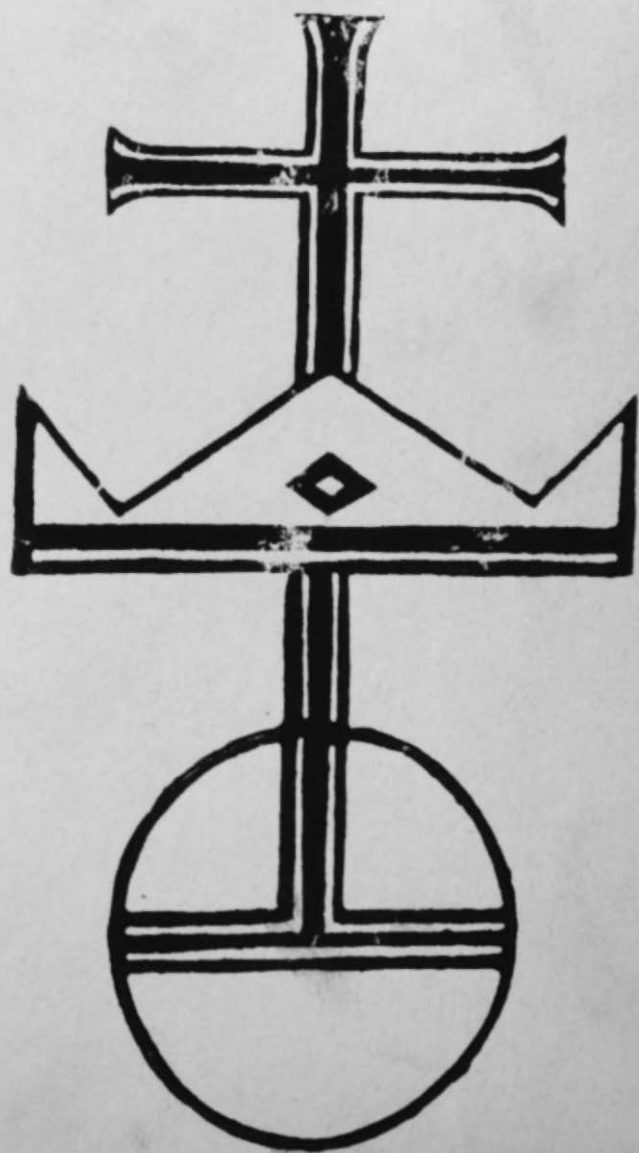


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E d i t o r i a l . . .

"The Lord God Hath Spoken!"

The lion hath roared, who will not fear?
The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

In a period of uncertain foreboding and corruption the Word of the Lord came to the prophet, Amos. Filled with its fire, he left his flocks and orchards to preach to an unwilling people. The Lord God had revealed his secret to his servant, and the prophet could not remain silent.

The Word of God is no less urgent for us than it was for Amos. Our age is filled with as much evil foreboding and corruption as his. It is for us to leave our quiet, enjoyable meadows and orchards to bring this Word in all its power to our world. To us, His servants, God has revealed His secret.

There can be no compromise; there can be no softening of His message. The Word of the Gospel must be preached, and it must be preached to a people who are unwilling to hear it. The prophets spoke boldly and plainly; they stood up even in the face of death and (what is more feared in our age) ridicule. In our day as never before the Church must be a mountain of strength. Our preaching cannot be dictated by the pleasures of the listeners. The Lord has raised up sons for prophets, but even among the children of God they have been commanded, "Prophesy not!"

If we are seeking realism in the ministry, then we have it in the prophetic sense of the Word of God. "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he hath taken nothing?" Does our world languish in chaos and religious rebellion, if it is not stirred up with evil and disorder by the Destroyer?

"The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" We rebel against God and we are traitors to His revelation, if we do not proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ with power to a world so in need of it. This is realism! This is to see beyond the obvious, to strike at the heart of the problem. The Word has come to us, as it came to the prophets, in a special way; we must declare it in its purity, and whether they like it or not, the people must listen. Is it too much to hope that in our ministry there will be a rebirth of the prophetic spirit?

CONFRONTING MODERN CONFUSION

by

Earl T. Knaus, Jr.

"Modern man is treading a narrow defile that skirts an Inferno of such destruction as Dante could not envision nor Dore depict. Stricken by psychic anxieties, cloven by emotional conflicts, beset by economic insecurities, assailed by political doubts and cynicisms, the plucked rooster, man, is a peculiarly vulnerable fowl as he struts along the path of civilization. He has crowed a good deal in his time, rather bravely in spots. But now he begins to suspect that the ax of destiny is being sharpened for his neck. He trembles, pales, calls for madder music, stronger wine to drown the approaching specter of his fate."¹

Let no one think that these are the words of a frustrated radical which the tide of events will wash away! This is the theme of many voices crying in the wilderness of modern confusion. This is the cry of prophetic voices trying to hold back a civilization from its own self-destruction! This cry is a fact! A fact validated by the "the trampling hord" of our ages' problems. Our world has cast out Christ and now, if we would listen, we can hear the bells tolling out our death!

"Before every one of history's tremendous catastrophes people have been obsessed, one way or the other, with the world they live in, and with their own supremacy over it. God has slipped out and cynicism has crawled in. They have become incurable naturalists, and emptied life itself of all its meaning. It happened in the days of the downfall of Greece. Existence had become flat and two dimensional, man-centered and secular. The fates that hounded Aeschylus and Sophocles were dogging the steps of human life. It happened to Rome. From the thirteenth century on, it began to happen to the Middle Ages. The Reformation did its best to restore the great, central integrations of being; but it was a losing battle. The impetus of the Renaissance was too strong. Little by little it rid men of the 'folly' of belief. Philosophy turned in upon itself. Miracles were dug up out of God and planted in society, where they never have done so well. They became altogether relative and subject to expediency. Humanism took over the reins. Individualism began to run riot in a desolation of freedom. A pseudo-science undertook to turn religion into a byword, hardly more than a pretty story intended to make people sleep better. We discovered what the love of a mother was by injecting secretions into rats. The only answer to which is—rats! The soul became a knee jump. Nothing was

real that you could not dissect or put into a test tube or express in a formula.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
We know precisely what you are!
We've studied your size, and got your mass:
You're not a diamond, you're holium gas!

"We learned about physics and invented gun powder. We poisoned ourselves to death with telephones. We went everywhere in an airplane and came home to tend the machines: producing as much as we could for profit, then destroying the produce to keep the prices up! Until the child of nature had triumphed over the child of God: only to find in the triumph his own measureless defeat. Life in two dimensions had come off with all the garlands, and they were withered. Until today humanity wanders among the ruins in a passion for self-extinction, played upon by the demons of frustration."² We have howled at ourselves Christ's lament over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I--and ye would not!"

I.

This solemn judgment moves to examine what the Hebrew-Christian tradition has to say in the face of the soothing cauldron of contemporary events. First of all, let us analyze what modern man believes, and by what devious routes these beliefs have led to our predicament. Reinhold Niebuhr grasped a significant insight into our predicament when he said: "We are thus living in a period in which either the optimism of yesterday has given way to despair, or in which some of the less sophisticated moderns try desperately to avoid the abyss of despair by holding to credos which all of the facts have disproved."³ This statement of the case becomes self-evident when we observe the beliefs men have entertained for the past two-hundred years. After the medieval period a change in belief set in which ultimately became a simple identification of human ideals with the forces of nature. But this unreflexive naturalism and optimism soon gave way to "humanistic dualism in which a sharp distinction was drawn between the human and the natural world."⁴

"Thus the optimism of pure naturalism degenerates into a fairly consistent pessimism, slightly relieved by a confidence in the meaningfulness of human life, even when its values must be maintained in defiance of nature's caprices."⁵ This kind of naive optimism has a death grip on our culture which is relieved occasionally by the influence of sophisticated pessimists and cynics. It is also significant to note that the self-deification of humanity in past decades has seen "the recent emergence of a more explicit type of self-glorification in race, State and nation..."⁶

This latter development represents a cynical reaction to the hypocritical pretensions of the humanistic cultures. It has, consequently, developed in those countries which have suffered defeat and humiliation at the hands of the satisfied and dominant Western States. The Marxist movement, on the other hand, is the only modern movement which has seen through

the pretensions of Western Humanism. It recognizes the sinfulness of human culture due to its relevant nature. Yet it has created a new naturalistic humanism by proposing to make the proletariat the saviors of the world at some future date in history. More light will be shed upon these latter developments in a later section.

If we find the above analysis in a general way correct, we see on the one hand that modern men have slipped into despair and a meaningless existence. Like the prodigal son many want to their substance in riotous living. They have no transcendent loyalty, such as Christians have in Christ, to which faith can bind their lives. As a result they live only for momentary pleasures, the gratification of the senses or whatever else they can get out of life. It might be called a kind of modern fatalism accentuated by our inability to adjust to our technical advances. This is the lowest possible plane of living and fails to bring out the best in a person. In the end these people come to despair because they have not satisfied their capacity for communion with a judgment and redemption which stands outside the pale of human history.

On the other hand we know those who have some supreme loyalty in life but it is not transcendent enough to escape the judgment of history. It is this person who can be considered an optimist grasping at straws. And optimism in this context is based upon self-deification. "Most optimistic creeds when reduced to their essentials, prove themselves to be confidence in some human virtue or capacity. The optimistic man trusts life because he believes in his nation, or in his culture, or in the goodness of his church, or in the goodness of pious men, or in the capacity of human reason for infinite growth, or in the ability of one particular class to build a civilization which will be free of the evils by which all previous civilizations have destroyed themselves. Each new creed of human optimism is but a variation of the basic creed of all those who trust in man and make flesh their arm. So great is the power of human pride and so inevitable the blindness of this pride that the illusions of this optimism do not become apparent until history itself destroys the very force or source of meaning which men have trusted."⁷

And this is exactly what contemporary history is doing. A good example of this would be those Nazis who placed their faith in the contemporary order of Nazism. Now that Nazism has fallen, as all such earthly orders must change or pass away, these people are thrust into a vacuum. Until men have stopped putting their trust in a passing order of things, or in any other optimism short of the ultimate optimism of the kingdom of God, their trust will be betrayed by the destruction and chaos of human history. But these two general trends of modern beliefs are not all that warns of coming disaster.

Unless we become the unrighteous righteous we must examine the present-day Christian's outlook. Here perhaps is one of the saddest of all predicaments. For we Christians have fallen prey to the above types of belief and are diluting the faith which is ours through Christ Jesus. On the one hand we adopt a utopian liberalism which is blind to the power of sin, death and destruction. When this happens we forget that we still must be forced to our knees by the recognition that there is no other place

to go. We must realize that progress, which is the fruition of optimistic humanism, exists only in the mechanical and organizational aspects of life. It is a relative conception. In God only is there perfection.

On the other hand some of us become so concerned about modern man's poll-moll rush towards destruction that we become pessimistic unto despair. When this happens we forget that faith in the saving grace of God lifts us above the flux and change of earthly existence in which man's attempt at justice is only a balance of power. All in all, the state of modern man's beliefs and their contemporary consequences is indeed a confused and sorry spectacle. But it is our conviction that "once known, the truth of the gospel explains our experiences which remain inexplicable on any other level. Through it we are able to understand life in all of its beauty and its terror, without being beguiled by its beauty or driven to despair by its terror."⁶ In the face of modern disintegration and confusion what does our Christian heritage make known to us?

II.

We must come to a right relationship with our God. As Dr. James Stewart, in his book The Strong Name, says: "No one can look at the world today and observe the tragic disillusionments and rampant degradations without being driven to the conclusion that something in the organization of the human race has gone mysteriously and terribly wrong... . It is the glory and the doom of man to have been made for fellowship with God. Of all the faculties and capacities which he possesses, incomparably the greatest is his capacity for God... . Reconciliation with God is, therefore, the cardinal issue, far and away the most crucial problem confronting the soul of man today."

But let us see if we can explore the nature of this basic religious answer to our needs a little further. "Religion," declares Whitehead, "is a vision of something which stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of things, something which is real and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal and yet the hopeless quest." These paradoxes are in the spirit of great religion. The mystery of life is comprehended in meaning, though no human statement of the meaning can fully resolve the mystery. The tragedy of life is recognized, but faith prevents tragedy from being pure tragedy. Perplexity remains, but there is no perplexity unto despair. Evil is neither accepted as inevitable nor regarded as proof of the meaninglessness of life. Gratitude and contrition are mingled. To such faith the generations are bound to return after they have pursued the mirages in the desert to which they are tempted from time to time by the illusions of particular eras.⁷

Shall wonder that modern men are tying the hangman's noose around their own necks. We are in the very center of these paradoxes, standing as we do at the "junction of nature and spirit." "Man is both strong and weak. Both free and bound, both blind and far-seeing." Subject to both freedom and necessity, we are "stricken by psychic anxieties, cloven by emotional conflicts, beset by economic insecurities, assailed by political doubts and cynicisms." Across this threshold we have stepped into the turmoil and confusion of our times. We have attempted to overcome our limited nature, our anxiety concerning our finiteness, by obscuring it and believing that we could thereby overcome our anxiety. We have made the world revolve around ourselves and thus usurped the throne of God. We have sinned. "It is one of the curious ironies of modern culture that in the very moment in which a rationalistic type of Christianity tended to consider the possibilities of human perfection in terms of its purely conscious activity, a newer science in the form of psychology on the one hand, and of social economics on the other, revealed the labyrinthian depths of the unconscious dishonors which dog human actions and corrupt human ideals, even though the conscious mind is intent upon virtue."¹⁰

As a consequence of the sin of pride our world has little semblance of justice, for "the ego which falsely makes itself the center of existence in its pride and will to power inevitably subordinates other life to its will and thus does injustice to other life."¹¹ The rampant sensualism of our times springs from the same basic conditions as the sin of pride. "Bonapartes man seeks to solve the problem of the contradiction of finiteness and freedom, not by seeking to hide his finiteness and comprehend the world into himself, but by seeking to hide his freedom and by losing himself in some aspect of the world's vitalities. In that case his sin may be defined as sensuality rather than pride."¹² It should be obvious that we can expect not justice in a world where every ego overshadows the universe, where every man is a god. This situation can only result in a feverish chaotic clash of runaway wills. And this is the very turmoil which has engulfed us!

It is at this point that God in Christ, He who has been brooding all the while over the "dusty flats of life," offers his triumphant answer to the frustration of our age. Standing at the edge of the abyss of darkness by our foolish attempt to save ourselves, we are pushed to our knees by the overwhelming conviction of our sin. We are in the position of Abelard whose experience Helen Waddell described. "Grief without a ripple, without ebb or flow, a kind of dark water lay sullen in his heart. And he was again in rebellion. And again came the frail wisp of memory, voiceless as the drift of thistle-down, inevitable as the sunrise, "Neither do I condemn thee." For a moment it seemed to him that all the vital forces of the body were withdrawing themselves... Then his spirit leaped toward heaven in silent adoration; ...with every power of his mind, with every pulse of his body he worshipped God." It was forgiveness that had brought deliverance. Where exhortation and denunciation alike had failed, the sense of God's mercy freed him from his past and set in his heart a passion for goodness and God."¹³

And so it can be with us. With the necessary tension between our "high possibilities and our tragic handicaps" we can avoid melancholy despair and glorified egoism—and thus the chaos and destruction of sin. It is as though overtones of God's great symphony for man, his forgiving suffering love, were rolling across the heavens. And we, standing in the shadow of the cross, have the very fibre of our being pulled taught by the hand of Jesus to receive that music of the spheres. As it flows into our souls, we too become instruments in that celestial orchestra and come into harmony with the music of his love. It is the fellowship of persons, the interchanging of life with life by the giving of the self—God giving himself in Christ to save mankind. This is to be in tune with God. This is to be reconciled. This is to be in fellowship with Christ. This is to root and boat the issue of our times.

III.

The above is certainly the basic answer of the Hebrew-Christian tradition to the needs of our age. Peering into the crater of modern civilization which may erupt at any moment, we must first of all recognize and appropriate what the adherent who came into the primitive church must have recognized and appropriated. That: "here was a God who loved freely and widely, without favorites, and beyond all racial restrictions, a God who had of His own will entered human life with a purpose that would not be defeated, a God with whom one had personal communion, a God who was both creator and redeemer, a God who was above Fate and the Stars, ruling men graciously instead of exposing them to caprice on His own part or to astrological cross-currents in the universe, a God, above all, whose love gave a meaning to life and history instead of leaving man to float in a welter of illusions or of casual vicissitudes." Let us examine how the love of God in Christ, reconciling sinful men unto himself—man's vertical relationship, works itself out in man's relations with his fellow man—man's horizontal relationship.

This brings us to morality as seen against the background of modern confusion. When we explore modern man's attitudes towards his fellow men we see the same confusion and disintegration that we discovered existing in the beliefs of men today. If Christ were among us He would undoubtedly weep as He did when He looked at Jerusalem from the mountain top. He had come to reconcile men to God, and they were rejecting Him! Consequently, what He saw there we see today—man against man in direct contradiction of the command to love our neighbors as ourselves. We see men hating each other for such superficial reasons as race, color or nationality. Christ also saw the growing difference between the ragged diseased poor and the wealthy privileged few. Our Lord knew that such conditions could only lead to misery, suffering and destruction. And cannot the same conditions be seen today with many closing their eyes and letting their hearts be hardened? Let us be warned that, as one author put it, "In a world where anything goes, everything will soon be gone!"

One of the best examples of the breakdown of modern morality is the war. No matter what may be said in defense of the necessity or inevitability of fighting the war, some of the things it made men do to one

another were sinful—witness the atrocities and the atomic bombings! All the things that went before and are coming after the war, such as racial prejudice and economic exploitation, are frightful examples of our moral breakdown. Modern prophets tell us that only "the decadent forces of a sick civilization" could produce such conditions. Our Lord clearly saw such a cesspool of immorality when he wept over Jerusalem, and in 70 A. D. His prophecy took place and the proud city was levelled to the ground! The world needs to clean up the relations between its citizens. If we would have just relations between men we must have Christ-like lives!

But there are no just relations between men in a world which has sold itself out by being sold on itself! Herein lies the crux of the problem of restoring morality to an age which acts like "sin is the only real colour left in modern life." Morality is more than just cleaning up social relationships. We do not just ask for brotherhood and expect to get it—not in this age! We do not! "Nothing is cheaper and more futile than the preaching of a simple moralism which is based upon the assumption that the world need only be told that selfishness is sin and that love is the law of life to beguile it from the anarchy of sin in which it is at present engulfed. Such a moralism, to which the modern Church is particularly prone, is blind to the real tragedy and persistence of sin in the world."¹⁵ It is necessary to understand that our present predicament is the direct result of the beliefs that modern culture entertains.

Modern man has been riding on the crest of self-glorification, and his life shows it. This same crest of self-glorification has swollen into a tidal wave of such threatening proportions that it may well dash us upon the rocks of destruction. "If anything further were required to complete the self-destruction of modern optimism we have it in the tragedy of modern history. They have negated practically every presupposition upon which modern culture was built. History does not move forward without catastrophe, happiness is not guaranteed by the multiplication of physical comforts, social harmony is not easily created by more intelligence, and human nature is not as good or as harmless as had been supposed. We are thus living in a period in which either the optimism of yesterday has given way to despair, or in which some of the less sophisticated moderns try desperately to avoid the abyss of despair by holding to credos which all of the facts have disproved." One is almost forced to agree with the poet: "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind."¹⁶

We have introduced chaos into the relations between men by distrust of God and trusting in man. And therein lies the irony of modern moral confusion: The very trust we put in humanity has now seduced humanity to the edge of destruction. We have made man the end of our culture and are thereby bringing our man-made culture to a quick end! "It is an instructive fact that our age, which began with the substitution of humanism for theism as a more direct and unambiguous method of protecting human values, ends in a series of international and fratricidal struggles in which the common dignity of man is outraged."¹⁷

Thus modern inability to have any semblance of just relationships between men lies in its false interpretation of life. Subject to optimistic humanism, with outbursts of cynicism and despair, we have not accepted the reality of the Hebrew-Christian tradition simply because ". . . the conclusion most abhorrent to the modern mood is that the possi-

bilities of evil grow with the possibilities of the good, and that human history is therefore not so much a chronicle of the progressive victory of the good over evil, of cosmos over chaos, as the story of an ever increasing cosmos, creating ever increasing possibilities of chaos."¹⁸ We have blinded ourselves to the reality and effectiveness of the love of God in the life of the individual, on the one hand, and the resulting newness of life coming with the forgiving love which makes for right relations between men, on the other hand. We must realize that the ultimate dimension of life is not achievement made on the horizontal plane.

This truth has been betrayed by "the illusion of modern liberalism, that we are dealing with a possible and prudential ethic in the gospel." When in reality "the full dimension of human life includes not only an impossible ideal, but realities of sin and evil which are more than simple imperfections and which prove that the ideal is something more than the product of a morbidly sensitive religious fantasy."¹⁹ "Confronted with this situation humanity always faces a double task. The one is to reduce the anarchy of the world to some kind of immediately sufferable order and unity; and the other is to set these tentative and insecure unities and achievements under the criticism of the ultimate ideal. When they are not thus challenged, what is good in them becomes evil, and each tentative harmony becomes the cause of a new anarchy."²⁰

We cannot deceive ourselves any longer into believing that a simple moralism is going to be the panacea for the world's ills. On the other hand we must not deceive ourselves by believing that 'God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.' "One of the vices of a really profound religion is that its insights into the ultimate problems of the human spirit frequently betray it into indifference toward the immediate problems of justice and equity in human relations."²¹ Let us not be pessimistic unto despair and withdraw from the evil surrounding us. That man who draws away thinking to save himself is as much deceived as the man who plunges into the thick of the battle thinking by his own power he will slay the demon. We need a social consciousness.

And, incidentally, we in the church have no occasion to dodge criticism. We too can have a love that 'puffeth up.' "The approach of the historic Christian Church to the moral issues of life has been less helpful than it might have been, partly because a literal interpretation of its mythical basis destroyed the genius of prophetic religion, partly because Christianity, in the effort to rationalize its myths ran upon the rocks either of the Scylla of a too optimistic pantheism or the Charybdis of a too pessimistic and other worldly dualism."²² In other words, many of us have rendered our moral effectiveness ineffective because we too are subject to the trends of the times. On the one hand we have adopted the liberal utopian air and thought we could solve the world's ills by some social program. Or on the other hand we became so disgusted with the sins of the age that we try to live as though we did not belong to humanity.

When we understand that in Christ religion and morality are wedded, never to be divorced, we will have grasped a fact which our age has largely ignored. We have unwittingly done so "by digging up morals out of God and planting them in society, where they have never done so well!" "The dimension of depth in the consciousness of religion creates the tension between what is and what ought to be. It bends the bow from which

every arrow of moral action flies." "The 'pull' or 'drive' of moral life is a part of the religious tension of life. Man seeks to realize in history what he conceives to be already the truest reality—that is its final essence."²³ Let us not forget "that the order of human existence is too imperiled by chaos, the goodness of man too corrupted by sin, and the possibilities of man too obscured by natural handicaps to make human order and human virtue and human possibilities solid bases of the moral imperative."²⁴ And those of us who would withdraw from the evil of our world will not only desert human values, but also the social consciousness of the prophetic tradition.

We must direct our gaze unwaveringly upon the insights of the Hebrew-Christian tradition into the ultimate problems of the human spirit. "Moral life is possible at all only in a meaningful existence. Obligation can be felt only to some system of coherence and some ordering will. Thus moral obligation is always an obligation to promote harmony and to overcome chaos. But every conceivable order in the historical world contains an element of anarchy. Its world rests upon contingency and caprice. The obligation to support and enhance it can therefore only arise and maintain itself upon the basis of a faith that it is the partial fruit of a deeper unity and the promise of a more perfect harmony than it revealed in any immediate situation."²⁵ Unfortunately these facts have already slipped our minds, but if we forget them completely, history will carry out its destruction of our civilization and construct a new world—minus you and me!

This is the faith that our age must set itself to appropriate, and it is no easy task. We cannot let ourselves be drawn into believing that now that we have defined our task, it is nearly accomplished. As one pastor has put it: "Some things seem to come only with suffering, and, if we do not find them now, we shall suffer." And I have no doubt that by whatever pattern the future unravels itself, we shall suffer. To carry the cross of Christ is to suffer. It will require the utmost strain on our minds eye and the most contrite repentance and replenishing of our heart's desire to keep us from being led astray on false tangents. The man who sits nonchalantly in his armchair scanning the editorial section will be rudely awakened by the collapse of our civilization! Likewise the man who expects to halt collapse by a pious heart to heart chat with mankind on the state of its morals will be rudely awakened! Nor is this any reason for us to become so frustrated and despondent that we say with Macbeth:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It's a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

No, life has meaning, and right living flows from that meaning. If we are to approach a man with the Gospel, who lives, for example, in the slums, there are two things we must keep in mind. First, we must lead him to repentance and reconciliation with his God. He must bind his life to transcendent loyalty which the chaos and destruction resident in him cannot overcome. If this is not done, anything else we may do for him is subject to the chaos of his sinfulness, thus leaving him in no better plight than before. But to leave him there to degenerate amidst the poverty of his conditions would be an evidence of our own lack of a complete Christian experience. With the probability of a saloon next door

and a house of ill-repute around the corner, we must express our social consciousness by cleaning up the conditions in which he lives. To do one without the other is to negate the complete effectiveness of the Gospel in the life of man. But to balance this extreme illustration, suppose we approach a man who has experienced all the humanitarian benefits our culture can give. This gentleman is living in one of the smart and fashionable suburbs. He too must come to a right relationship with his God, but again there is more involved. There's the probability that this man is trying to keep up with his neighbor's latest display of wealth and power. We cannot let this man degenerate amidst the temptations of human pride, and, therefore, our social consciousness once again comes into play. In every case let us be wary of falling into the pitfalls which denude the Gospel from complete effectiveness in our relations with our fellow men.

But we still have not plumbed the depths of the moral problem. The conflicts in the moral situation can finally only be resolved in the personal religious experience of the individual. We admit that sin, death, and destruction introduce chaos into the life of man. In order to prevent sinful men from destroying himself and his relative achievements we must place him under the law of some immediate order and harmony. Then to prevent this order itself from becoming sinful and introducing anarchy on a new level, we must finally rely on man's religious capacity and tension, his relationship with God, to place that relative and immediate order of unity under the judgment of God. But sin remains and will introduce chaos into this unity in spite of man's relationship to God. If man wishes to escape this vicious circle it is obvious that no unity or order which he creates will enable him to do so. Here we stand in the paradox of man's moral life. It is only He who stands outside this circle and longs to break through who can establish justice amidst this chaos and save the individual—and this He does by His love for us.

But from our vantage point within the circle it remains a seeming contradiction, an impossible possibility. On the one hand love is the law of life and not merely some transcendent ideal of perfection. "Yet there is this other side of the gospel teaching and of all biblical thought: It makes no difference whether a man is good or evil in the sight of God, because all men are in need of God's mercy."²⁶ The only kind of answer one can give to this is to say that: "If there is no assurance of a divine mercy which not only creates but re-creates in the wake of human destruction, the human enterprise remains purely tragic."²⁷

Consequently, the ultimate resolution of the moral problem lies in the personal religious experience of the individual with his God. "It is not easy to harmonize the two elements in the Christian religion which do justice to the two facets of human experience, the moral and the supra-natural. The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith declares that those who live by faith are declared righteous by the grace of God even though they are not righteous by their own achievements. This justification does not absolve man of his moral obligations. God forbid, that 'we should sin in order that grace may abound.'" On the contrary, the grace of forgiveness is vouchsafed only to those who have consciously made the will of God their law of life. In this sense the tension between law and grace is resolved in the life of the individual.

We can hardly claim, however, that the mystery of their relation to each other is finally cleared for us. The mystery is that on the one hand duty is demanded of us as if duty not done will never be done. On the other hand faith declares that man would be undone if God could not complete what we have left incomplete and purify what we have corrupted. The cross is the perfect revelation of both these truths. In it the sin against man is revealed as the sin against God, as something more than a casual imperfection. Yet in it the merciful purpose of God, to take human evil into himself and smother it there, is also declared. But even in the cross the relation of law and mercy remains a mystery." So it is that "Love is both the fulfillment and the negation of law. Forgiveness is the highest justice and the end of justice."²⁸

IV.

Just relationships between men are necessary if we are to meet the issue of our times. But we know that men of their own resources cannot establish these relationships. They can be established and maintained only by the forgiving love given us in Christ. It is out of our relationship with God that they only true and progressive morality flows. The question before us now is whether or not the modern state and its present involvement in international chaos can be brought within the pale of this truth.

Before we try to see what Christianity has to say to the frustrated scene, let us recall the nature of the modern situation. We are perched on the precipice of disaster today because of the humanistic optimism upon which our culture has grown up. And because contemporary events have frustrated our dreams and hopes many are driven to despair or false credos which history must inevitably destroy. With this in mind we look to see what has happened in the international scene while the modern mood was developing. The nation-state may be considered the unique development during this period. It is interesting to note in passing that this political conception developed, at least partly, as the result of the underlying mood of optimism in this period. Consequently, it has become an instrument in the hands of destruction in our age, based as it was on an optimism which failed to blumb the height and depth of life.

With the forces of international disaster bearing down on us, keen observers of the international scene tell us that if we are to avert it we must place the eighty-odd sovereign nations of the world in one political unit. This is, after all, one world. "If human society were organized so that relations between units in contact were regulated by democratically controlled legal institutions, then modern science could devise the most devastating weapons, and there would be no war. But if we allow sovereign rights to reside in the separate units without regulating their relations by law, then we can prohibit every weapon, even a penknife, and people will beat out each other's brains with clubs."²⁹ This conclusion is reached from the premise that, politically speaking, "the real conflict of our age is not between individualism and collectivism, nor between capitalism and communism, but between industrialism and nationalism."³⁰ "These two dominating currents of our age, nationalism and industrialism, are in constant and inevitable conflict with each other." "Industrialism tends to embrace the whole globe within its sphere of activity." "Nationalism, on the other hand, tends to divide this world into small independent groups." "The political framework of our world with its eighty-odd sovereign nation-states is an insurmountable obstacle to free industrial progress, individual liberty and social security."³¹

The truths with which the Hebrew-Christian tradition faces the international situation are the same with which it faces the relationships between men. And the same force introduces chaos between nations that does so between men—the sin of pride. "The pride of nations consists in the tendency to make unconditioned claims for their conditioned values. The unconditioned character of these claims has two aspects. The nation claims a more absolute devotion to values which transcend its life than the facts warrant; and it regards the values to which it is loyal as more absolute than they really are." "Collective pride is thus man's last, and in some respects most pathetic, effort to deny the determinate and contingent character of his existence. The very essence of human sin is in it. It can hardly be surprising that this form of human sin is also most fruitful of human guilt, that is of objective social and historical evil. In its whole range from pride of family to pride of nation, collective egotism and group pride are a more pregnant source of injustice and conflict than purely individual pride."³²

Collective pride is more destructive than individual pride because: 1. Nations do not have direct intimate contact with each other. 2. Nations tend towards immediate rather than ultimate interests. 3. The restriction by mind on individual impulses is only inchoate in the world of nations. 4. The nations' use of force to achieve internal unity is often used externally. 5. The social ignorance of private citizens. 6. The "... projected self-interest in patriotic altruism." 7. Nations tend toward more hypocrisy. 8. Dishonesty is necessary to gain the double claim on individual loyalty; as his own special and unique community, and as a community of universal values and ideals. 9. Class character of national governments disrupt cooperation."³³

How do these differences affect the individual Christian life? "It is possible for individuals to be saved from this sinful pretension, not by achieving an absolute perspective upon life, but by their recognition of their inability to do so. Individuals may be saved by repentance, which is the gateway to grace. The recognition of creaturcliness and finiteness, in other words, may become the basis of man's reconciliation to God through his resignation to his finite condition. But the collective life of mankind promises no such hope of salvation, for the very reason that it offers men the very symbols of pseudo-universality which tempt them to glorify and worship themselves as God."³⁴

If nations are so liable to introduce chaos and destruction into life, the regulating principle between the life of nations must be justice. But our international relationships have shown little justice, as contemporary events will testify. It is at this point that our self-sufficient culture shows most clearly its inadequacy to realistically interpret life. It erroneously supposed that men would see the folly of their ways and establish justice between nations for the sake of world brotherhood and the love they had for their fellowmen. And while we went blithely ahead on this basis, destruction slipped in the back door. "Justice is not love. Justice presupposes the conflict of life with life and seeks to mitigate it."³⁵ "The very essence of politics is the achievement of justice through equilibria of power. A balance of power is not conflict; but a tension between opposing forces underlies it."³⁶ This is where the modern optimist has failed to meet the crisis of the political situation, but at which the classical Christian tradition offers us its deep insights. "History would add a cruel irony to the tragedy of the self-destruction of modern democracies if it developed that what is still left of a uni-

versal culture and an ordered civilization could not protect itself against moral nihilism and political anarchy because a liberal civilization had assessed the height of morality in politics too highly. All political justice is achieved by coercing the anarchy of collective self-interest into some kind of decent order by the most attainable balance of power.

Such a balance, once achieved, can be stabilized, embellished, and even, on occasion, perfected by more purely moral considerations. But there has never been a scheme of justice in history which did not have a balance of power at its foundation. If the democratic nations fail, their failure must be partly attributed to the faulty strategy of idealists who have too many illusions when they face realists who have too little conscience. The false strategy will not be derived purely from the illusions of the idealists about their foes but from their illusions about themselves.³⁷ It is little wonder that our bedeviled optimism has failed in politics as it has in every other area of life. "A humanism which is sustained only by the obvious marks of common humanity breaks down when the hysteria of conflict destroys or obscures these obvious human ties. The humanities which secularism tries to preserve as ultimate ends and as self-sufficient values, literally depend upon a structure of value which reaches beyond them. A universe of value in which there is no dimension of depth is rent along its thin surfaces by the forces of nature and history if it is not held together in a larger universe, the heights of which transcend the conflicts of the moment."³⁸ Unless we still want to believe that our culture is thoroughly Christian, then we have no effective transcendent values. We have no judgment of our pride which will enable us to recognize our sin. If we do not recognize our sin we will inevitably construct a world order which will collapse under the will and weight of its supposed perfection and finality. And with that collapse will come a destruction of meaning for individual life such as the world has rarely witnessed.

The Hebrew-Christian tradition saves the individual from this self-destroying pride of nations as, at the same time, enables the individual to mitigate that destruction. But above all we must recognize that "the problem of politics and economics is the problem of justice. The question of politics is how to coerce the anarchy of conflicting human interests into some kind of order, offering human beings the greatest possible opportunity for mutual support. In the field of collective behavior the force of egoistic passion is so strong that the only harmonies possible are those which manage to neutralize this force through balances of power, through mutual defenses against its inordinate expression, and through technical methods for harnessing its energy to social ends.

All these possibilities represent something less than the ideal of love. Yet the law of love is involved in all approximations of justice, not only as the source of the norms of justice, but as an ultimate perspective by which their limitations are discovered."³⁹ With the above in mind, the approximations of the law of love in the political realm are freedom and equality. "The ideal possibility for men involved in any social situation may always be defined in terms of freedom and equality. Their highest good consists in freedom to develop the essential potentialities of their nature without hindrance. There can be no development of personality without discipline; but the ideal discipline is self-imposed, or at least not imposed by agents who have other motives than the enhance-

ment of the ultimate values of human life. Since human beings live in a society in which other human beings are competing with them for the opportunity of a fuller development of life, the next highest good is equality; for there is no final principle of arbitration between conflicting human interests except that which equates the worth of competing individuals. If their actual worth is not equal, there is always the possibility that their potential worth is; and that the potential equality is hindered from realizing itself only by the accidental or hereditary advantages of one person over another. . . . The principles of equal justice are thus approximations of the law of love in the kind of imperfect world which we know, and not principles which belong to a world of transcendent perfection."⁴⁰

But Christians today have diluted these insights and as a consequence there are two real dangers to avoid. In the first place, let us avoid optimism. Many have not because it is the natural expression of the sin of pride and because they have been nurtured by a culture which could teach them little else. It is as a result of this that there is little justice existing between nations. Without a transcendent loyalty with which to judge the nations, they have become vain. And we are no exception! We have been victors in the great wars. We are strong and wealthy. If there is nothing outside of human life and history with which to judge our achievements we will have to depend on the strength of these achievements to save us, and no nation is ever just because it is the nation at any particular moment in history. We need a transcendent criterion with which we can judge our achievements and see how relative and imperfect they are. We need to keep our national pride humble when seen against this criterion. If not, then there can be no cooperation and justice because each nation will consider itself the final law. And when there are several final laws, something has to go!

The only possible way to prevent this situation from becoming one of utter chaos and destruction is to realize that: "The independence of a nation, like that of an individual, does not rest solely on its freedom of action, but equally on the degree to which the freedom of action of other nations infringes upon its own independence. Only if we base international relations on law, just as we base on law the relations of individuals and groups within organized society, can we hope that the constant and inevitable evolution essential to life will be brought about by peaceful methods."⁴² And we are warned that if we do not choose to recognize this fact and act upon it, we shall end up as a fascistic country. Not that fascism which is identified with a particular people, culture or era, but the fascism which is a politico-social doctrine whose aim is the complete regulation of individual life, in other words tyranny. If we continue to believe that our choice lies between socialism or capitalism, "it matters little which we choose. If it is to be 'National', it will be Fascism."⁴² "For, to put it bluntly, the meaning of the crisis of the twentieth century is that this planet must be brought under unified control by law. Our task, our duty, is to attempt to institute this unified control in a democratic way by first proclaiming its principle, and to achieve it by persuasion and with the least possible bloodshed. If we fail to accomplish this, we can be certain that the iron law of history will compel us to wage more and more powerful wars, until unified control is finally attained through conquest."⁴³

All nations must be coerced by an international law higher than themselves, or justice will become a farce. But it is imperative to remember that even this law is relative and must be viewed in the light of God's final law or it will merely introduce chaos and destruction on a new level. The heights of human achievement are surrounded by a steep incline down which man constantly slides into 'a vale of tears.' We must mitigate the chaos and destruction inherent in life, but the individual's salvation lies only in the grace of God. The nation as it developed after the medieval period was man's answer to his collective needs then, but now it has introduced chaos and destruction in life. There is an element of change in life to which we must constantly adjust our collective life. So let us not deceive ourselves into believing that because international justice and unity are the adjustments in our age, it is to become the salvation and perfection of mankind. In God alone lies perfection for the individual.

But there is a second real danger to international justice other than utopian liberalism. It must also be remembered that the application of historic Christianity's ultimate insights to life is betrayed by those who become so enraptured by these insights that they withdraw from life's tragic realities. "This application is a rather sober and prosaic task, and a profound religion with its insights into the tragedy of human history and its hope for the ultimate resolution of that tragedy is not always equal to it. Accustomed to a telescopic view of life and history, it does not adjust itself as readily as it might to the microscopic calculations and adjustments which constitute the stuff of the moral life."⁴⁴ These persons let life and its horrible realities become a playground for Satan. They betray the relative and immediate order of life into the hands of chaos and destruction as readily as the optimist who thinks he will establish utopia upon life's tempestuous seas. They are the Christian pessimists.

"A Christian pessimism which becomes a temptation to irresponsibility toward all these social tasks which constantly confront life of men and nations. . . . cannot speak redemptively to a world constantly threatened by anarchy and suffering from injustice. The Christian Gospel, which transcends all particular and contemporary social situations, can be preached with power only by a Church which bears its share of the burdens of immediate situations in which men are involved, burdens of establishing peace, of achieving justice, and of perfecting justice in the spirit of love. Thus is the kingdom of God which is not of this world made relevant to every problem of the world."⁴⁵

Throughout I have tried to make clear that we are standing in the shadow of disaster. That civilization as we know it is about to crash resoundingly about our ears. "Confusion now hath made his mastery!"⁴⁶ I have pointed out that this situation is in large part due to the underlying optimistic humanism upon which our culture has fed. If we have any self-sufficient friends by the name of Horatio, it is time we said with Hamlet: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy!" The belief in the self-sufficiency of man failed to take into account the reality of sin. "Every humanistic creed is a cosmos of meaning sustained by a thin ice on the abyssal depths of meaninglessness and chaos. Only the faith in God, who has been 'our dwelling place in all generations', can survive the vicissitudes of history, can rescue human existence from the air in which it is periodically involved by its sinful pretensions, and the tragic disappointment of its facile hopes."⁴⁷ I have also warned against a pessimism which recognizes the

the chaos introduced by sin, but withdraws from life. This pessimism can isolate us from the realities of life and render our attempts at social justice ineffective.

With this analysis of modern confusion before us I have tried to find historic Christianity's answers. I have tried to see how we can apply Christian truths to the individual's personal confusion. I have tried to see how we can apply Christian truths to the relations between men in an age where disillusion is fast gaining ground because of frustrated optimism. I have also tried to see how this application can be made in a chaotic and threatening international scene. We are living in a terrible tragic age. We are going to learn what suffering really means. But out of the abyssal depths of human suffering it is our hope that our gaze may be fixed on the transcendent light of the Gospel. It remains to be seen how the judgment of God upon our age will affect us. It remains to be seen how we shall modern confusion.

"If hopes are liars, fears may be liars', and it may be that the insights of a prophetic religion may qualify and mitigate the cruelties of the social struggles through which we are passing to a greater degree than now seems probable. It is comforting to know, nevertheless, that if this should not prove true, the truth of prophetic religion, and of Christianity in so far as Christianity is truly prophetic, must survive the torments of a dying civilization as an ark surviving the flood. At some time or other the waters of the flood will recede and the ark will land. Human life can have dignity only as it is comprehended and understood in a universe of meaning which transcends human life. It is the life in this ark of prophetic religion, therefore, which must generate the spirituality of any culture of any age in which human vitality is brought under a decent discipline."⁴⁰

This is our challenge! "We here, breathing the air of heaven, in this terrible, creative epoch of the human story: eating, sleeping, stretching, plodding along through these magnificent years of extremity and ruin, peril and birth. And some of us hear nothing, see nothing, sense nothing, but Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday—I scarcely know how to get out of it!—Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: until you could scream! When we might be putting our hands with God's to a new heaven and a new earth! Suppose Paul on the Damascus road had not said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Suppose he had said, as so many of us say, "All right, I am persuaded that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. I shall quit persecuting these Christians, and go home and keep the faith pure. I shall do my best to live a kind and patient life. I shall not harm any body at all. I promise!" We should be sure to this day that God had wasted His time stopping such a person!"⁴⁹

FOOTNOTES

1. Lieberman, Peace of Mind, p.5.
2. Scherer, Event in Stornity, pp.83,4.
3. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, p. 186.
4. Ibid., p. 186
5. Ibid., pp. 186,7
6. Ibid., p. 207
7. Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, pp. 115,16

FOOTNOTES (continued)

8. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, p. 214
9. Ibid., p. 201,2
10. Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p. 265
11. Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. I, p. 179
12. Ibid., p. 179
13. Day, Jesus and Human Personality, pp. 235,6
14. Moffatt, Love in the New Testament.
15. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, pp. 224,5
16. Ibid., p. 188
17. Niebuhr, Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 231
18. Ibid., p. 97
19. Ibid., p. 60
20. Ibid., p. 61
21. Ibid., pp. 92,3
22. Ibid., p. 99
23. Ibid., p. 8,9
24. Ibid., p. 50
25. Ibid., p. 105
26. Niebuhr, Beyond tragedy, p. 261
27. Ibid., p. 267
28. Ibid., pp. 267,9
29. Reeves, "Anatomy of peace," Reader's Digest (Jan. 1946), p. 149
30. Ibid., (Dec. 1945), p. 132
31. Ibid., (Jan. 1946), p. 162
32. Niebuhr, The nature and destiny of Man, vol. I, p. 213
33. Niebuhr, Moral man and Immoral Society.
34. Niebuhr, Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 89
35. Ibid., p. 109
36. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, pp. 215,16
37. Ibid., p. 104
38. Niebuhr, Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 231
39. Ibid., p. 110
40. Ibid., p. 147
41. Reeves, "Anatomy of Peace" Reader's digest (Jan. 1946) p. 157
42. Ibid., (Dec. 1945) p. 133
43. Ibid., (Dec. 1945) p. 134,5
44. Niebuhr, Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 166
45. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, p. 216
46. Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act III, Scene 4, l. 71.
47. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, p. 213
48. Niebuhr, Interpretation of Christian Ethics, pp. 236,7
49. Scherer, Event in Eternity, p. 220

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DRAMA

by

Robert E. Bornemann

II. The Liturgical Drama

The liturgical drama is a phase of dramatic development often overlooked both by students of literature and students of religion. This may be partly because the material is not easily available and partly because it is in Latin and Old French. It is of particular interest to those who will someday be in the parish, for it is dramatic literature, fitted into the liturgical structure of the church's worship, and is free from spots of secularism and theatricalism. To the student of drama the liturgical plays are a seed from which will grow a sturdy tree. To the student of religion they are unaffected expressions in simple dialogue and pantomime of religious truths precious to the hearts of the believers.

The liturgical drama was usually performed in Latin by the priests and other churchmen. The plays did not differ greatly from one country to another, for they were brief and their subject matter was limited. Unlike the later guild dramas of the English cycles and the passions, such as the one at Valenciennes, there was little character delineation. They simply represented dramatically the facts of the event. Consequently, W. P. Eaton can make the observation that "so long as the drama remained liturgical and was conducted in Latin by the priests and churchmen, it was more or less common to all Europe."

The beginnings of liturgical drama is in the trope, which rose about the ninth century. About that time additional texts, processions, and pageantry were added to the Gregorian liturgical texts of the sixth century. The result was that many of these variations came to be written in dialogue form, and were used as introductions to the introits. These so-called introit tropes were sung antiphonally by the choir, their closing words leading directly to the text of the proper introit for the day.

An example of this is the trope Hodie Cantardus, used perhaps at one of the early services on the Feast of the Annunciation. Note in particular that it is prepared to be sung antiphonally by the choir.

Today is sung to us a boy, whom the Father begot ineffably before time, and the same to whom in time a celebrated mother gave birth.

(Question) Who is this boy of whom you give voice with such dignity in your making him known? Tell us that we may rejoice with you.

(Answer) He it is who was foretold, and chosen of God to come to earth, foreseeing long before he made it known, just as he predicted.

(Here followed the proper introit.)

Soon, however, the tropes became more elaborate, and deacons were employed to portray shepherds, and the dialogue was carried on between them and the choir. In the trope, In Natale Domini, the directions are given that "at Mass there should be two deacons dressed in dalmatics behind the altar who say:"

Whom do you seek in the manger, shepherds? Tell us.

Then two singers in the choir respond:

The Saviour, Jesus Christ, an infant in swaddling clothes, according to the message of the angels.

Again the deacons:

Here is the little one with Mary, his mother, concerning whom it was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah: Behold a virgin will conceive and bear a child. And now you publish it saying that he is born.

Then a singer says in a high voice:

Alleluia, alleluia! Verily now we know that Christ is born on earth, about whom you all sing with the prophets, saying:

(The Christmas introit) Unto us a Child is born, etc.

The tropes used at the introit were gradually enlarged even more. They began to be sung not simply before the introit, but even in place of the lessons, both at Mass and at the minor offices. Here the trope can be seen as the beginning of actual drama, indeed, the Easter Quem quaeritis in sepulchro is considered by many scholars to be the birth of English drama.

The text, Angelica de Christi Resurrectione, which contains a version of the famous Quem quaeritis, follows the so-called "Winchester Troper." It was used in earlier manuscripts in the services of Easter Eve, but in the eyes of such scholars as Gautier and Manly it was originally a trope for the Easter introit. It is very similar, although somewhat enlarged, to the Quem quaeritis in the Regularis Concordia Monasterii ascribed to Dunstan or, with more probability, to Ethelwold and assigned to the year 967.

Whom do you seek in the sepulchre, O dwellers in Christ?

(Response of the holy women:) Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O dweller in heaven.

(Consolation of the angelic voice:)
He is not here; he is risen as he foretold.
Go, tell who is risen, saying:

(Modulation of the holy women to all the clerics:)
Alleluia! The Lord is risen today,
He the courageous lion, Christ the Son of God! Thanks be to God.

(The angel says:) Come and see the place where they laid the Lord,
alleluia! alleluia!

(Again the angel says:) When you go, tell his disciples that the
Lord is risen, alleluia! alleluia!

(The women, rejoicing, sing with one voice:)
The Lord is risen from the sepulchre,
who was raised up for us on the tree, alleluia!

As the tropes were in use they became detached from the introit and took a place in the minor offices, principally Matins. They usually followed the lessons for the day, and were always prepared and enacted to be the means and sources of greater inspiration and understanding.

Despite their being extended and expanded they remained for a while in Latin. The writers began to go beyond the simple Biblical texts used in the tropes and introduced laments and conversation. Nevertheless, there was still no attempt to characterize the persons represented. The actors were still subordinate to the message they were re-enacting.

The Officium Sepulchri of Narbonne employed an interesting device. It did not retain, as in many of the others, the more or less traditional Quem queritis in sepulchro sequence, but broke down into dramatic dialogue (with some additions) the great Easter sequentia, Victimae paschali (A version of this may be found in the Common Service Book, hymn 112.).

An interesting thirteenth century text is that of the Kloster-Neubourg sepulchre office. It is connected with the Easter offices described briefly in part one of this paper. At Matins the cross and corpus are removed from the sepulchre with the singing of Psalms and responses. Then, three presbyters represent the Mary's. Their speeches are particularly interesting because of their elaborate variations of the usual Quem queritis. For example, the deacon who portrays the angel says instead of the traditional Quem queritis in sepulchro, O Christicolae, Quem queritis, o tremulae mulieres, in hoc tumultu mentes? (Whom do you seek, O trembling women, gazing about this grave?)

Another thirteenth century manuscript, one not associated with a particular church, contains an example of one of the most mature and extended liturgical plays, Mysterium Resurrectionis, written to be performed at Matins. It includes not only the story of the three Mary's, but also the coming of Peter and John, and the meeting of Magdalene and

Jesus. The mystery is still objective and impersonal. Despite the patterned lament at the beginning, the play is simple and straight-forward, containing the "seed," as it were, from which it developed, the Quem quaeritis trope. In reading the text, printed below, also note the slightest hint of characterization in having Peter rush ahead into the sepulchre while John hesitates. The conversation between the two apostles may also reflect a common question of those times. The two speeches just preceding the Te Deum may also be hymns: Alleluia! resurrexit hodie Dominus, and Leo fortis, Christus, filius Dei. (The versification was prepared by John W. Dowler.)

The Mystery of the Resurrection.

(Three brothers prepared and vested as the three Mary's proceed to the likeness of the Lord's sepulchre. Walking as if sad, they sing alternately these Verses!)

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Alas, now falls upon the dust
The faultless Shepherd, good and just.
Oh, greatest lamentations! | (1) And think ye not that you will pay
Oh damned nation, for this day?
Oh, great and sudden wrath! |
| (2) Alas, all holiness has died;
The Shepherd lays His life aside.
Oh, mourn the tragic end! | (2) What crime did He, the crucified,
What evil then, the Just who died?
Oh, wicked people, hear! |
| (3) Alas, the maddened Jewish mob
With gnashing teeth condemns its God.
Oh, people cursed forever! | (3) Alas, in sorrow how can we
Best mourn this blessed Divinity?
Alas, oh, weeping sisters! |

- (1) But let us quickly do our best
To honor His last silent rest
With consecrated hearts.
- (2) With perfumes and with spices rare
Anoint the true Lord resting there.
Oh, precious Holy Lord!
- (3) With fragrance from the fairest bloom
Preserve the Fairest in the tomb,
His blessed flesh anoint.

(When, however, they come into the choir, they go toward the monument and sing altogether:)

But we are helpless--oh dismay--
For who shall roll the stone away?

(To which the angel responds, seated at the head of the sepulchre, and wearing a gold alb, a mitra adorning his head, a palm in his left hand and a many branched candlestick in his right. He speaks moderately and rather gravely:)

Whom to you seek in the sepulchre, O dwellers in Christ?

(The women:) Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O dweller of Heaven.

(To which the angel responds:)

Ye dwellers in Christ, why seek Him here,
The living with the dead?
Nor see He goes to Galilee
Before you as He said,
"Behold the Christ must suffer,
The Lord of Life now dies;
But lo, in wondrous glory
The third day He shall rise."

(The women turning to the people sing:)

To the monument of our Lord let us come; we have seen the Angel
sitting there, and saying that He has risen from the dead.

(After this Mary Magdalene, having left the two approaches the sepulchre
and looks into it repeatedly, and says:)

Alas, my deepest sorrow,
Bereft of Christ adored,
What thief hath stolen from the tomb
The body of my Lord?

(Just then two in the likeness of Peter and John enter swiftly, and
standing, she says to them sadly:)

They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have
put Him. The sepulchre I found empty and the kerchief and clothes are
left behind.

(Hearing this, they hasten to the sepulchre as if running; but the
younger, Saint John, halts outside the sepulchre; the older, Saint Peter,
immediately enters, after which John also goes in. Coming out John says:)

What can we make of such an awesome thing--
Have they then stolen from the tomb Our King?

(Peter:) I know that as He said before
The Lord hath risen ye life once more.

(John:) But why did He when He had risen
Leave untouched the tomb's white lincn?

(Peter:) What need indeed such signs of gloom
When Christ had risen from the tomb?

(When they have gone, Mary approaches the sepulchre, and repeats the
above lament. Then two angels sitting before the sepulchre speak:)

Woman, why do you weep?

(Mary:) Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not
know where they have laid Him.

(Angel:) Do not weep, Mary; the Lord is risen: Alleluia!

(Mary:) My heart is burning with the desire to see my Lord;
I seek, and I do not find where they have placed Him: Alleluia!

(Meanwhile, One dressed as a gardener comes, and standing at the head
of the sepulchre says:)

Woman, why do you weep? Whom do you seek?

(Mary:) Lord, if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I shall take Him.

(And He:) Mary!

(Falling at His feet, Mary says:) Rabboni!

(He draws back:) Do not touch me: for I am not yet ascended to my Father and your Father, my Lord and your Lord.

(Thus, the gardner goes; then Mary turns to the people and says:) Rejoice with me, all who seek the Lord, because I have sought and He has appeared to me. While I tarried at the sepulchre, I saw my Lord: Alleluia!

(Then the two angels come to the mouth of the sepulchre and say:) Come and see the place where they laid the Lord: Alleluia! Do not you fear: change now the look of grief; proclaim that Jesus lives; He already goes toward Galilee. If you would see, hasten; and on your way, tell His disciples that the Lord lives: Alleluia!

(Then the women say to the people:)

The Lord who on the cruel tree died
Now lives to set all death aside:
Alleluia! Alleluia!

(They hold up the linens, and say to the people:)

See you, friends, these signs of gloom,
White linens left by Him in the tomb.

(Then they put the linens on the altar, and turning they sing alternately:)

- (1) Today the God of Gods is risen.
- (2) Judeans, vainly sealed is death's dark prison.
- (3) Revealer of the gate of Heaven!

(Meanwhile he who first appeared as the gardner comes as the Lord, wearing a white dalmatic, a white headdress, a precious phylactery on his head, and having a cross in his right hand and a paratorium text in his left. He says to the women:)

Do not be afraid; go ye and tell my brothers that they should go into Galilee. There they shall see me, as I told them.

(Chorus:) Alleluia! The Lord is risen today.

(This done, all sing together:) Christ, the Son of God, courageous lion.

(Then the chorus sings:) Te Deum.

(Note: The original Latin text from which this translation was made is found in du Meril, Les Origines Latines du Théâtre Moderne, 1897.)

The liturgical plays did not simply treat of the Resurrection. There is an eleventh century text entitled Ordo Rachelis (Munich) which depicts the slaughter of the holy innocents. Among fourteenth century dramas are the Rouen Officium Peregrinorum, which tells the story of the journey to Emmaus, the Officium Pastorum (also of Rouen) which relates the announcement to the shepherds of our Lord's birth and their worshipping

Him, and also the Limoges Officium Magorum, the history of the magi. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it may indicate somewhat the extent of the tremendous wealth of material.

A French manuscript of the eleventh century contains one of the earliest examples of the use of the vernacular. It is a play based on the Gospel for the last Sunday after Trinity (or Pentecost according to the Roman usage), Sponsus, depicting the story of the ten virgins. It is a curious combination of Latin and old French. It opens with the Sponsus' (taken by the chorus) exhorting the virgins to be watchful and ready for the Bridegroom's coming. Then follows a four stanza speech for the prudentes (the wise virgins) written in old French. The foolish virgins speak throughout in Latin save for a single refrain in old French: Do-lentas! Chaitivas! Trop i avin dormit (wretched! maid-servant! Too much I have slept). At the close Christus appears and dismisses the foolish in a speech in Latin and French, beginning: Amen dico, vos ignosco (Again I say, I do not know you).

In England there was a very famous writer of liturgical mysteries, Hilary. There is much conjecture about his nationality, but it is known that he was born during the reign of Henry I in the early part of the twelfth century, and that he studied under Abelard at Paraclete, a monastery south of Paris near the Seine. Hilary wrote three important works: Suscitatio Lazari, a History of Daniel, and a story about Saint Nicholas. Of these the Suscitatio is considered his best. With plays like Hilary's liturgical drama reached a climax, notwithstanding the excellent plays and offices of later date.

There are many more plays than these to which we have referred, but the few mentioned here are sufficient to illustrate the development of liturgical drama from simple introductory dialogues before the introits to the greatly extended forms in the minor offices.

These dramas are characterized by their being closely bound up with the liturgical structure of the church's worship. They were free from secular influences; there was no attempt at theatricalism. Their purpose was one of instruction and edification; and when the churchmen felt that the factors of spectacle and pantomime were insufficient to attain these ends, they gradually introduced the vernacular into them. Whatever was done, was done to bring the Gospel clearly to the believer. It was hoped that the liturgical drama would help to intensify the worshipper's consciousness of the stories' truths.

(Editor's note: To follow in the next number of the Seminarian, no. 8 which is issued with the present number, will be Part Three: The English Mystery Cycles.)
