i.e., crossless) church. Such people should look for a building with a weather vane instead of a cross, since they turn with the wind anyway.

There is one passage which I believe every Christian should memorize: the one which tells us that "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." It might be a good idea to inscribe this saying on our coffee cups, so that we would begin every day with a reminder of the truly Christian attitude. Many of us are dissatisfied with our circles of fellowship precisely because we have reversed this attitude: we have come to be served and not to serve. Someone needs to shout in our ears: "WE ARE NOT HERE TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE." And, we might add, if we are true followers of Christ, we will offer our lives for the ransom of many—and that involves some kind of a cross. It also involves being misunderstood, being opposed, being ignored, and having to go on alone when others won't help and don't care.

But let's get back to Mark, the author of *The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, because he will help us to overcome this problem. We know, of course, that Jesus is the Son of God, but at the time with which Mark begins his Gospel that was a "Messianic secret" which could not be disclosed. It

was not possible for selfish humanity to understand that that term could only describe one who was willing to give his life as a ransom for many until the lesson was indelibly written in the teaching and experience of Jesus. Not until the total picture of the incarnation was finished could we appreciate this title of Jesus. Reading Mark's Gospel is like standing behind a master painter who, dab by dab, puts it all together for us. Let's stand awhile and watch.

Various Testimonies . . .

When Jesus was baptized a voice came from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased" (Mk. 1:11). This announcement was made to Jesus, not to us, and apparently no one except him made anything of it. It came at a time when he was taking upon himself John's "excommunication" of the Jewish nation. That is, he was associating himself with sinful human beings who were in need of baptism. As he did so, God saw fit to assure him of his status in the heavenly family. Those of us who have access to knowledge of his postbaptism experiences understand how appropriate God's confirmation was, but it was not intended for those who lived then. They simply could not grasp it.

But God was not the only supernatural being who was aware of Jesus' status. Mark also records testimony from the other end of the spiritual spectrum. The unclean spirits, we read in 3:11, cried out, "You are the Son of God." Although what they said was true, Jesus "strictly ordered them not to make him known." It has been suggested that Jesus did not want testimony about him to come from such an un reputable source, but there is more to it than that. Jesus was more than a mere heavenly being, just as he was more than a mere son of Joseph. The

demons were in no position to assert his dignity, since it could only be truly understood in terms of the cross. He could not yet be known as one who came not to be served but to serve, and so even those who had partial knowledge had to be muzzled.

The watershed of Mark's Gospel is reached in another well-known confession recorded in 8:29-31: "And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.' And he charged them to tell no one about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." By this time Jesus had led his disciples (or at least Peter) to a significant affirmation of faith, one which appears all the bolder in view of the indication in verse 28 that popular opinion did not hold that he was the Messiah. But although Jesus accepted Peter's confession as true, he still would not allow the disciples to tell anyone about him. This is more than a "counsel of prudence in view of the political repercussions," for the fact is that the disciples had yet to learn that "the Son of man must suffer many things," that he came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

As a matter of fact, as Mark's record later discloses, the disciples would have ample opportunity to be ashamed of him; hence the propriety of the warning in 8:38: "For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous generation, of him will the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." An important fact to be remembered is that in this world men will often be tempted to be ashamed of the Son of man. The glory of the Father in which he will come in

the future is still not—and certainly was not then—so apparent that everyone will risk bodily injury or willingly become an object of contempt on account of him.

A Glimpse of Glory . . .

However, a glimpse of that glory was provided for the inner circle of disciples in the transfiguration, during which a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (Mk. 9:7). What Peter had confessed is now divinely confirmed, as God speaks from the abode of his glory (symbolized by the cloud) and vindicates his Son (as well as Moses and Elijah). The statement on the mountain is very similar to the one made at the Jordan, but there is an important shift in persons: the "you are" of assurance spoken to Jesus at his baptism is now the "this is" of proclamation addressed to the disciples. The Messianic secret has begun to unfold.

But Mark's balanced record lets none forget that Jesus had to suffer and die. Chapter 12 records the parable of the wicked tenants, which shows how God, in his astounding patience, time and again sent his servants, only to see them beaten and killed. Finally he sent his "beloved son . . . and they took him and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard." Not only did he suffer like a dog, but he was also disposed of like one. No decent burial for him—his corpse was merely thrown over the fence (i.e., in the parable).

The glory of the Lord is the glory of the incarnation, and an excellent example of how Christ accepted the limitations of true humanity is provided by this statement: "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mk. 13:32). This assertion of the Son's limitation of knowledge has been offensive to many, and it was particularly embarrass-

ing to orthodoxy at the time of the Arian controversy, but there can be no doubt as to its genuineness. After all, who would have dared to invent such a saying? However, its purpose is not merely to show that his knowledge was limited, but to warn us that all—even the Son—must live by faith. We cannot calculate the future; we can only live vigilantly, trusting the Father. Far from detracting from his glory, this admission only enhances it.

The apex of Jesus' trust of and submission to the Father is reached in Gethsemane, where he prays, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." Those of us who can't take no for an answer to our prayers need to remember that, as C.E.B. Cranfield points out, "The only answer Jesus receives to his prayer is the hard answer of events"—he returns to his disciples and finds them sound asleep! And those of us who have reversed Christian values and want to be served rather than serve need to bear in mind that his was not merely personal but *redemptive* suffering. He was dying for others.

It is well known today that the word "Abba" was a common word used by a child in addressing his father (similar to our "Daddy"), but, before Jesus, it was never used by a worshipper addressing God. Hence Jesus is pictured as speaking with daring intimacy. However, as C.F.D. Moule has stated in an excellent discussion of the language of worship, Jesus did not so speak "in order to take the liberties of familiarity but, on the contrary, to express the most costly form of absolute submission: 'not my will but thine be done.' Just as Christ seems seldom to have spoken of God as King or Lord but often as Father, so here His address to God is on the very simplest level of family relationships, and, at one and the same

time, on the profoundest level of reverence and obedience: thus a new epoch is marked in the history of prayer to God" (*Worship in the New Testament*, 76).

We need not fear being irreverent in using such familiar forms of address in our prayers today—*provided* they are characterized by the same degree of submission. The word "Abba" is not for everyone to use; it is only appropriate for those who are absolutely obedient to the Father, which is to say, for those who are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Remember that Paul says it is the Spirit of his Son in our hearts who cries, "Abba! Father!" Those who come to be served rather than serve should use words more suitable to their hearts.

Utter Loneliness . . .

Since so many of us tend to give up the fight when our brothers and sisters do not support us in crises or share our sense of ministry, we should try to appreciate the depth of Jesus' loneliness on this occasion. His disciples seem to have been of no help at all. In fact, "true friendship as we experience it—sharing of the inmost thoughts, the exchange of feelings, hopes, sorrows, joys—was a reality that Jesus seems not to have enjoyed, with any continuity, with the Twelve. This was possible with the Father alone, and it is to him, not to the disciples in their frailty, that Jesus turned in his hour of testing" (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 518).

Soon after the loneliness of Gethsemane Jesus faces the hostility of the Sanhedrin. We are not sure why—whether because Judas had betrayed the secret, or another disciple had talked carelessly, or for some other reason—but the high priest asked the right question: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" That the question is asked implies that the authori-

ties were aware of the possibility of such a claim. The time has come. The Messianic secret can be told. Jesus—forsaken, alone, and apparently helpless—answers, "I am . . ." Only in his suffering can he answer that question affirmatively.

Shortly thereafter this theme of Mark's Gospel is brought to its triumphant conclusion: "When the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that he thus breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God!'" (15:39). There has been much discussion about the precise intent of the centurion's words, but we can hardly doubt that Mark regards them as parallel to his opening statement: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." He intended for us to accept the confession in the full Christian sense, and as an assertion of what the high priest regarded as blasphemy.

But why did the centurion reach this conclusion? He saw that Jesus "thus breathed his last." According to verse 37, "Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last." The language indicates a sudden, violent death. Vincent Taylor correctly argues that such expressions as "breathed his last" (RSV) are too smooth. If we may so speak, Jesus died vigorously. He did not die the normal death of one who was crucified. The centurion knew this, and, like Pilate, he marveled. We may marvel, too, and confess, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

The objective of all "gospel preaching" is to elicit that confession from those who hear it. Nothing less will do. And Mark's message is eminently suited to that purpose. It is also incumbent upon those who make that confession to assume the attitude of redemptive suffering which drew it out—an attitude which says, "I came not to be served but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many." Nothing less will do. □

AN ANALYSIS OF A MOVEMENT

CRAIG M. WATTS

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There was a fury of activity and then—nothing. The protests subsided, the crowds dispersed. An apparent calm resignation seems to have settled upon the campuses. *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report* and other major papers have made extensive comments on this fact in the past couple of years. The spirit of the sixties is dead. Many rejoice in this fact. Though all Christians should be happy that there is a great reduction in campus violence, I find myself saddened at what I view as a loss of moral commitment among so many students.

The sixties have often been contrasted with the silent years of the fifties. The call of the time then was to conformity. Anything radical was labeled as anti-patriotic and shunned. McCarthyism was the only thing that resembled a vital political movement. The situation was such that *Time* magazine claimed that a reconciliation between capitalist America and its intellectuals had occurred (March 4, 1957). The most radical voices on college campuses were not those of the students but rather the liberal professors.

There were sensitive and insightful souls scattered among the conformity

worshippers who could not be fully content with what they defined as emptiness of purpose. In an obscure periodical known as *Assay*, published in the fifties by the University of Washington, a coed, Dorothy Kosobuddoe, observed:

What we all lack who are under 30 is some guiding passion, some moral vision if you will. We are unable to wind the loose threads of our experience into some larger pattern, and we know it. . . . We have not found anything to promote; deep in the dreams of ourselves in our relations to others, we realize with Yeats that there's more enterprise in walking naked.

With the close of the fifties the silence among the youth broke. No doubt there were many factors involved in the determined step away from the apparent apathy that we do not know. One thing we can be sure of is that the sixties introduced a whole new game.

On New Year's Day, 1960, four black students from a college in Greensboro, North Carolina, walked in and seated themselves at a department store cafeteria counter reserved exclusively for whites. They took with them the Bible, and a few philosophy textbooks. Their demon-

stration, though it was not the first, was significant in pointing to the beginning of the Movement.

Conceived as an instrument to aid and organize sit-ins, boycotts, and various other types of demonstrations, students met to form the S.N.C.C. (The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) later in 1960. Their ideal of non-violence found its roots in Judeo-Christian tradition. They furthermore held as a possibility immediate radical change. With this view in mind, hundreds of students from all over America attempted to provide their energies and resources to local communities in the South. Freedom schools were set up and creative new techniques in education and communication were used (see Massimo Feodori's *The New Left*, pp. 14-19).

Radical Developments . . .

As serious opposition raised its ugly head, the S.N.C.C. tended to radicalize. The non-violent stance was modified as a result of endless frustrations. When the Georgia House failed to confirm the rightful election of black candidate Julian Bond, it became evident that the party structures remained nondemocratic. In the light of this, in 1966, the S.N.C.C. separated from white organizations. From this move came the Black Panthers.

In 1962 another of the most influential forces of the new spirit came into being, the S.D.S. (Students for a Democratic Society). Their manifesto displayed high values that few would desire to dispute:

We regard men as infinitely precious and possessed of unfulfilled capacities for reason, freedom and love. . . . We oppose the depersonalization that reduces human beings to the status of things.

The cry, "Build, not burn!" displayed their early stance.

In 1963 the S.D.S. followed the S.N.C.C. in beginning community projects in the ghettos. By the summer of 1964 the work projects were started in ten poor white communities:

Without a precise program but following the method of attacking the problems of poverty and local control where they existed, local organizations became involved in a series of actions aimed at bringing about immediate reforms in specific structures or institutions. They denounced violations of the building inspection code, organized rent strikes, demonstrated in front of suburban homes of slum landlords, called for the intervention of the Human Rights Commission . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 27).

The list of significant actions could easily be greatly expanded.

As the Movement went on frustration mounted. Continual resistance from "the system," failure of the greater masses to cooperate and violent opposition started disintegrating the beautiful dream of equality in a productive society. The ugliness of such things as the violence at the Chicago Convention and the Kent State shootings caused the idealism to fall away all too fast. Casting off the non-violent approach, S.D.S. president Carl Oglesby declared: "Revolutions do not take place in velvet boxes. . . . Nuns will be raped and bureaucrats will be disemboweled."

The Weathermen split off from the S.D.S. and proved themselves to be many of the things that were originally opposed by the Movement. Violence became the norm, and in the end proved to be even less fruitful.

Then, suddenly, there was silence. It is almost as if the fifties have overtaken us again with all the uninvolved apathy.

Little seems to be left of the spirit of the sixties except some external symbols like beards and long hair. But any protest value these things may have had has disappeared. Those who were radicals a few years ago are now simply forming a new bourgeois. There was a lot of sacrifice involved in the protest movement, but now things have changed. The ideals went sour. Many previously involved in the Movement have settled for a piece of suburbia. Where the older middle class sat in front of the TV with a beer in hand, the younger counterparts sit in front of the stereo with a joint. There is no qualitative difference.

What Happened? . . .

Why the sudden death of the Movement? A multitude of reasons have been put forward as possible explanations. It would be impossible to examine each one in so short an article, nevertheless some fundamental problems can be pinpointed.

Six years before the spirit of the sixties flickered out, Irving Howe, a severe critic of the Movement, made two almost prophetic observations about the weaknesses of the New Left:

What is most impressive about the 'new radicalism' is that it springs from a genuine moral feeling, a release of outrage. . . . Often their rebellion must take the form of seeking modes of personal differentiation rather than strategies for political action ("The New Radicalism," *Partisan Review*, Summer 1965).

How could moral motivation and individualism be viewed as weaknesses? one may ask. Were not these two points the strength of the Movement? As a matter of fact, some have tried to argue that they were what gave the Movement its dynamic. But let us examine them in order.

Two Weaknesses . . .

It has been correctly said that the New Left position revolved around moral value much more than programs. The S.D.S. manifesto cited above begins with a statement concerning the high value and significance of men. The founding statement of the S.N.C.C. is also based on an "appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence." This sounds beautiful, but there is one problem—the values have no stated foundation supporting them. They are assumed and flourish insecurely without roots.

Dr. Francis Schaeffer wrote of an incident that occurred several years ago when John Gardner, the head of the Urban Coalition, spoke in Washington to a group of student leaders concerning the need for a restoration of values in our culture. In the silence that followed his speech a man from Harvard stood up and probingly inquired, "Sir, upon what base do you build your values?" Gardner simply looked down and said, "I do not know." Though he saw the crying need for values, he could not find a foundation to build upon. No humanistic system has provided a sufficient reason for man to begin with himself as the starting point of value. The value of man is not something that has been proven and so it must not be assumed. The Movement of the sixties, and most other social movements, act as if there are real moral truths, but few are able even to begin to provide a basis for morality. Without that there is no reason to call cruelty "bad" or love "good."

As for the second point, individualism, we must first note that individuality and individualism are not the same thing. Individuality is the expression and exercise of personal differences within certain given limits. Individualism rejects the no-

tion of limits so that at times the exercise of personal differences are seen as an end in themselves. This is an understandable reaction to a social structure that has burdened men with an abundance of arbitrary limitations without providing sufficient grounds for them.

So with all emphasis placed on personal freedom there was little structure to work within to accomplish the desired goals. There was no universally accepted theory; disorganization prevailed too often. Tom Hayden of the S.D.S. contended that feeling rather than theory should be depended upon. "We start armed only with questions, believing that the answers can be discovered in action" (*Newsweek*, Sept. 30, 1968, p. 66).

The problem with all this is that too many people's "feelings" led them in different directions. With no structure to work within, the individualism led to randomness and eventually frustration. The freedom was not given sufficient direction so that it might be fruitful. Freedom apart from structure led to failure. It was little more than blind romanticism to believe that such an approach could effect widespread and lasting results.

At this point one might ask, "What does this have to do with me?" As Christians, what do we have to offer? Too often in the past "Christianity" has been used to support the status quo and give it the illusion of divine sanction. Such was evident in the Middle Ages, during the time of Martin Luther and in nineteenth century "Christianity" of the southern United States. Of course, Christian defenders of the status quo are by no means a thing of the past. Countless contemporary examples could be cited.

Because of the misrepresentations and misuses of Christianity there is a great resistance to hearing anything spoken "in the name of the Lord." We must admit

sadly that in various perverted forms the Way of the Lord has been used to manipulate the masses. Perhaps before anything else can be done the horrors of the past must be admitted, condemned and, as much as possible, repaired.

The Christian Solution . . .

A truly *Biblical* Christianity offers a solid alternative to both left and right wing approaches to social problems. First of all, the high worth of man is maintained *with reason*. This goes beyond humanism with all of its baseless optimism. There are two reasons for the Christian to hold to the significance and value of man. (1) Man was created in the image of a personal God whose very character determines all true and ultimate values. (2) Even though the image of God has been marred by man's rebelliousness, God still views man as valuable. This is demonstrated by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

The Christian has a basis for morality that others do not have. Though all have moral feelings, it must be admitted that these are not consistent with the nature of the universe, if indeed the universe had an impersonal beginning and simply continues by a cause and effect process devoid of any transcendent goal. There can be no "right" or "wrong" in such a world. In other words, despite all of the efforts made to do so, "ought" simply cannot be derived from "is." There can only be what *is*. Compassion and cruelty lose their qualitative difference; they blend into one. In the words of Marquis de Sade, "What is, is right."

The basis for morality that the Movement of the sixties lacked can be found in the Christian faith. It is found not in arbitrary authority and decrees, but in the infinite-personal God himself. This is

a sufficient driving force to inspire the active compassion that is so desperately needed.

The other weakness of the so-called New Left, individualism, can also be mended by Biblical Christianity. The necessity of individuality is recognized and encouraged in many scriptural statements. In both the parables of Jesus and in the writings of his apostle Paul individuality is held as essential. The framework this individuality is expressed in is the Lordship of Jesus. This simply means that our individuality finds direction and meaning through the structure set up in the Bible.

Apart from the Christian system, one is forced either to reject limitations and structures altogether, which leads to individualism and anarchy, or cling to arbitrary structures and limitations, which may end in totalitarianism.

Of course, the Christian faith is not first of all interested in the alteration of worldly systems. History seems to indicate that one corrupt system overthrown is merely replaced by another corrupt system. Christianity is more radical than other so-called radical approaches in that it deals with not only the external system but more fundamentally it confronts the individual's internal condition. The external social ills must be dealt with; the tendency toward dehumanization seen everywhere must be attacked. But the basic attack must be made by getting to the root of the problem—the heart of man.

As long as Christianity appears to be controlled by the status quo the message of the Lord will not be taken seriously. As long as Christians all over the country allow themselves to be choked by the mundane pleasures of the middle class the prophetic message will be unheard. The alternative does not have to be leftist but it certainly must be truly Christian. □

THE POURING OF THE CUP

(For Bennie: from John 2:1-11)

How little a thing it seems
That Mother makes request of me.
It's true that these are friends,
And their need is real, if small.
But all my heavy thoughts have been
On the confrontation that waits
But for the stroke of open power,
The opening of the flower from her
womb.

Be known before my time
For the sake of a little wine?

She walks away from my retort
As if she knows the time is
Neither hers nor mine, but His
Who holds all hours till they are ripe.
She speaks a word that makes
The servants turn and look at me
In expectation, while she walks away.
This day, a beginning for those whose
Union now we celebrate, may be
The start of my own road, too.
Her heart, she knows, will feel
The piercing point of my rejection
When at last the flower dies
Because it could not be endured.
And yet she bids it bloom, for
In her heart is room for all
That God would plant. If
She shrinks not, then her resolve
Must be my sign that wine
Which will be bitter on my lips
Ere long may be begun in
Sweetness and in plenty now.

—Elton D. Higgs

LETTERS

Lane Wrong?

Thomas Lane's article "The Principle Reconsidered" (August, 1975) seems to be in keeping with editorial policy of chipping away at the foundation stone of our faith in Jesus Christ. That foundation is the Word of God (Romans 10:17), and we, unlike most religious bodies of our acquaintance, claim to accept it alone (*sola Scriptura*) as the basis of our faith and practice. If I can *understand* and *believe* what that Word says, then many statements made in the article are out of harmony with simple truth.

Thomas writes of the fact that "we denounce as denominationalists" "all other Christians." Then he proceeds to identify for us these "other Christians." "Interestingly enough, Baptists and Presbyterians typify themselves as the New Testament church. Since they strive to take their beliefs from the New Testament just as we do, they are, strictly speaking, New Testament Christians." Is this to mean that Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, John 3:3-5, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3-5, Galatians 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21, etc., are no longer valid in determining who it is that has come into fellowship with Christ? Is the necessity for baptism unto remission of sins merely a denominational interpretation by the Church of Christ denomination? Evidently the author includes the church of Christ as a piece of the denominational world, for he berates "our refusal to have congenial relations, let alone actual cooperation, with other denominations."

Thomas wonders, along with the noted Mr. Rice (Campbell-Rice debate), why, if the views Mr. Campbell was defending were so obvious, "the overwhelming majority of Christians since the Reformation had failed to see them." For the same reason that the "overwhelming majority of" Jews failed to see Christ when he came. Was it not obvious whom he was? Did not the Scriptures clearly prophesy concerning the one

to come? Did not he manifest all the marks of identification? Assuredly so! But Satan blinded those who were content to be blinded. And so it has been throughout the history of mankind. Those in the Reformation were people of like passions as those Jews who called Christ a blasphemer.

Why cannot we be content with the fact that The Way has never been popular and never will be (Matthew 7:13-14)? Will there be no end to the attempts of those who would water down the truth so that they might welcome into the fold those whom the Lord calls "workers of iniquity" (Matthew 7:23)? I am convinced the time will not come until such a time as Satan will no longer go forth to deceive. This is, of course, not an in-depth analysis of the reasoning of Thomas Lane, but rather a hurried response to some unwarranted statements in the article.

Roswell, Georgia

J.D. TANT

EDITOR'S NOTE: We feel our brother is unfair in attributing to us an "editorial policy of chipping away at the foundation stone of our faith in Jesus Christ." If indeed, as he says, that foundation is the Word of God, we strive to discover and build upon it, and our policy is to encourage our readers to take it seriously and to discern the difference between it and other foundational choices.

I don't like it when you print such trash as Thomas Lane's article on all of us taking the Broad Way, without first identifying the author—who he is, what he stands for, or what denomination is meant by his "we," and "us." I don't think it is ignorance, but just plain liberalism that prompts such an article.

Bird Island, Minnesota

HARRY PRATT

The Other Side

I am writing in response to the one-sided prejudicial letter of Mark Smith (printed in your August edition). I happen to be the "minister" of the local church of Christ where Mr. Smith felt he was the object of discrimination. Not only did he mis-apply his accumulated data, but I must question the sincerity and value of a Christian who would choose congregations to prove points he already accepts as facts.

Mark was not avoided the Sunday evening of his first visit. He sat near the back, exited quickly, and sat on a motorcycle awaiting the congregation to greet him. Mark refuses to consider in his "facts" that:

1. A family was leaving after working with the congregation for ten years. Many people wanted to say a last "goodbye."

2. Graduation for our county was scheduled that evening. Some had to leave quickly to be in time for that service.

Mark should have more insight to such situations, especially when we have taken the time to try to explain such to him. Obviously his attitude deters such consideration.

On to the next Sunday. Had we thought

that Mark would object to serving at the table, we would not have asked him to do so. One important point is this—we *did not ask him to serve because he had a \$235 Petrocelli suit*. We asked him to assist us because:

1. He claimed to be a Christian.
2. The majority of our men were sick, on vacation, or at national guard duty.

Mark's inference was that we welcomed him and requested his service because he looked "rich." Mark was greeted because he stood at the back aisle (he arrived before anyone else) and greeted others as they entered. He was asked to serve because we needed assistance.

Churches generally have enough problems without visitors (who claim to be mature Christians) expecting us to bow to their whims and definitions of hospitality. The church in Oneco is friendly. We are anxious to help people and to express interest in visitors. As far as Mark's experience with us is concerned—I am convinced that the majority of it was something he wanted to prove. Before you do it again, brother Mark, realize one thing—you are a servant also.

Oneco, Florida

CLIFF VALDOIS

Voice from the Past

A CHRISTIAN AUDITING

What money is in the world of finiteness, that the concepts are intellectually and spiritually. It is in them all transactions are conducted.

If things then go on from generation to generation in such a way that everyone takes the concepts as he gets them from the preceding generation—and then spends his time enjoying this life and laboring for finite ends, etc., it comes to pass only too easily that gradually the concepts are distorted, become quite different from what they originally were, come to mean something entirely different, become like false money—whereas quite tranquilly all transactions continue to be conducted by terms of them, since the falsification does not affect the egoistic interests of men as does the dissemination of counterfeit money, especially when the counterfeiting of the concepts is precisely in the direction of human egoism, so that he who is hoaxed by it is (if I may use the expression) the other party in the business of Christianity: God in heaven.

—Soren Kierkegaard

A LEAF FROM THE DIARY OF A CELESTIAL SCRIBE

REASSIGNMENT

One of the glories of the heavenly realm is that there is always an adequate solution for every problem.

Take one of the recent arrivals from earth as an example, namely P.G. Fothergill, famous preacher, lecturer and debater of no mean ability. Where would the Lord find a place for one with such an eminent reputation? You needn't worry your pretty little haloed head. Undaunted by the filling of every responsible heavenly post by the influx in ages past of all the apostles, prophets, evangelists, martyrs, Christian college presidents, and Bible salesmen, the Lord proceeded to amaze us all with his ingenious assignment.

"The clue came," He said, "with the last debate held by my great servant P.G."

It had been with the famed miracle healer, Nasal Richards. P.G. had distinguished himself in previous encounters by disposing of such opponents in curt fashion and scathing derision. However, this time Nasal had an ace up his sleeve.

In flamboyant and emotional manner the faith healer climaxed his first speech by calling for his assistants to bring forth a glass container filled with deadly rattle-snakes. He then announced to the audience as he rolled up his sleeves that he was going to place his arm in the container and demonstrate his divine powers. And did. The snakes all struck with deadly accuracy, two at a time, but old Nasal calmly lifted his arms in triumph, shouted

"Praise the Lord," and calmly took his seat, unharmed.

Not to be outdone by any such display of apparent supernatural powers, our hero P.G. strode to the lectern and boldly declared that he was ready to duplicate the exhibition the audience had just witnessed.

Cautiously, P.G. stretched his bared arm into the container of threatening reptiles, who immediately lashed out simultaneously with their lethal venom. This time their stinging bites and poisonous fangs proved to be fatal. P.G. toppled over backwards in just a matter of minutes (not before mocking the spiritual gifts of his opponent), sending his charts and debate notes flying, and placing the audience in complete shock and panic. His glorious career was over. He was dead . . . and it was minutes before anyone observed that so were the snakes, every last solitary one of them!

The Lord clasped his hands in evident confidence and satisfaction as he announced to P.G. his new assignment with the foreign intelligence service in hell. There was obvious agreement and unanimous approval in the Royal Court as the Lord instructed him on his new duties and requested that he pick up his red asbestos suit and demonic apparel from the supply headquarters. P.G. was enthusiastic himself as he departed on his new career in the continuing battle against the oldest Serpent of all.

—Gabriel Cloudburst