

## TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCHISMS

IN the year 1592, when Giordano Bruno was brought before the Holy Inquisitors of Rome, he repeated in his defense against the charges of heresy a doctrine which was then familiar and well-known to all—the doctrine of double truth, which distinguishes between the truth according to divine revelation and the scriptures held to be canonical by the Church, and the truth as disclosed by *philosophy*. Unfortunately, Bruno's plea that he wrote "as a philosopher" and that he "believed in the Pythagorean manner," was not acceptable to the Holy Office, and since he refused to recant, he was burned at the stake on February 19, 1600. One of his last utterances to his judges was: "Perchance you who pronounce my sentence are in greater fear than I who receive it."

There was some truth in Bruno's challenge, for he had been teaching young men how to philosophize, and there is no activity more menacing to the security of dogmatic beliefs and supernatural revelation. A sure instinct on the part of the doctors of the Church led to his condemnation.

You don't hear much, today, about the doctrine of double truth, as protection against charges of heresy, yet it is very much alive. You don't hear about it for the reason that, today, the tables are turned. That is, the heretics are now mostly among the clergy, who must be careful lest they offend against the more orthodox beliefs of their congregations! Of course, the assumption that the congregations believe in the old theology is often unfounded. A writer in the May *Harper's* (William W. Bartley, III, "I Call Myself a Protestant") tells about the churchly game of "Let's Pretend," first described by a man who has given up the ministry:

The church members confide to each other that they no longer believe their church's doctrines, but "would not dare to let their minister know they felt that way." And the minister tells *his* confidants (when he dares to have any) that he doesn't believe the doctrines either, "but would not dare to say so from the pulpit"!

Judging from the candid announcements of men who have left their churches, and the less candid admissions of others who haven't, such problems are quite common, today. Donald R. Fraser, a Canadian minister who resigned from the United Church to become a Unitarian, began while still in theological school to wonder about the conflict between Holy Writ and modern scientific knowledge. His college was liberal and he found himself able to diverge from orthodoxy without causing any disturbance. Of that period, he now says:

What was a little hard to understand was that the same professors who helped their students toward a more liberal interpretation of Christianity urged them to be "unobtrusive" about their modern outlook when they became ministers and thus not to upset the faith of any in the congregation. Such a warning is not out of place, however, for a minister in the pastorate finds almost no support in trying to present the results of modern Biblical scholarship.

The failure of a church congregation to respond to "modern Biblical scholarship" does not seem so dreadfully backward, since this sort of research, providing no more than a learned appendix to an abandoned myth, has hardly any value from either a religious or a philosophical point of view. But it was all these bright young men of liberal education in religion had to offer, in exchange for the old dogmas.

Mr. Fraser managed to stay in place until he began his preparation for classes to be held between New Year's and Easter in 1957. During this work he had occasion to read carefully the "Articles of Faith" of the United Church, ending:

"We believe that God, *on the sole ground* of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord."

Mr. Fraser comments:

When it came time to discuss with the class what Doctrine says is the sole ground of salvation, I realized that so far from being central for me, it had lost all meaning whatsoever.

For him, resignation at once became mandatory. He sent a letter of explanation to every family on the pastoral charge and to friends outside the congregation. The replies he received were on the whole encouraging. One letter, however, was so remarkable that Mr. Fraser repeated it in full. The writer was well over eighty years of age and had all his life been a minister in the same church as the one Fraser was leaving. This man claimed to be more "radical" in his views than Fraser, yet said that he had enjoyed "a very happy, and on the whole, successful ministry." His letter continues:

First of all, when I was licensed to preach and afterwards ordained, I paid no attention at all to the questions that were put to me. Those questions and the whole body of doctrine which they represent are based on what is called Theology, but Theology became obsolete at least four hundred years ago but certain official persons, especially in colleges, do not seem to be aware of its decease. But surely the life of mankind is a large enough phenomenon, large enough and rich enough to provide us with aspects of it for our discourses Sunday after Sunday.

I have not used the word "God" nor the words "Jesus Christ" in the pulpit for fifty years, both of these being theological terms and therefore meaningless. I have at my own university and at another given addresses in harmony with that which I am now stating to you, and while there has been some shaking of heads among the weaker brethren, I have gone my way unmolested. . . .

All this I am mentioning to you, not as if I were exhibiting my own wares, but to show you how it is possible to live one's life as a minister with utter indifference . . . for those who walk in darkness or try to sit on two stools at one time. Though I have some friends who are as orthodox as John Knox or John Calvin, as for the "Average Man," of whom you speak, this is what I notice, namely, that he is more enlightened than he knows he is. . . .

Playing the game out to the end, Mr. Fraser offered to remain in his pastorate if the General Council of the United Church would be willing to consider reviewing and revising the requirements of ministers. He was told, however, that "the United Church is a Trinitarian Church and it isn't going to change for you." But after his meeting with the Alberta Conference committee was over, a prominent United Church minister said to him: "In a

sense, many of us are Unitarians. When you are talking to a Jewish rabbi or an intelligent Moslem, you wish the doctrine of the Trinity had never been invented!"

Without bitterness, Mr. Fraser concluded that the church in which he had grown up, while claiming to be a repository of divine truth, was losing its integrity. He became a Unitarian.

This sort of issue, as a private problem of conscience, has been common enough among Christian clergymen for at least a century, perhaps more, but it emerges into the foreground of public awareness much more easily in lands where there is an established or state religion. In the United States, where there are dozens of different versions of the Christian faith to choose among, ranging all the way from the Fundamentalism of, say, Billy Graham, to the virtually agnostic credo of the Unitarians, a man can find a haven without dramatic public revolt. He may choose public revolt, in the interest of general education, but he need not do so.

In Catholic countries, however, or in England, the demands of orthodoxy are less equivocal. Questions about the Roman faith are hardly open to public discussion. In England, where the "Catholicism" of the state church lacks only allegiance to the Pope and the practice of auricular confession (now reviving, here and there, among Anglicans), the issue has a relative simplicity. The priest of the Anglican Church either subscribes to the Thirty-nine Articles or he retires. But in England, unlike the Catholic countries, the believability of the Thirty-nine articles can be and is discussed, with anyone interested taking a hand. In what is probably the best forum of undogmatic religious debate for English-speaking peoples, the *Hibbert Journal*, the question of what the requirement of belief in the Thirty-nine Articles may exact of a man who is both intelligent and honest has been pursued almost endlessly. The conclusion commonly arrived at in these discussions is that to become a priest of the Church of England in the twentieth century, such a man will have to sacrifice either his intelligence or his integrity. He cannot keep both and remain a priest.

Since England is a country where tradition has a much stronger role than it has in the United States, and since the Established Church became a part of English tradition over four hundred years ago, the struggle of the British conscience to break with the unbending requirements of Anglican orthodoxy causes sensitive individuals considerable pain. Even those who declare themselves unable to compromise for the sake of conformity often write with affection of the Church, while their objection to the articles of belief becomes a strenuous plea for latitude rather than an "attack." We could not have a better illustration of what Simone Weil called the "unhealthy influence" upon the exercise of the intelligence brought by *group opinions*. As she said:

. . . when a group starts having opinions, it inevitably tends to impose them on its members. Sooner or later, these individuals find themselves debarred, with a greater or lesser degree of severity, and on a number of problems of greater or lesser importance, from expressing opinions opposed to those of the group, unless they care to leave it. But a break with any group to which one belongs always involves suffering—at any rate of a sentimental kind.

It takes a while for the full implications of Simone Weil's thought on this point to sink in. She undoubtedly spent the whole of her all-too-brief life pondering such questions. She is one of the few religious thinkers of the contemporary period who stands wholly and explicitly against the arguments of the Grand Inquisitor. She is hostile to any kind of unexamined conclusion as an element in the way of life chosen by an individual. That is, she is hostile to the social sanction and organizational support of such conclusions. She would remove all cultural blessing of the human tendency to accept a dogma or any sort of "party line" in place of the labor and the uncertainty of individual reflection and decision. This is the central issue between Ivan Karamazov's Cardinal of Seville and the returned Jesus of sixteenth-century Spain.

The article by William Warren Bartley III, "I Call Myself a Protestant," in *Harper's* for May (briefly referred to above) is just about the best statement of this general issue and problem that has appeared in recent years. This article is the last of a *Harper's* series concerned with modern religious

beliefs. It deserves being made into a Pendle Hill pamphlet by the Quakers, and not merely because Mr. Bartley finally chose the Society of Friends as the religious group most hospitable to the sort of thinking he wants to pursue. It deserves further and wider circulation because it examines the moral issues involved in Christian faith in the twentieth century, describes the major alternatives of decision which are open to thoughtful Christians, explores the consequences of the "group opinions" established by religious orthodoxy, and, finally, intimates the philosophical dilemmas which have become shrouded by the habitual refuge sought by intellectual Christians behind the "front" of publicly accepted creeds.

Mr. Bartley's principal whipping boy is Paul Tillich, one of the distinguished modern theologians retained by President Pusey to rehabilitate the Christian faith at Harvard University. In brief, Bartley says that Tillich is a profound thinker, but no Christian, and that he has no business in hiding his heresy.

Readers may recall a MANAS discussion of Dr. Tillich's *Saturday Evening Post* (June 14, 1958) article, "The Lost Dimension of Religion" (MANAS, July 9, '58), in which it was suggested that the chief defect of the Harvard theologian's argument was his failure to press it to a logical conclusion. It was said, further, that if he *had* developed his conclusions more fully, the *Post* probably would not have published his article, since it would have been plain that Dr. Tillich has abandoned almost entirely the orthodox Christian faith.

This is Mr. Bartley's complaint, also. He wants Tillich to level with the believers. Tillich, he maintains, advocates letting "*innocent* ignorance prevail." He likens Tillich to the Grand Inquisitor, who used precisely this defense of the Church's policy, when alone in the dungeon with Jesus. Bartley writes:

In Protestant Christendom today, as in Dostoevsky's Seville, the beliefs and religious expectations of those learned in theology are very often not only different from and more complex than those of the average man in the pew; *they contradict them*. Agreement is no longer over *beliefs*, but over

*passwords*, passwords which one may take literally, symbolically, or in some other way, depending upon one's theological sophistication.

Nor are the theologians at all eager—and in fact they are rather worried—about communicating their beliefs to the "believers." They have only added to the breakdown of real communication various circumlocutions which make their break with traditional Christianity seem less serious than it is: we get different kinds of "truth," different kinds of "belief," different kinds of "knowledge."

"Well, yes," the theologian nods when pressed, "I don't believe that there is an afterlife, but the notion of an afterlife is *symbolically true*, you know."

"Yes, Virginia, there is a God." . . .

Mr. Bartley says directly of Tillich:

Tillich is quite unable to accept the "supernatural." His aim is to "heal" the old Christian ideas and stories by calling attention to what is still *acceptable* in them and by disarming those aspects which are no longer tenable. His first step is to *redefine* the old terms, so as to eliminate their supernatural features, and to reinterpret them as myths and symbols. The system which results is a radical revision which retains the *appearance* of orthodoxy.

. . . I believe Tillich's theology is Christian in name alone. Far from re-establishing the Christian symbols, he is asking us to accept *his* philosophy and *his* religion understood in terms of reinterpreted Biblical concepts. The result is not Christianity; it is a new religion.

So, the young men are leaving the solidly orthodox Protestant churches. Mr. Fraser became a Unitarian, Mr. Bartley a Quaker.

Little remains to be said, except, perhaps, some few words on the subtleties of religious or philosophical metaphysics. With some reason, it may be urged that the "symbols" are a necessary stage of belief, preliminary to perception of transcendental truths of philosophy. After all, one learns to manipulate integers before he works with fractions. He must master arithmetic before he is ready to encounter algebra, and the abstract notions of higher mathematics are an intellectual vocabulary which must be prepared for with simpler disciplines.

The parallel seems accurate enough. Yet the valid allegory is one which, in the progress of understanding, is enriched, but never abandoned or *rejected*. The growth of the Christian in philosophy seems, too often, to lead to atheism rather than profound spiritual insight. Most great religious systems provide some prediction of this ordeal of transition from the literal to the symbolic, and from the symbolic to the mystical and transcendental. But what of a religion which has built-in resistances and obstacles to these transitions? Barth, another of the modern Christian theologians, has put the matter very well: "It cannot be otherwise than that Dogmatics runs counter to every philosophy no matter what form it may have assumed." Thus, as Bartley comments:

If the philosophy and science of the past three hundred years seem to conflict with the Word, let the philosophy and science go. Kierkegaard has aptly called this a "crucifixion of the intellect."

It is a crucifixion of the intellect and of something more—the integrity of the human intelligence.

## *REVIEW*

### ONE OF THE RELUCTANT GREAT

ALL the Schweitzer books have passed us by but two—Robert Payne's *The Three Worlds of Albert Schweitzer*, which we reviewed in MANAS for Feb. 12, 1958, and now, *Days with Albert Schweitzer*, by Frederick Franck (Holt, \$4), with which we have spent the pleasantest couple of hours of reading we have enjoyed in many weeks (and we do a lot of reading!).

The Payne book is a competent professional study of Dr. Schweitzer, dealing with his three enduring interests—music, Christianity, and medicine. Dr. Franck's work is quite plainly a labor of love, and "amateur" in this sense. If you read one of these books, you should read the other, for together they give an unforgettable picture of a man who has had greatness thrust upon him by his single-minded concentration upon the things that have seemed important to him to do.

*Days with Albert Schweitzer* brought a special quality for the MANAS reviewer, however, for it seemed like the return of an old friend for a longer visit. Dr. Franck will be remembered by most readers as the writer of the "Letter from Lambaréné," in MANAS last summer. Readers who plan to get his book and would like a foretaste of its contents may look up the July 30, 1958, issue for that purpose. The book has 178 pages and is filled with the author's drawings of the people, the animals, and the buildings, equipment, and surroundings of Lambarene—and, of course, of Dr. Schweitzer. A principal charm of *Days with Albert Schweitzer* lies in the fact that Dr. Franck did not go there to "write a book," but to establish a dental clinic and work there as a dentist—and, when he had time, to draw.

We shall not attempt much of an account of what is in this book, except to say that the reader is privileged to enjoy a kind of vicarious friendship with Dr. Schweitzer, since Dr. Franck, as a working dentist in his hospital, was the kind of a

man Dr. Schweitzer could afford to be friendly with. The relationship was strengthening, never depleting, since they worked at common tasks.

A portrait of Schweitzer grows in these pages—the portrait of a man wholly indifferent to the legends that are growing up around his name, a man who has not let fame disturb him any more seriously than the clouds of African insects which buzz outside his netting at night. His nights, incidentally, are largely spent at his desk, where he works at his correspondence and at writings concerned with the larger agony of a world afflicted by the hateful ills of war. At the end, Dr. Franck has this to say:

The crucial fact about Albert Schweitzer, and that which makes his long life into a profound message to every man, is that in the face of all obstacles a man succeeded so absolutely in developing every one of his potentialities to its utmost limit.

To this we might add that it is obvious that Schweitzer never said to himself, "Now how can I become a 'well-rounded' individual?" His drives to know, to do, to help, to succor, and to explain must have arisen from a source far deeper than any concern with "personal-development." Hence his blessed indifference to what people say about him.

The loveliest thing in Dr. Franck's book is his description of how he gave drawing lessons to the children in the leper village. While leprosy is no longer the deadful scourge that it was a century ago, and mutilations can now be prevented, there are still those in the leper village of Lambarene who have no fingers. But of the children in Dr. Franck's drawing class, only five were infected. The others were children of parents confined to the village. Since children need the love and care of their parents, and often die when separated from them, it was found desirable for them to live at home in the village. It is now known, moreover, that the chances of infection are quite low.

But not only the children drew. "Victor, a young intellectual looking man who had hardly

any fingers left and whose feet were totally mutilated and bandaged, drew holding a pencil between the bandaged stumps of his hands."

After the lessons had gone on for a while, a great project was undertaken:

We decided to make a large collective mural, nearly the whole Village participating. I got a huge piece of drawing paper, about six by eight feet. Marc made the divisions. Victor was asked to do the lower part because he could not stand and had to be carried on his little stool to where the paper was stretched against the wall of a hut. One-footed Albert wanted to draw le Grand Docteur with one of his pelicans. According to talent and age, spaces were allotted to be filled in by everyone who wanted to. There was great general enthusiasm and our first completed mural amazed le Grand Docteur himself, who had never suspected such talent among his lepers.

While at Lambaréné, Dr. Franck saw between five and six hundred patients, including the whole leper village, and did hundreds of fillings, extractions, operations, and treatments, and taught emergency dentistry to the staff. The need for good dentists in this part of Africa is desperate. Fortunately, Dr. Franck will return there this summer.

With only two groups of people does Dr. Franck show any impatience. One of these is the tourists who come to Lambaréné, expecting to be "serviced" while they have the "experience" of seeing Dr. Schweitzer at work, and to whom is shown a courtesy that seems beyond the call of duty for even those as saintly as Dr. Schweitzer. "On two occasions cultural-hungry matrons from a cruise ship were sent here to see the Hospital. . . . The thirty females were properly fed at Schweitzer's expense and the only dislocation they caused was that all the nurses had to sleep on improvised beds in order to accommodate them." In a somewhat different category of visitor was the middle-aged, brown-bearded puppeteer known as St. Francis who wanders about Africa performing "for the love of God in Heaven" and to support his wife and six children in France. He talked a blue streak, mostly about himself and

God, and at one point asked Dr. Schweitzer if he would have time for an interview that night.

When Schweitzer heard the word interview [Dr. Franck relates] he took up his table knife and made a mock attack on his guest, "Don't you dare pronounce that word here," he said.

"Oh, excuse me," said St. Francis, "I did not mean to interview you. I thought you might want to interview *me* about my adventures for the glory of God."

Sorry, I'm too busy just now," Schweitzer said, getting up, "but do come back for lunch tomorrow, Monsieur." I heard him mutter to Mathilde, "I wish I had that gift of gab!"

Others whom Dr. Franck finds trying are the people who think themselves able to sum up Schweitzer in a phrase, usually a small-minded phrase, or who judge Lambarene and all its works in the terms of their own insignificant lives. Dr. Franck understands these people perfectly and exposes them simply by repeating bits of their dialogue.

One value of Dr. Franck's book which should not be left unmentioned is its embodiment of his quick yet deep comprehension of the people of Africa. He does not write "about" them, but of them, and no writer is less aware of external differences in his concern and sympathies for others. No happier combination of talents, the healing and easing of pain, and the insight of the artist, could have been brought to Lambaréné, by an observant human being. This book will delight all readers.

## COMMENTARY

### "THE DIFFICULTY OF BELIEVING"

THE discussion, more than twenty years ago, in the *Hibbert Journal* of the issues of Christian belief is so excellent a parallel of the current discussion of the same question that examples of this earlier British thinking seem in order.

After the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine issued its report, John Campbell Graham contributed a two-part article, "Fast and Loose in Theology," to the *Hibbert Journal* for October 1938 and January 1939. He began:

It is, I suppose, generally agreed that the chief problem confronting the Church of England, as a branch of what is called "Catholic" Christianity, is the difficulty of believing its official doctrines, a difficulty due to the growth of knowledge. It would seem to be no less obvious that it is upon the solution of this problem that the continued existence of the Church depends.

Sketching some of the history of this problem, Mr. Graham recalled the passage of the Clerical Subscription Act in 1865—a piece of legislation which conceded, in substance, that the Church and the State would no longer expect "the same degree of subjective conformity as had hitherto been demanded."

Outraged by what seemed to him the immorality of this ordinance, Henry Sidgwick resigned his Oxford Fellowship. Hypocrisy and insincere conformity, he said, were the besetting vices of religion. Further (Graham summarizes):

It might be legitimate among a primitive people to support a fictitious theology for the good of the community by systematic falsehood, but in a society like our own where everyone could read and no one could be prevented from printing, where doubts and denials of the most sacred and time-honoured beliefs were proclaimed daily from the housetops, the method of pious fraud was surely inapplicable.

The other side of the argument was conducted by Hastings Rashdall, oddly enough a "modernist," who wanted revision of doctrine to make Christianity possible for men who

understood the consequences of historical criticism, yet who defended "spiritual expediency" in the meantime. His argument ran (in Graham's summary):

It was a grave evil that men should be forced as a condition of ordination to subscribe to incredible statements, but it would be a graver evil if the Church's ministry were to be recruited solely from men who thought those statements credible. . . . Long before the impossibility of getting men to take orders had secured an alteration of the Articles, the church would consist of none but men who were, *ex hypothesi*, below the average standard either of intelligence or conscientiousness. . . .

This was the problem with which the Commissioners concerned with Doctrine wrestled, and which they left virtually untouched. Unwilling to change the words of the Faith, they explained: "Traditional phrases lay less stringent fetters upon the free play of thought." Here, too, "symbolism" comes to the rescue. The Commissioners found that the beliefs of the New Testament writers, even when they "appear to be shared by our Lord's own human mind," may be interpreted in a "symbolical" sense.

Mr. Graham has little sympathy for the Commission:

"Statements affirming particular facts may be found to have value as pictorial expressions of spiritual truths even though the supposed facts themselves did not actually happen." Presumably the doctrine of the "Virgin Birth" is such a statement and also that of the "Resurrection of the Body." But on this view they cease to be doctrines and should no longer be treated as creedal—the doctrines are the "spiritual truths" which they pictorialise. Where Christianity appeals to history Christianity must abide by the verdict of history, and there is no doubt about the verdict of history concerning these doctrines. It will be generally agreed that if such doctrines are not historical, they are pictorially, not only valueless, but a nuisance and a stumbling-block. . . .

The document [The Report of the Commission on Doctrine] has been praised for its "spirit of compromise." But to say one thing while meaning another is usually called by a less pleasant name. "We must not lie on behalf of God." We know that some of the Commissioners were in favour of

doctrinal revision. Had their voices predominated we might have had an epoch-making manifesto. Certainly it would not have received synodical sanction, but it would have received the sanction of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit of Truth, which must in the end prevail. It is urged that revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles would disrupt the Church. The risk must be faced. Those who make this plea have not considered the alternative. The secession of the intelligentsia can have only one result: there will soon be no Church to disrupt.

Another writer in the *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1937), Col. T. B. Luard, is concerned with the same question:

The fundamental religious issue of the day is not the Divinity of Jesus but the spiritual nature of man. Is it not the spirit of Christian faith rather than the letter of Christian tradition that is needed in the world today? Christian spiritual experience and spiritual power could yet save and transfigure the world if, released from the fetters of theology, it was free to play its part in the epic adventure of Creation to which we are called as the fulfilment of our spiritual nature—the ever more satisfying inward realisation and ever more spontaneous outward expression, in creative . . . reaction to circumstances, of truth, beauty, love, joy, peace and liberty.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves PERILOUS ADVENTURES

IN reporting on a Book of the Month selection, *Endurance*, the story of the "incredible" privations suffered by the 1916 Shackleton Trans-Antarctic Expedition, Clifton Fadiman called it an epic of "the heroic age, now completely at an end, of polar and near-polar exploration."

Alfred Lansing, who wrote the book after tracing and interviewing the now widely scattered survivors, produced much more than a thrilling travelogue. *Endurance* is a story of extraordinary leadership on the part of Shackleton, and persistent courage on the part of his men—qualities essential to heroic myth and legend. The Lansing volume sounds like a book for all the half-grown-up, English-speaking children of the world. There are few human qualities of greater importance than "endurance"—the end-result of physical, emotional and mental disciplines. Young people need to know that men are more than machines and always will be, that the calculations of probability in any enterprise can be confounded by a person or persons with indomitable will. And if the traditional hero-stories are no longer "alive" in our culture, such tales of our own time may provide a similar inspiration.

We quote two short paragraphs from Mr. Fadiman's expansive review:

The expedition had to withstand blizzards, ice, freezing cold, wet, boredom, inhuman fatigue, filth, Ice Age isolation, darkness, agonies of labor, overcrowding, sleeplessness, frostbite, knife-like blasts, a diet better left undescribed, and the horror of hopes constantly dashed by disaster.

It is all incredible. But most incredible is the climactic episode in which Shackleton and five men, leaving the rest of the party on an island, set sail on April 24, 1916, in a twenty-two-foot open boat, bound for South Georgia, 870 miles away, a pinpoint in a savage wilderness. They crossed the Drake Passage, the most dreaded waters in the world. Thousands of times a day they overcame the threat of fifty-foot-high

rollers. Hour after hour they clubbed ice off oars and boat.

And on May 10, 1916, they reached the land from which they had set sail 522 days before—only to find that to get help they had to go overland across impassable sawtooth peaks to Leith Harbor. Which they did. "I do not know how they did it, except that they had to" is the judgment of the leader of another, well-equipped scientific party which duplicated their feat in 1955.

Two other sagas, now available as paperbacks, portray the same raw human courage in differing backgrounds, although in each case the struggle is between men and the elements. *The Long Walk* (Harper, 1956) is the story of an escape from a Siberian prison camp in 1939—an unbelievable odyssey successfully pursued over four thousand miles, through Siberia, across the Gobi desert, and over the Himalayan range to India.

The story is told in the first person by Slavomir Rawicz, a Polish officer, who lived to serve again in the free Polish forces. Included in the company were two other Poles, a Czech, an American, and a Polish girl. Rawicz lived through privations beyond the average person's capacity to imagine. Of the original party, two died in the Gobi desert and another was lost in a Himalayan crevasse. The wonder is that anyone survived. The following by a San Francisco *Examiner* writer does not exaggerate the quality of this volume:

More than one hundred adventure books are published every year, yet I doubt if any is as gripping and filled with suspense as *The Long Walk*. A journey of 4,000 miles, with neither map nor compass, equipped only with an axehead, a homemade knife and insuperable determination to live—that is the essence of this book.

Slavomir Rawicz and six companions broke out of a Soviet slave labor camp and walked south into the endless crushing spaces of Siberia headed for Tibet. That Rawicz survived to tell his story is a miracle of human endurance. Through nights so cold that sleep meant certain death, through scorching days when heat drove men to the brink of insanity, Rawicz moved on.

The third book in this "impossible-adventure" collection is *We Die Alone* by David Howarth—the escape tale of Norwegian freedom-fighter Jan Baalsrud. Mr. Howarth was the second in command of a secret navy base in Scotland, from which twelve Norwegians sailed to occupied Norway to organize resistance against the Germans. The story begins with a precarious landing on the Norwegian coast in 1943. A Quisling betrayal led to the capture and execution of every member of the party save Jan Baalsrud. This sole survivor, wounded and starving, with frozen feet and suffering from snow blindness, was helped by more than a hundred persons in his desperate effort to reach the Swedish frontier.

After the war Mr. Howarth visited Baalsrud in Oslo; together they retraced the latter's escape route and talked to many of the people involved in his rescue. In an introductory note, Howarth writes: "When at last I could see the story as a whole, I began to wonder if anyone who had not been there would believe it. It was not just the staggering feats of endurance: if I had invented it, I would never have dared to rescue my hero so many times from so many apparently hopeless situations. But I did not invent any of it, or even attempt to dramatise it; this is how it happened, and nobody who heard the story bit by bit, as I did, from those diffident and humble men and women up there could ever doubt it."

It is impossible to select representative quotations from these stories of courage and privation, though a special significance seems to lie in one passage which describes Jan on the brink of death after a week in a blizzard without food. His will to live was flickering dimly, yet he was aroused by the compassion and equal determination of a man who cared for Jan in the face of certain death if his hospitality became known to the Germans:

Jan was restless and nervous. He kept dozing off into the sleep which he needed so badly, but as soon as he began to relax, he roused himself anxiously. It was a symptom of his feeble mental state. He felt terribly defenceless, because he could

not see. He was afraid of being betrayed; but if he had been in his right mind and able to see Marius's honest worried face, he would have trusted him without the slightest qualm.

Marius, in fact, was watching over him with something very much like affection: the feeling one has towards any helpless creature which turns to one for protection. He had already promised his protection in his own mind, and in the best words he could think of, and it upset him that he had not succeeded in putting Jan's fears to rest. He wanted to find some way to soothe him and make him believe in his friendship; and on an impulse, when the women were not listening, he took hold of Jan's hand and said very emphatically and clearly: "If I live, you will live, and if they kill you I will have died to protect you. Jan did not answer this solemn promise, but its sincerity had its effect. He relaxed then, and fell asleep.

These stories—at least *The Long Walk* and *We Die Alone*—are for both children and ourselves. There is something about a true epic which helps to dispel the mists of human pettiness—and declares that any human being, whether young or old, may be capable of enduring much more than he might otherwise imagine.

## *FRONTIERS*

### The Disappearing "Wilderness"

THERE are still numerous isolated defenders of "the forest primeval." Individuals and small groups perennially seek legislation which would prohibit the encroachment of a growing population upon public lands maintained by the U.S. Forest Service or the National Parks Commission.

To some, when they hear the protest from a supposed pinnacle of comparative-value analysis, the intensity of feeling generated by wilderness defenders may seem at times to border on the absurd. After all, the threat of total destruction by war is imminent in many portions of the globe, and the problem of overpopulation is, in some cases, a contributing factor here, too. However, one may *feel* a response to those who treasure unspoiled territory, a response that has its practical aspects, as well as being æsthetic and mystical.

For some months we have been saving for appropriate notice a pamphlet by James and Lorli Nelson, opposing the conversion of Pere Marquette Park, in Grafton, Illinois, to an Army Nike station and missile stockpile reserve. The Nelsons, as their final paragraph makes clear, are concerned with much more than a sense of personal loss regarding an area reputed to be one of the most beautiful in America; the process going on at Pere Marquette Park can be regarded as symptomatic of a good many other "conversions" which accompany our acceptance of priority for the mechanisms of military defense. In any case, this is what is happening to a five-thousand-acre state park in the St. Louis area:

Now approximately ninety-five percent of the Park, is "off limits" for ordinary people like you and me. We estimated that fifty acres have been devastated beyond all recognition with the very latest construction—or should we say destruction—equipment such as power saws, bulldozers, power shovels drag lines, earth carriers, "sheep's foot," and "cat" tractors whose efficiency had left not a tree, not

a blade of grass. Here is to be the radar tracking apparatus for the Army's Nike Hercules missile, requiring three separate radar devices according to the Chicago District Corps of Engineers who conveniently look the other way when passing the sign at the entrance of the Park : THIS IS YOUR PARK. PRESERVE ITS NATURAL BEAUTY.

Concrete block houses, dump trucks, house trailers, trenches, earth mounds, piles of raw rubble, heaps of debris, burned stumps, fuel and oil drums. That is all that remains in this squalid desert which we are permitting to replace a sanctuary of natural beauty, a shrine of national historical significance.

The only thing we recognized was a plaintive little sign forgotten in the mud: KEEP OFF THE GRASS. But there was no grass left. . . .

The Army plans to maintain this installation permanently with between seventy and one hundred soldiers exclusive of their families also living at the missile base in the heart of the Park. The announced current cost is "exceeding" one and a half million dollars. Official pronouncements indicate that the newer Nike Zeus missile has already made the present Nike Hercules obsolescent.

The concern of people like the Nelsons may make more sense than first appears to be the case. For while it is certainly difficult for the average citizen to feel that he actually knows what "is going on" as a result of foreign policy or long-range domestic economic planning, anyone can tell the difference in sound between a state park pick-up and a ten-ton truck hauling construction equipment—or, later, missile components. And anyone can see, and feel, the difference between a missile and a five-hundred-year-old tree.

There is also what might be termed the "philosophic" aspect of participation in the unspoiled out-of-doors. On this topic, as upon the question of overpopulation, we have received a communication from a MANAS reader:

TO MANAS: Time and again the editors of MANAS have indicated their love of the primeval beauties of nature and they seem to have profited from the rich instruction that sensitive men may receive from intimate contact with primitive and unspoiled wilderness. This consciously expressed

devotion to unaltered nature is almost unique to our times, possibly because for the first time in the history of man's occupancy of the planet the last reaches of its geography are now being explored, and exploited.

Wilderness means the pristine state of nature, the climax of eons of patient construction and the establishment of delicate and subtle relationships of the parts to an exceedingly complex whole. It is, indeed, the perception of these magnificent intricacies and the even more wondrous entirety that reveals to us the great Plan of which we are a part. Standing solitary in the cathedral of wilderness man discovers that even the volcanoes about him speak of the profound harmony of the creation. Once having had this experience, it is impossible for him ever again to regard human life as mundane or without purpose. The importance of this experience need not be gainsaid: it is an empirical fact, though all too seldom realized in our too-urbanized, too-collectivized world.

Too much history is of man's voluntarily walking out of the Garden, unequal to the human responsibilities raised by the sublimities before his eyes. Today, he is in full flight from the Garden, destroying behind him the last vestiges of his precious birthright, and covering with dust the path by which he might, in a wiser age, return.

Europe is destitute of wilderness areas. Only in tiny, isolated sectors may one any more in solitude relate himself to the eternal verities of the natural world. European civilization is the poorer for this loss, as it now is all too painfully coming to realize.

America, the last great Frontier in the world, during the lush years of the 19th century expansion westward, indulged in unprecedented orgies of destruction and exploitation. The prairies, once vast, lustrous seas of perennial grass, have become impoverished deserts. Diseased and despoiled forests stand as gaunt symbols of civilized man's disregard of ecological commonplaces in his lust for the immediate, but transitory rewards of rapid material gain.

Conservation movements have been working steadily to interrupt and mitigate the destructive activities of business and industry in the usage of our natural resources. While this problem is ever becoming more difficult and complex, conservationists are now having to turn to an even more staggering situation.

Due to increasing pressures from an "exploding" population, the demands on resources are rapidly mounting. First to feel these increased pressures, of course, are the totally virgin areas, still "undeveloped" and with the promise of the highest yields at the lowest costs. Many of these areas may be more valuable as wilderness than they can ever be as regions to "harvest," even under the most carefully managed conservation practices. Wilderness cannot be harvested; it cannot be managed; it cannot be developed. It is, and that's all that can be said or done about it. Simply to leave some places in the world untempered-with has become the conservationist's immediate problem.

As much as anything, the pressure on wilderness areas arises out of the desire, not always as clearly indicated as one might wish, of people to establish a meaningful encounter with nature. In huge numbers, as hunters or fishermen, camera enthusiasts, back-seat explorers, skiers, hikers, campers—all are seeking refreshment, escape, solace, recreation, information, or exercise in the presence of nature. None of these are unlaudable reasons for people to seek the natural environment. But the simple fact is that there is not enough such environment left to satisfy all the diversity of needs and to accommodate the numbers of needful.

In particular, those whose needs require solitude and the primeval quality of nature are finding it increasingly difficult to get away from the "developed" areas.

There can be little question any longer that without effective and immediate steps being taken, the most vulnerable of all our resources, primeval nature, will succumb to the increased demands for

multiple use and exploitation by the sheer space requirements of a burgeoning human population, endowed as never before with leisure and mobility.

Population control has been too "controversial" a matter for conservationists to openly espouse until quite recently. Indicative of a new boldness, inspired by necessity, was the head-on confrontation of this issue at the Sixth Biennial Wilderness Conference held last March in San Francisco. The Conference, by an overwhelming vote, adopted the following resolution:

As wilderness is one of the first of the earth's important natural resources to come into short supply as a result of the world-wide human "population explosion," the final destiny of wilderness may hinge on this trend. This conference, recognizing that both economic standards and the quality of human living are at stake, accordingly recommends that research on human population problems be greatly increased and that social, governmental and other appropriate agencies give immediate and urgent attention to the development of desirable population controls.

The arithmetic of the population problem exposes a grim future for places like Yosemite Valley. Already Kleenex has been noted as the official flower of the valley, so omnipresent is the litter left by the unmanageable numbers of people who now visit the park. If the present rate of population growth in the state of California continues, the state's population by 2005 will equal the present population of Japan, and bring with it a ten times increase in the visitation rate at Yosemite Valley. This would mean 13,000,000 visitors per year by the time today's pre-school child takes his teen age children to a vacation in the mountains. Kleenex will be the least of the problems!

The whole history of man has been marked by his efforts to lengthen life. Now it appears that the vigor and longevity he has achieved may become his greatest liability against leading the "good life." Paul Sears summed up the situation when he said:

I am far less interested in guessing how thickly mankind can be amassed on this planet and still survive than I am in the optimum quality for those who do. Why continue, not only to tolerate, but to sponsor reckless and irresponsible multiplication of numbers? Why accede to the notion that in a world where millions are hungry and malnourished through failure to apply the knowledge we now have, industrial enterprise must concentrate so largely on the mass production of what a philosopher would consider toys for adults?

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A letter like this one makes the reader feel as though he belonged to a species as devastating as locusts and as prolific as rabbits. The difference, of course, is that men do not *have* to desecrate and devour their natural environment the way the locusts do, as they become more numerous. And why speak so anxiously of the *future* of the Yosemite Valley, when already hot-dog stands and other concessions make it seem a Coney Island of the High Sierras! Even John Muir might prefer a Park Avenue penthouse to this sort of embellishment of natural beauty!

It is not, we think, so much a question of the quantity of human beings as of their quality. The quantity only makes the quality more evident, not worse. Population growth may seem a serious problem on this basis, yet there is nothing to suggest that control of the birth-rate exerts a refining influence on human beings. Experts have already pointed out that birth-control on the part of the sophisticated leads to a big bulge of population in families which add mostly to the "mass-man." It is perhaps natural for those who see the rapid depletion of natural resources to worry about the spurt in the rate of increase of the human species. We cannot argue with these people on their own ground, but would only point out the improbability that the quality of human life, which is essentially ethical, can be much aided or improved by mechanistic methods. A parody of the argument would be that if we have more room to spread our ruin, it will be less noticeable and therefore less offensive. It is not unreasonable to doubt the validity of this claim.