

## TYPES OF RELIGION

THERE is perhaps no better way to recognize the difference between Catholic and Protestant Christianity than to contrast the "firm" answer of the Catholics to the question, "What Happens After Death?" (Knights of Columbus Religious Information Bureau advertisement in *Harper's* for August), with the speculative wonderings of a Protestant writer in the *Christian Century* (William Hordern, in *CC* for July 8), under the title, "Hope: Here and Hereafter."

The Catholic writer—or rather the voice of the Catholic institution—is certain and oracular . . . "the Catholic Church always has given, and gives today, a definite answer to the important questions raised by the fact of death." If a puzzled individual wants "more information on Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, the end of the world and the resurrection and judgment of all men," he has only to mail the coupon "today" to receive "an interesting pamphlet in a plain wrapper." Further, "nobody will call on you."

Here speaks authority, with never a doubt or a question. The Church knows, and is willing to instruct. Those inclined to listen "can face eternity without fear."

The Protestant has no such blanket assurances to offer. He is rather critical of the institutional formulations of organized Protestantism. Referring to the choice of the subject, "The Christian Hope," by the World Council of Churches for its 1954 Assembly, he notes: "Everyone agreed that there is a Christian hope, but there seemed little agreement on what that hope is." Mr. Hordern speaks of the present as "a disillusioned and often hopeless age," urging his fellows of the Christian faith to reflect upon the ultimate expectations of human life, hereafter as well as here. "We must not," he says, "allow ourselves to be intimidated by Marxian jeers about

'pie in the sky' into giving up this precious faith in One whose love is eternal."

The Protestant is plainly sensitive to the critical attacks of the radical movement and of humanist analysis of dogmatic attitudes. In this he is widely apart from the Catholic advocate, who never admits to finding anything more than evil counsels in materialist analyses of religion. The Protestant, moreover, appeals to his readers to work out their own convictions on immortality. How can we think, he says in effect, that death means no more than that we are gathered to the bosom of the Father, there to vegetate in effortless bliss for all eternity? Instead, Mr. Hordern suggests, the struggle between good and evil in the human breast must go on. "After death men will continue to grow out of sin into harmony with God." This is no Protestant version of Purgatory. . . . the Catholic doctrine of the afterlife is . . . static. Purgatory is not a realm where the battle between good and evil continues; it is a place where those who are saved in essence suffer passively until they are purified for heaven."

Here, in the idea of continuing growth after death, may be at least some of the elements of a tenable theory of immortality; yet, in concluding the discussion, Hordern says:

Christianity has to cling to the double facet of its hope—for here and for hereafter. But a dynamic view of that hope makes these two facets complementary to each other. God is the Lord of history. He shall reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. So interpreted, the Christian hope for the hereafter is not a temptation to neglect the battle here, but an invitation to see it as the beginning of a struggle that will continue beyond history to final victory.

This is a curious compound of contradictions. The writer's "dynamic" view of life after death is that the struggle of the individual to achieve shall

go on—that *he* must still work out his salvation, even in the hereafter. But then we find a sudden relapse to reliance on an outside power—the God who is "the Lord of history"—who, like any mundane conqueror, will "put all enemies under his feet." It is as though Mr. Hordern is saying, "We must think, but not too critically; we must hope, but base our hope upon a power other than ourselves."

There is a plaintive weakness about the Protestant position (we must "cling") which is never apparent in the monolithic exposition of Catholic doctrine. The Catholic view has the power of forceful affirmation, yet, on the other hand, this power is maintained at the cost of unblinking authoritarian rule in the world of moral decision—a rule, moreover, which not infrequently invades the field of politics and temporal power.

Can there be, then, a *free* certainty about such matters as immortality and other religious and philosophical questions?

An odd contrast to what has been reviewed thus far is found in the *Partisan Review* for July-August, 1953, in Joseph Campbell's memorial article on Heinrich Zimmer. The *Partisan Review*, we may note, has grown from roots which explicitly reject all forms of religious orthodoxy. It was first a more or less political organ of dissent, with self-evident Marxist background. The acute critical faculties of its editors and contributors, however, gradually led away from any sort of political orthodoxy, and in recent years it has been in part a sounding board for articulate anti-Stalinist opinion. *PR* has, however, maintained its spirit of self-conscious alienation from conventional bourgeois attitudes and often devotes its pages to sophisticated critiques or investigations of popular tendencies in modern culture. For example, some years ago, *PR* printed a series of representative articles by intellectual leaders on what was termed "The Failure of Nerve"—signifying the emergence of a new temper in American intellectual life. These articles

suggested that more and more writers were being seduced away from their loyalty to "scientific method" by the promises of either religion or metaphysics. Then, a few years later, *PR* offered another series—"Religion and the Intellectuals"—which revealed further tendencies in the same direction. This was a series which showed that at least some of the writers were in process of taking a calculated risk, deciding to make some sort of peace with some sort of religion.

Even with this background, it seems a bit strange to find Joseph Campbell celebrating what may be termed, not the religious "faith," but the religious *conviction*, of a great scholar in the pages of the *Partisan Review*. In the same year that a well-schooled Christian mourns the lack of dynamic certainty in Protestant religion—mourns it in the pages of the leading Protestant journal of the century—a man born to skeptical scholarship is hailed as affirming profound religious truth in a magazine devoted to rejection of every form of uncritical belief! It is indeed wonderful!

Campbell begins without apology, telling about Zimmer's days in America:

The surprise was, to hear a man lecturing at Columbia University for whom deities with many arms, and the radiant saviors of India and Tibet, were clues to human and superhuman realizations valid today and forever.

Zimmer, it seems, had long ago been done with academic orthodoxy. His "liberation" came after his five years of service in the German Army, completed at the end of World War I. "After those generals," he explained, "the professors couldn't fool us." At the age of twenty-eight, he said to himself:

"I do not criticize anybody or anything. But henceforth I shall decide what I shall take seriously, if anything at all. I am a *revenant*, a *ghostly revenant*. It is mere irony that I have come back. Many much better did not. I offered my life for the ideals and purposes of the community, and did it naively, willingly. With this life I brought back I am free to do what I decide to do—free as a guest from the other world. They have no claim on me any more."

Here, perhaps, was the beginning of a genuinely religious spirit—unmarked by any of the familiar indicia of piety—simply a declaration that man, this man, is *free*. He chose Oriental mythology and metaphysics as the field of scholarship in which to practice his freedom, "for there," as Campbell explains, "was an idea of life precisely the opposite of that represented in the contemporary West." Campbell continues:

In defiance of the positivistic attitude of his scholarly colleagues, Zimmer had resolved, as a way of understanding, to believe that India's truths were true—true for man, true forever, and not merely as functions of a local social context. Vowing not to translate any text before he somewhat comprehended it (a bold vow for a professional Orientalist), he had made the act of faith, demanded in India of even candidates for esoteric wisdom, that if he believed he would learn—St. Augustine's *credo ut intelligam*. Also, he had condescended to the Oriental notion that to think according to one system of ideas while seriously trying to understand another is to invite impotence.

Zimmer's freedom, we may suppose, allowed this extraordinary impartiality—extraordinary in the West, even though a rule of common sense in the Orient. Doubtless the freedom made possible the discovery of common sense. It is as though, suddenly, a luminous possibility appeared to Zimmer—*What if these things be true.?*

We can imagine this sort of "opening" coming to any honest and reflective man. What if the heart of all being tides in me, as in everything else? What if an order of eternal life Spinoza's *sub specie æternitatis*—intersects my own? What if the vague intuitions about a life beyond life—vague to me are as thunderclaps of natural revelation to men who learn to hearken to an inner voice?

Zimmer, at any rate, discoursed from a plateau of conviction which may astonish some, while drawing others on to paths of self-discovery. Campbell quotes this passage from Zimmer's exposition of Indian philosophy, *Ewiges Indien*, published in 1930:

Just as in true love, or just as in a true marriage, the two no longer live "for one another" but are within each other, so is the eternally living Divine Principle ever within the world as its animating power. The play of the world—embracing and consuming itself—which is throughout a play of power, the seer recognizes as the apprehensible part of the Divine as the magic in which True Being enwraps itself for its own display. And this world is holy through and through—"Divinity's living garment," not a Vale of Tears. The one who knows this remains untouched by the terror of death and untroubled by anxieties concerning the immortality of his temporary personality; for what is incomprehensible in this display, namely the Divine Principle in its eternal being, is identical with one's own formless, deepest essence, beneath all the conscious and unconscious qualifications of the personality. It is the non-particular in us: the pure, divine non-form: a nameless, shapeless power.

Shall we then study Zimmer's treatises on Oriental religion and symbolism, instead of the catechisms of Christianity? Perhaps. But what is far more important is to study Zimmer's liberation, and where it led. Not Zimmer's precise conclusions, but the temper of his search, the generosity of his determination.

Perhaps a new conception of religion is dawning in the world—a religion with the sinews of philosophical discipline, and a religion which reserves its humility for what truly reaches beyond the scope of human understanding, while remaining impatient of "mystery" which hides contempt for the mind and the spirit of impartial inquiry. And perhaps other men like Zimmer—men who, having passed through some searing ordeal devised by modern civilization, break with all lesser allegiances—will help to shape its spirit and point the way to wider realization.

## *Letter from* **American Abroad**

TRAVEL in Andean countries still reveals the ruthless hand of the Conquistadores who superimposed Spanish control, but never subdued the spiritually powerful "*ayllu*"—the indigenous people bound together by the exigencies of a difficult life in folds of the stony, icy Andes. The telluric influence is very powerful in shaping a people. So strong is it that the European is transformed by the land that becomes his home, and the home of his son and his grandson. Something of this stark grandeur affects the peoples of the nations which inhabit the Andes.

The high plain, the "*puna*" of Peru and Bolivia, has an austere beauty, with components of brownish earth sparsely studded with plant life, distant peaks capped with snow, and infrequent, dour clusterings of adobe huts that emphasize the meagerness and desolation of existence. Only with difficulty is a living coaxed from the recalcitrant earth. The potato is indeed the manna of these people, but a potato unrecognizable to us in its shrunken, frozen form, with the moisture trampled out by human feet. Even the lure of regular wages from the mines (some at 16,000 feet) loses its hold on the people as sums are slowly accumulated to buy a small herd of llamas or alpacas, with which the owner wanders, seeking forage, from one region to another. An engineer told me that although a good Indian miner might be shown with figures that he would be ahead financially if he stayed working in the mine, rather than going each year to cultivate a plot known to his ancestors, to bring back a couple of llama loads of potatoes as the fruit of his absence, he inevitably and irresistibly disappears for a time each growing season. Perhaps he endeavors to establish some subtle continuity with the ancient people of the land who once lived an integrated social life, organically functioning and spiritually satisfying in a way that his present existence cannot be.

Peru's low-lying river courses to the Pacific, flanked by ribbons of green sugar cane, are in striking contrast to the brown desert hills. Here there are large estates worked by hundreds of laborers. Near Trujillo a single large company employs 2500 laborers at a miserably low daily wage. A passing professional man with whom I rode told me with bitterness that the men in that general area were striking for an increase of one sol a day (a sol at that time was worth about six cents U.S.), elaborating on the slight reductions in the cost of milk and sugar allowed to company workers. As he talked, I recalled prices of clothing and food in the markets and stores and wondered how *one* sol could ease their plight.

In the mountainous areas beyond Cajamarca, I was told on impeccable authority that men worked for as little as three cents a day. Of course they can't live on it. In the markets of Huancayo, reached by a train whose engine intrepidly chugged over the highest passenger track in the world, on a side street I saw small booths, cheek to jowl, selling a single article—coca leaves with oval patties of charcoal and lime held together with potato. Its purpose? This brownish green dried leaf brings a drugging mitigation of the pangs of a hunger which is spiritual as well as physical. It somehow supplies a fictitious warmth to chill altitudes and an illusion of strength to bear great burdens. I was told of an Indian carrying a heavy load of cloth on his back to a hotel. The hotel man filled the Indian's hat with the meretricious coca leaves, in payment for a long trudge.

In the lovely tropical city of Cochabamba, Bolivia, in January of this year, I saw an orderly but ragged and pitiful column marching through the streets. Their cry was for "*tierra*" (land). In that place is a palace (one of several) built by Simón Patiño, the fabulously wealthy mine-owner who died in 1946.

So, throughout the continent. Each country has its struggle and its tragedy: Colombia with a dictatorship of terror of the Right; Ecuador

combating a difficult terrain beset with poverty; Bolivia stirring under economic tyranny; Argentina with a rascal in power who stoops to control a proud people through the use of thousands of spies (more, it is said, than 100,000 in Buenos Aires alone); Uruguay suffering emergency because Perón across the river has cut off almost all communication and trade between the two countries.

I often think of my several days in Cajamarca, the ancient stronghold of the Incas. It was there that Atahualpa filled a good-sized room (still to be seen) with gold as the price of his freedom. He was killed by Pizarro. On an ancient "seat," Atahualpa is said to have rested high on a hill with two of his counselors, overlooking one of the valleys of his empire. With difficulty I persuaded a barefoot little old man to sit in one of the three depressions forming the "seat." He appeared a beggar, but he did not beg. He felt unworthy as a poor "*paisano*" to occupy this honored place, but agreed that Atahualpa was his ancestor. I wanted his picture in shreds and rags and patches, but would never hurt his inherent pride. I wanted it as a reminder of what "civilization" had brought to his people. I heard him murmur wonderingly, yet with intuitive cognition: "*Es mi patria y no es mi patria.*" (It is my country and it isn't my country.)

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### "THE STONES OF THE HOUSE"

ONCE again we find ourselves unable to disagree with the professional enthusiasts whose comments adorn the jacket of a Book-of-the-Month selection. Prof. Theodore Morrison's *The Stones of the House* may indeed be called a "delightful novel" and is, moreover, adapted to stimulate some relatively painless thinking.

The book has two themes. The first conveys impressions of the peculiar dilemmas in which a conscientious college administrator may find himself—dilemmas at once ridiculous and profound. Morrison's years of observation on New England campuses enable him to dramatize the fact that a college president is commonly hired by the board of trustees in order to perpetuate the *status quo*; yet the duty of a conscientious educator is to work for constructive changes. The college administrator, in other words, has a very hard time being his own man. He didn't found the college, nor can he secure endowments or appropriations without giving time to pleasing the inevitable overgrown adolescents who are often elected to trusteeships. He *wants* to be an educator, but institutional requirements oblige him to function also as a politician, bringing surprising challenges to integrity everywhere he turns.

The second theme of *The Stones of the House*, growing out of the first, deals with "acting-President Aiken's" personal relationship with a wealthy alumnus with whom, in college days, he once shared a dormitory room. "Badger Bratten" is the quintessence of all the "frat boys who made good in industry"—the men who are invariably convinced they have the "know-how" to bring their *alma mater* "up-to-date." Badger enters the story on a breeze of Morrison's enjoyable humor. Interrupted in a conversation with the college chaplain by a call from Badger, President Aiken braces himself to endure whatever new scheme was working in this typically American brain:

The receiver grew tumid with a familiar deluge of baritone noise, ragged at the edges with tobacco and alcohol.

"It's the Badger, Andy, the old roommate, boy. Is the college still there?"

"The bricks and mortar, anyway," Andrew said.

"They still let you act the president?"

"I'm still trying to act like an acting president."

It suddenly seemed as though a load of gravel had been dumped into the receiver. Badger laughing. Andrew held the instrument away from his ear until the main avalanche had passed and only detached pebbles still grated down.

"We're going to do something about that, boy," said Badger's voice, hopping from the jovial to the note of solemn allegiance. "We're going to fix it so you don't just act any more—get what I mean? Some of us alumni have been talking about it, and if I say so, Andy, we're the kind of backing that counts. Look at the taxes we pay this goddam socialist administration in Washington. Kids in the army, too."

Taxes and kids in the army. The association flowed naturally from Badger, though it might be a hard nut for a logician to crack.

Aiken finally discovers that there is a lot of good stuff in Badger when the chips are down; one of his sons is killed in Korea, another snuffed out in an automobile accident, but the Badger neither hates others nor pities himself. In fact, as Aiken admits to himself, Badger acts so much like a hero he could even be taken for one.

Bratten represents the tirelessly bumptious adolescence of the average American male, and is symbolic, also, of a hastily educated generation almost exclusively concerned with technical and managerial ascendancy. This is how Morrison sums up the Badgers of our time, in President Aiken's sympathetic resections:

Badger leaving college in nineteen-eighteen, coming back to take a war degree. Probably right when he said he enjoyed soldiering; certainly left no detectable scar on his psyche. Or had it? How much did the war have to do with the terms on which Badger tried to live his adult life? It would be hard to tell; but perhaps the real problem lay elsewhere, in

any case. Badger was essentially a city character. And for Badger it was the locus of deals, of barleycorn loyalties; music the background for flesh and floorshow, science the chance to hire long-haired Ph.D.'s at a dime a dozen to make molecular money for him by processes he could patronize without understanding.

Badger and his generation should have learned how to conduct a civilized life in cities, because cities are civilization, locus of arts, of sciences, apex of industry and politics. Cities are the enormously complicated switchboards from which the impulses go out over millions of wires to organize the activity of all the machines, all the hands and feet and nervous systems on the planet. Right there, of course, is the trouble: the abstraction of the city and its life. Streetcar and subway rails: made of steel abstracted from minerals abstracted from earth. Police and fire systems: abstractions from human behavior that once responded to theft by hue and cry and to fire by running with a bucket to the nearest well. The desks where men sat and the papers that passed before their eyes with the numerals of money and credit on them, what did they do but abstract human activity into a choice among symbols of symbols? What happened, amid all this abstraction, to the natural man who could read weather signs direct from wind and sky and whose skin could feel sunlight and snow? What would humanity become if it were completely alienated from that natural man?

Acting President Aiken passes through many kinds and stages of difficulty as he labors to prepare the way for a new library on the campus. For one thing, he has to circumvent the efforts of influential fraternity men who endeavor to block his seizure of leased property on which a frat house stands. He has to maneuver like a scheming salesman to secure the money for the library; then, finally, crowned with victory, he is presented with the honor of a bona fide presidency. Meanwhile, however, anti-communist hysteria has been spreading. More than once he desperately jockeys to save one of his best teachers, perennially accused of "radical" sympathies. So we discover that even in the quiet setting of a small university, intrigue, surprise tactics, and even espionage play their somewhat muted roles. Finally, Aiken comes to the view that the function of a university should be to serve the total community, not just the

students. Even incorrigibles like Badger are in need of education—need it far more seriously now than they did in their youth.

Aiken gets a lot of things done, things sufficiently important to make them worth writing about; and he gets them done with patience and humor. He is not supposed to be a great man, but simply the sort of man an intelligent administrator might develop into, given a taste for up-hill battles.

## COMMENTARY

### BETTER THAN THEIR CREEDS

WHILE reading over this week's copy for *Frontiers*, it occurred to us that not one in five of the people we know can fairly be called "acquisitive" in outlook. In fact we have known very few people who reveal a longing or determination to become "rich." Instead, they want simply to be "comfortable," free of economic pressures and worries, so that they can devote themselves wholeheartedly to the things they enjoy doing.

Yet it is certainly correct to call our society an "acquisitive" society. The popular norms set by our culture have to do both directly and indirectly with getting and spending. We are said to be willing to fight a great war to preserve the right to get and to spend as individuals. It is as though the vast majority of the people have been sold a bill of goods in this matter of acquisition, and have come to believe that it is right, good, and indispensable, in the same way they suppose that the traditional religion they have inherited is right, good, and indispensable. Both their religion and their economic ideas are unexamined inheritances.

If the great majority of people are far less acquisitive in nature than the slogans of our society might suggest, another majority—perhaps the same majority—tends to a much more common-sense view of religion than that of the professional upholders of dogma who give formal definition to Christian belief. It is as though all these people are better human beings for being half-hearted capitalists and half-hearted Christians—half-hearted in the sense that they avoid ideological extremes in both religion and political economy. Further, it becomes even a mark of virtue for a person to say, when questioned about his adherence to some orthodoxy, "Of course, I don't believe in all *that*."

As a people, we are pretty well adjusted to these things, and take them for granted, but it seems fair to suggest that psychological attitudes of this sort mark what is actually the *low ebb* of culture and civilization. Epochs of human greatness occur only when men strive with all their energies to live up to

the cultural ideals of their time, so that when people are favorably judged *because* they exhibit indifference to what are supposed to be standards of behavior and belief, we may conclude that human excellence is then possible only for the very few—the non-conformists and radicals of one sort or another.

While civilization moves from peaks to valleys, and then climbs slowly up to peaks again, we have an idea that the people of one generation differ very little from the people of the next—that what they express is largely in reaction to what their times call forth. This, we know, is pretty much a "conditioning" theory of human behavior, and we subscribe to it only with the qualification that you never know when a man will break out of the limitations of his environment and surprise us all. A society, then, starts moving toward a peak in the development of culture whenever a man of exceptional qualities, or a group of such individuals, breaks free from habit and custom and is successful in rooting social and moral ideals which make wisdom in action a treasure to be sought after with every human resource. It is in such periods of transition that, slowly but surely, people come to see that there is really little virtue in their half-heartedness—that this is merely a way of meeting inadequate ideals inadequately, and thus finally constituting a symptom of decay in social organization, the unanalyzed response of the still-normal individual to an environment which discourages all but mediocre motives and reactions.

In such sluggish waters may be born new currents of resolution—and, ultimately, of revolution. Whence come the distinguished individuals who provide the impetus for these dramatic changes, we cannot say. Yet come they will, for while civilizations may die away, they always rise again, as though the course of social evolution were a path of spiral progression, now receding, now rushing onward.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

PARENTS with progeny near college age may find in Chad Walsh's *Campus Gods on Trial* (Macmillan, 1953) a useful measure of the philosophical confusion in education at the university level. According to Prof. Walsh, a "converted" Christian who teaches English at Beloit, all this confusion simply represents an inadequate understanding of Christianity. While, to us, the matter seems more complicated, the young professor provides a useful account of some of the historical and sociological causes for educational dilemmas, and the first third of the book—approximately 50 pages—lays a basis for parent-teacher discussions. Like most Christian apologists we have read, Walsh seems least informing when he begins to deliver gospel, but because chatty Christian pep-talks of this sort have now characteristically replaced ponderous theologizing, this part of the book is worth skimming through as representative of Christian persuasiveness in academic style.

The real justification, we think, of *Campus Gods on Trial* is Walsh's capacity to rephrase, succinctly, a fundamental truth about human beings—the truth that we all worship gods of one sort or another, whether we call them Progress, Relativism, Science, Security, Humanitarianism, Communism, or the capitalized God of Christianity. Considerably impressed by Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences*, Prof. Walsh wishes Christian students and their parents to realize that "your choices of *Gods* have still greater and more permanent consequences on you."

Walsh quotes from Paul's counsel to the Athenians, on which occasion Paul noted that "despite the numerous deities of the Pantheon there was one altar left dedicated to an unknown God." Perhaps "the unknown God" is that only partly awakened synthesizing capacity of the human mind itself, which may ultimately be able to rid itself of the partisan approach to ultimate questions! As we have indicated, however, Walsh cannot himself be said to speak in the name of *this* unknown God, for he extols the simplicity, the definiteness, and the exclusiveness of Christian theology. His transition from confident analysis to naïve mysticism can easily be criticized, but perhaps the important thing is to realize that his sort of

retreat from the disciplines of logical thinking is reflected by innumerable discouraged agnostics at every level of the educational world. Elementary and high school teachers, also, devote themselves to logic part of the time and to rationalizations of their *escape* from logic, when it comes to "spiritual values," the rest of the time.

Here is one of Prof. Walsh's ingenuous efforts in this direction, allowing him to assert, without any particular rhyme or reason, that a "personal," "friendly" God does indeed exist: "God often creeps up on you when you are least expecting him," he writes. "He works through your intellectual confusion—the questions you ask that receive no satisfactory answers, in courses, and casual conversations." Then there is this bit of cozy religious nonsense: "The person who uses his freedom to give his 'I' into the hands of God, there to be remade in the image of Christ, is really only lending it. For God gives it back. One day, when you least expect it, he returns it to you, much improved from the scrubbing and alterations it has received. What began as surrender to a master ends as sonship to a father." Further:

It is futile to consider the individual miracles attributed to Christ without first looking at the supreme miracle: the Incarnation. Almost everyone believes in some sort of God, and almost everyone admires Jesus as a moral teacher. But a combination of the two—Jesus the teacher as God incarnate—offends our sense of order and decorum. It seems too bizarre to be true; but, bizarre or not, this ultimate miracle is the foundation on which the Christian faith is built.

Prof. Walsh, like many another man who doesn't like difficult solutions, believes that man's happiness depends upon his feeling of belonging *to* something he needn't analyze.

Returning to the early chapters of *Campus Gods on Trial*, we must credit Prof. Walsh with some thoughtful statements concerning the purely negative agnosticism which has become characteristic in the academic world. He says:

At one time agnosticism was an exciting thing. Today it has hardened into a new orthodoxy, and become staid and respectable. This standardized and somewhat smug unbelief dominates a number of homes especially in urban areas; and in such homes the parents usually fancy themselves as intellectuals.

We wonder, however, if "agnosticism" is precisely the word. It might be better to say that "stylized skepticism" plays the social role indicated, saving "agnostic" for the man who is not predisposed to *either* Doubt or Acceptance of speculative theories, whether religious or "scientific" in origin.

One of Walsh's best passages occurs in the course of his argument that human beings live primarily in their minds, even if the contents of their minds have been passively absorbed. The transition from family to dormitory or fraternity life, at college, is a leaving of "the old world" of the mind for a new residence. He writes:

Except for the handful of students who try to transplant the old country when they reach the campus, the four years of college are a war of liberation, waged against the entire world or against home and the home town. This is a very good thing, even if it means sleepless nights for the parents. A student comes to college hoping to discover that hidden core of individuality, the mysterious "I" which makes him different from more than two billion other "I's." And he is trying to decide what he will do with that "I" after he finds it: how he will train it and direct it, so that it will become what he wants it to be thirty years from now.

That is what college is mainly about. And the quest of the secret "I" is inextricably linked with the search for a more spacious home, where that "I" will have sufficient room to grow. The campus is such a home. It offers a new family, bigger and more exciting.

One reason for calling attention to *Campus Gods* is that this type of sympathetic emphasis on the need for intellectual and metaphysical recreation seems to us a far less fanatical-interpretation of the modern university's "godlessness" than that supplied by Robert Buckley's highly-publicized *God and Man at Yale*, Mr. Buckley regarded the "materialistic" professors as playing the role of satanic forces, tempting children of responsible Christian homes to forsake their saving faith and grace. In contrast, and so long as Walsh views matters as he does here, we can view his defense of Christianity with a bit of sympathy. For he at least indicates that the only values which can come from Christianity in the modern world will arise from individual reevaluation.

Walsh is also effective in his abbreviated demonstration that Communism is a religion which gained influence through the passion for social

justice—in itself, a good thing. "Communism," he writes, "is a highly sophisticated version of the gospel of inevitable Progress, and the only form of that faith with much vitality today." He continues:

It has the advantage of knowing what destination is printed on the railroad ticket, and its theory of dialectical materialism provides the faithful with a pair of binoculars by which they can study the social evolution of the cave man and peer also into the classless future. There is food for both the mind and the heart. No wonder, then, that Communism has in effect become a religion wherever it is dominant. You could set up a whole series of parallels between Russian Communism and Christianity:

<i>Communism</i>	<i>Christianity</i>
Writings of Marx, Lenin, Stalin	Bible
Communist party	Priesthood
Proletariat	Church
Private property	Original sin
Classless society	Kingdom of God
Withering away of the state	Second coming of Christ

The body of Lenin is revered like the relics of saints, the vast demonstrations in Red Square are equivalent to the more elaborate rituals of formal religion.

Marx himself was a very religious kind of atheist. He inherited the fierce passion against social injustice bequeathed by Micah and some other Old Testament prophets, and he derived from both Christianity and Judaism (perhaps quite unconsciously) the conviction that history is moving somewhere in particular.

This criticism seems sound enough; Marx's dogma that the root of all evil lies in private property and his insistence that all "Capitalists" are to be feared and/or hated requires a protest. But it seems to us strange that the author of *Campus Gods* does not recognize that the oversimplification of the problem of evil in traditional Christianity similarly leads to division among men—even hatred—as Harry Emerson Fosdick so convincingly demonstrated to the readers of the *United Nations World* some months ago.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Non-Acquisitive Societies

ONE of the many depressing aspects of modern newspaper and magazine publishing is the way in which editors and writers refer to the Free Enterprise system, as if they were making a ritual genuflection to a great law of nature. Especially since the rise of modern communist and socialist movements has this gesture been apparent. If anyone so much as hints that there may be ways of economic life which assign little importance to "ownership" and "competition," he is likely to be regarded with a contempt something like that the Nazis expressed for theories which happened to emanate from Jewish scholars. Even if he has no interest at all in "changing" the political system, and less in devising a new method for the distribution and exchange of goods, the fact that he speaks with something less than reverence of the economic processes developed in our acquisitive society is liable to make him an outcast among respectable people. An urgent patriotism and the deep anxieties of our time have made impossible simple criticism of these idols of the tribe.

So far as we can see, Capitalism, Socialism, and Communism all suffer from the same basic delusions and shortcomings. The important things to be said in criticism of one need to be said in criticism of all three, for all three hold that the major values in life are secured through the acquisition of goods. All three are, in this sense, acquisitive societies; and, from the viewpoint we intend to propose, may be called *profane* societies.

This comment is prompted by a passage in a learned article in the May *Scientific Monthly*—"The Origin of Trade in Indonesia," by Justus M. van der Kroef. The writer starts out with a detailed account of the interchange of gifts among the tribes or clans of Indonesia, where, as he points out, "in many cases the social structure of village society is still intact, and with it the close

interrelationship among all the sectors of human behavior." Trade, for these villagers, is more of a rite than a commercial transaction. Apparently, "getting rich" is not a common notion among these people. "Within the village society there is virtual communism—every villager can obtain someone else's property." People from other villages, however, do not take away things free, but offer their own possessions in trade, or as gifts in exchange. The background of this custom, says Dr. van der Kroef, who was born in Indonesia, is in the idea of the duality of the universe. There are, the Indonesians believe, "two antithetical forces, which confront but also constantly merge and supplement each other in a higher sacred unity." Trade or exchange is seen as a symbol of this interchange between the two great principles of nature. The writer comments:

It would appear, then, that the traditional exchange of gifts, fundamental to an understanding between clans or clan units in Indonesia, cannot be separated from the religious-cosmic point of view of the community in which the trade takes place. Elements of quality, cost price, profit, loss, or other economic rationalizations do not traditionally enter into the transactions. Trade is a sacred act, a ritual that satisfies first of all a moral-religious need. For it must be understood that the divine order, with its dualistic character, requires constant "rejuvenation"; *i.e.*, the community must constantly repeat the process of merging, "meeting," and fusion of the traditional antithetical elements, by proper marriage relations, by religious and totemistic ceremonies, and by trade. Only in this way, in the belief of the Indonesian, can the magic qualities of the universe be kept in balance and the continuity of the family and of the village be religiously assured.

Dr. van der Kroef closes with this pertinent observation:

From this, I think, it also follows that any economic improvement scheme, conceived along Western lines, such as those of the Point Four agencies, must reckon with the religious element in the economic want-creating process. A rationalized commercial life is alien to Indonesian tradition; should one wish to establish it, one will have to attack also the religious basis of society. For the Indonesian it is therefore not so much a question of learning

better techniques or of acquiring unlimited wants for modern consumer goods as a question of espousing new cultural values, in which the adoption of the amoral orientation of Western economic theory and enterprise is the essential component.

This sounds very much as though the writer were politely suggesting that the Indonesians may have a better way of conducting their "trade" than ourselves, and that it might be wise for our "experts" to approach these villagers with considerable respect. But whatever he means, here, the general contention of his article—that in so-called "primitive" cultures, the people behave in ways that are all related to some central conception of the meaning of existence—is plainly vindicated. As he puts it:

Not one segment of life [in such communities] can be regarded as far removed from the moral religious core of the society in question, and every significant activity of man is directly related to the overarching system of ethical values which gives a community its distinct character.

We might question, however, the limitation of this rule to primitive societies. A good argument, we think, could be made to support the view that modern totalitarian societies are deliberate efforts to recapture the unity of these ancient forms of the social community. Only a brief expedition into the lore of communism will disclose the rapid development of this system into what amounts to a theory of the cosmos. The claim that Marxism is a species of religion is too familiar to elaborate; the point we should like to make is that this unity, which the Marxist seeks to impose by violence, liquidation, and terror, is either secretly or overtly longed for by every human being.

One might argue that a break in this unity creates an almost unbearable psychic pain. Conceivably, the time will come when the epoch from, say, the French Revolution to the end of the twentieth century will be known as the period during which human productive activity was separated in both theory and fact from any religious or philosophical theory of the larger meaning of life. In these terms, both Fascism and

Communism may then be interpreted as abortive attempts to restore a sense of meaning to economic and productive activity.

About the only non-ideological and non-sectarian attempts to resist the "to-have-and-to-hold" theme of our acquisitive society that we can recall were made by people like the Transcendentalists and Walt Whitman in the last century. The *organized* attacks on acquisitiveness, unlike Emerson and Thoreau, have been angry and nihilistic in temper, with rigid "reform" programs to impose. This theory—if it can be called a theory—of totalitarian dynamics checks with Hannah Arendt's analysis, which suggested that Nazism was a revolt against petty bourgeois patterns of life—humdrum, uninspired, and acquisitive. The Nazi revival of the ancient Norse gods also intimates a longing to return to a non-commercial way of life.

The hideous failure of such movements, however, to do anything more than brutalize millions of the population over which they so briefly ruled may be taken as evidence that this way of returning to an integral or "organic" society is atavistic rather than a form of pioneering for the future. A more profound unity of life may be what we need, and what we should search for, but the means of political compulsion from above or without is surely not the way to find it.

One wonders whether, after all, the past holds any great lesson for us in the matter of the reconstruction of our way of life. Take for example the role of the epics of Sanscrit literature, which have been the shapers of scores of cultures throughout the Orient. Elizabeth Seeger gives a simple account of these works in her Introduction to *The Five Brothers* (a young people's version of the *Mahabharata*)

. . . the great epics came out of the dawn of the world, when everything was new; before man wrote or read, when intuition and experience were the only sources of his knowledge; when, amazed and stirred by the cosmic drama in the midst of which he found

himself, he tried to find his part in it, his relation to the earth and its creatures, to the heavenly bodies and to his fellow men. He searched this memory to find a cause and a beginning and cast his vision far ahead to seek a purpose and an end. His findings were infinitely important to him and to all who have come after him. In order to record them he put them into stories that caught the rhythm of the turning earth. There is no better way to remember and to make others remember than to make a story and to put it into rhythmic speech.

Because the epics were composed before writing was known or before it was widely used in the country of their origin, they were not individual works but collective, for they were told by teacher to disciple, by parent to child, by storyteller to storyteller, each generation, each unusual person adding something until the story grew, like a Gothic cathedral, including many centuries in its final form. And, like a Gothic cathedral, it gathered in its growth the history, the beliefs and customs, the economy and the arts of the times it passed through, and preserved them for us.

What shall we do, then? Substitute courses in ancient myths and legends for the present lessons in general science? The trouble with general science, of course, is that it has no role for man. Atoms and stars are cast in the drama of the universe, but even they have no "meaning" beyond the fact that they are simply "there," and man—man is simply a late arrival who develops by a process no less miraculous than the Bible story of his creation by Jehovah.

Some say that we have lost "God," and must find him again. We should prefer to say that we need to find ourselves, and to discover a purpose for our existence which is far-reaching enough to call out our highest energies. The trouble with so many of the theories about God, from St. Augustine on, is that they devalue man, and if the truth were known, it would probably be found that all this talk about the power of God and the sinfulness and weakness of man has had more to do than anything else with the great and energetic cycle of Western materialism. We need, perhaps, to recover from this by finding ourselves without assistance from any of the conventional religions. A return to these old religions might easily have

the same results as the Nazi revival of paganism, which, although filled with excesses, was qualitatively no bloodier than some of the religious dictatorships of centuries ago.

Perhaps the heavy duty laid upon this age is the rediscovery of man, without the aid of either gods or allegories. Then, conceivably, new epics will be written to take the place of the old.