

'What Spirit Are You Made Of?'

THEOLOGY OF THE WORLD
(Twenty-fourth in Series)
By BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

A review of motion pictures recently told what happened at a preview of an immoral film which has since been seen by millions. Only professional reviewers, newspaper men and women and editors of popular magazines were allowed. When the film was finished, the general opinion was that the film was a "bore". As they filed out, an announcement was made that one roll of film had been omitted in the showing. Half did not wait to see the missing scenes. The other half stayed, but none could agree where the missing section should be, so disconnected was the story itself. But despite the fact that almost all the professionals did not like the film, and some violently, one wrote a "rave review", and the picture became a success.

Why? Here we come to a peculiar mood in our guiltless culture. It was extolled not because it was technically an interesting film, but because pornography is "in", and decency is "out", and this film was nude with nudity. Things are to be judged not on the basis of good or bad, right or wrong, artistic or inartistic, beautiful or ugly, but whether it is "against" what the "spirit" of the times believes one should be against. Anything that extols and supports "authority", "value", "institution", "law", "decency", "holiness", "purity", "obedience", "college presidents", must be pelted, stoned and bombarded, otherwise one will be labeled with that name which brings the ultimate in social ostracism: a "square".

Just as the reviewers knew they dared not express their true feelings, but rather must abstain from saying a word against anything that lauded nudity and lust, so many today join protests, and snipe at anything which would keep society orderly.

The Lord told His followers that He had taken them out of the spirit of the world: "If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own" (John 5:18). But few can endure not to be loved by the world and what is "in". The vision that Ezekiel had of the heavenly Temple was made up of "squares", but is not a "square" today worse than a leper? Should he not go through the lanes and streets shouting: "Unclean"?

All this brings up the question: "Of what spirit are you?" Are you of the Spirit of Christ or are you not? All through Christian history the faithful were bidden to inquire whether they were "in" with the spirit of the world, or above it. That spiritual act by which each determined and judged his attitude as toward Christ-likeness, or toward Christlessness was called: "The Discernment of Spirit".

St. Ignatius of Loyola has a long treatise on it in his Spiritual Exercises. Though the terminology is old, it still remains what might be called a "Criterion for judging values". St. Paul expressed it: "Never try to suppress the Spirit. Think before you do anything—Hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil" (Thess. 6/21).

St. John, who himself had to learn to distinguish between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of Christ, warned about acceptance of every kind of doctrine. He gave one test: Does it center in Christ the Son of God?

"It is not every spirit, my dear people, That you can trust; Test them, to see if they come from God. You can tell the spirits that come from God by this:

Every spirit which acknowledges that Jesus the Christ has come in the flesh Is from God;

But any spirit which will not say this of Jesus Is not from God, But it is the spirit of anti-Christ". (1 John 4/1-4)

Judging the Spirit in the Scriptures

When the apostles came to Samaria, after the preaching of Phillip, to confer the gifts of the Spirit on the new converts, the effects were so obvious that the local magician, Simon Magus, wished to buy the power to produce the same effect (Acts 8/17-18). From that same Simon has come the word 'simony', which means the unworthy buying and selling of sacred offices. Simon Magus was not interested in bringing the Holy Spirit to others; rather he looked to the prestige that such power would bring to himself.

Just as some religious teachers and catechists make up for their lack of theological knowledge by shocking the hearers and by demeaning doctrine, so Simon was interested in the exaltation of himself rather than in the conferring of the true Spirit. Two of the most mutually exclusive things in the world are: to show how clever we are and to show that Christ is wonderful.

It must not be thought that the early Church was any more free from vagaries and the bizarre than we are today. St. Paul was at great pains to induce his Corinthians to use a little common sense. So violent was a movement in the early Church, that some believed the spirit gave forth certain sounds which no one could understand; at the same time some claimed they had the power to interpret. St. Paul had to tell the people that they may be talking to God all right, but they are not talking "to other people, because nobody understands" "any uninitiated people of unbelievers", coming into a meeting of the whole Church where everybody was speaking in tongues would say you were all mad" (1 Cor. 14/26).

So much did this odd-pentecostalism run away with them, that they interrupted one another, which was not the mark of a true prophet: "Prophets can always control their prophetic spirits, since God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Cor. 14-26, 29, 32). The babel of voices, each claiming to speak the truth, so disturbed the early Church that in the Didache, or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, written not long after

the year 100, there was the reminder: "Not every one who speaks in the spirit is a prophet; he is a prophet only if he walks in the ways of the Lord".

Emotionalism and want of a true critical spirit so deluded Montanus, in the third century that he thought he was the promised Paraclete. He proposed to tell the Church the things that Christ meant to say at that time when He told His Apostles that He had many other truths to give which they could not bear at the moment when He was on earth. In the midst of these counter claims, false prophets and self-hypnotists, the faithful cried out for some criteria to judge between the true and the false, the subjective and the objective. This was in the mind of John when he told his people "not to trust every spirit".

Different Spirits in the Old Testament

The Book of Proverbs makes a distinction between what man judges to be right and what is right in the mind of God: "A man's conduct may strike him as pure. God, however, weighs the motives" (Proverb 16/2). One of the most interesting examples in the Old Testament of what can happen to consecrated priests and religious, is the story of Saul. He began with a good spirit and ended with an evil one. It would be difficult to imagine a man more attractive than Saul at the beginning of his spiritual life. He was discovered by the prophet, Samuel. Learning that honors were to be heaped upon him, he fled. When he was found, Saul was given a vocation and, as happens in every vocation, God changed his heart (1 Sam. 10/9).

His words became so strong and prophetic, his influence was so heartfelt that "... the people said to each other, 'What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul one of the prophets too?' In the beginning he had shown no signs of seeking personal glory after winning the fight against the Ammonite marauders, but credited it to the Lord.

But just as a religious man or woman can begin by loving and serving the Lord, and then end by becoming absorbed in the world, so too, there came a turning point in the life of Saul. When the spirit was there and young David played his harp, Saul rejoiced, but then something happened. He became vindictive, jealous, irascible; and to explain it, the most frightening words of Scripture appeared:

"The Spirit of God had left Saul, and an evil spirit filled him with terror" (1 Sam. 16/14).

One by one his generous impulses were destroyed. Relations were broken off with those who had helped make him. He was shaken in his security; he rationalized his new moods. He became negative, critical, and even had a murderous spirit. Alienated from those whom he once loved, there came a torrent of increasing loneliness in one who had been estranged from God, man and himself. And the story ends: "So Saul took his own sword and fell on it" (1 Sam. 31/4).

But it was not only on Mount Gilboa that Saul committed suicide. For a long time, in ways less visible but no less deadly, he had been murdering his soul. Summoned by God, graced with a noble vocation, he at last had dealt death to his own soul by perverting the nobility to which God had called him. Self-assertion, self-affirmation and the substitution of the ego in place of any morality and authority outside of self, became the sword that was turned against his own soul.

Discernment of Spirits in the Life of Christ

How important it is to judge between spirits. The life of Christ offers a beautiful example of such discernment. At the very beginning of His public life, there was the testing:

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit Out into the wilderness to be tested by the devil".

Here it is to be noted that Our Blessed Lord was not tempted in the sense that we use the word, namely, to be made a wrongdoer. It is rather in the sense of testing, for that is the meaning of the Greek word in the Gospel of Matthew — peirazein.

Just as metal is tested to see if it can support strain, so Abraham was "tested" when he was called out of his native land to go into the land that God would appoint to him. As William Barclay writes: "What we call temptation is not meant to make us bad; it is meant to make us good. It is not meant to weaken us, it is meant to make us emerge stronger, finer and purer from the ideal. Temptation is not the penalty of being a man, temptation is the glory of being a man. It is the test that comes to a man whom God wishes to use. So there; we must think of this whole incident and experience, not so much as the tempting, as the testing of Jesus".

The testing of the Church today is not to be regarded solely as the work of an evil spirit. God has willed a testing as He willed to test His Divine Son. A few decades ago, it was easy to keep in the faith because the atmosphere which we breathe was less polluted than it is today. Furthermore, Western civilization was regarded as Christian; within the body of Christendom, there was a conflict of Christian sect and sect.

Today there is an invasion of a totally alien spirit from outside the body of Christendom. As one looks over the Church throughout the world, one discovers this testing which makes so necessary a "criterion of values." The Church in China, in Korea, in Vietnam, in Russia and in all of the countries behind the Iron Curtain, has been tested since 1917. The testing was done by persecution in which the faithful could keep their physical life only on condition of surrender of the spiritual life.

Western Christian civilization now is having its testing, not in the form of persecution, but in a testing that is suited to our affluence and our technological pride, namely, worldliness. As there was a decrease in quantity in other peoples by persecution, so there is a testing of quantity in the West-

(Continued on Page 12)

According to Study

Americans a Violent People

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — "Americans have always been a violent people" who "have been given to a kind of historical amnesia that masks much of their turbulent past," according to a special study made for a commission on violence.

Issuing the research study was a panel of scholars named last August by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.

The commission itself was set up by President Lyndon Johnson following the assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy.

Dr. Hugh D. Graham of Johns Hopkins University and Dr. Ted R. Gurr of Princeton University directed the work and wrote a summary conclusion: There are 22 chapters in the document prepared by various members of the task force.

An American tradition of violent actions and reactions was traced back to the nation's beginning. Periods more violent than the present decade were found, according to the report, in the 19th Century.

The study also said that "proportionately more death occurred as a result of racial lynchings and labor violence around the turn of the cen-

tury than in the contemporary period."

In the five years before 1968, 220 Americans died in civil strife, the study said. The casualty average of 48 per million was compared with 12 per million in other Western nations in the same period.

It was noted that Americans seldom organize for violence and that "we have been both a tumultuous people and a relatively stable republic."

One reason that violence continues in the nation, the study continued, is lack of resolution for grievances. The summary writers also said that the "myth of the melting pot" has obscured historic identifications and has meant inevitable group competition, friction and conflict."

Letters

Sisters Grateful

Editor:

One cannot find adequate words in English or in Spanish to express our thankfulness for your generosity.

We are thousands of miles away from our home town but it is at times like this that we would like to be there to say a personal thank you to each of you who have given so generously for our support in the service of His people.

Many of you cannot give yourselves entirely to His work in far-away fields, but you have shown your interest by your spirit of love and sacrifice in helping us and the people of God, spiritually by your prayers and materially by your sacrifices.

—The Sisters of Mercy, Santiago, Chile.

Tax View Disputed

Editor:

In the Courier-Journal for May 30 John Overlander opposes aid to children in God-centered academic schools on the ground that "taxes would increase to support both public and private schools."

Mr. Overlander is afraid that if we try to avoid the state monopoly in education toward which we are certainly heading, taxes will go up. Education taxes should go up, because the present educational tax structure is unjust.

It is obvious that educational taxes, by their very nature, are intended to benefit all children. This is why the government raises such taxes in the first place. But at the present time, in the City of Rochester for example, educational taxes raised from 100 per cent of the parents go almost entirely to about 75 per cent of the children.

Educational taxes are therefore presently lower than they should be because 75 per cent of the parents are enjoying a free ride at the expense of the other 25 per cent. The same situation prevails in the towns.

This common sense view of the basic nature of educational taxes is in agreement with the statements of the N.Y. Court of Appeals in the textbook loan case.

"No one in the last third of the twentieth century can doubt that a program aimed at improving the quality of education in all schools is a matter of legitimate State concern."

At a time when we have large-scale Federal and State aid to education it is justly feared that children who are denied these benefits may receive education inferior to children in public schools. Unless certain types of aid can be made available to all children, we run the risk of creating an educational lag between children in public and private schools.

Mr. Overlander seems to be very far off base in assessing the Constitution, the Courts, and the general attitude of much informed opinion. As I have said previously (Courier-Journal, April 25), the way to our just rights is political action. Let's join Citizens for Educational Freedom and start acting like American citizens.

J. K. O'Loane
N.Y. State Board,
Citizens for Educational
Freedom



"FRANKLY, IT WASN'T WHAT I EXPECTED WHEN HE ASKED IF WED LIKE TO SEE THE PARISH PLANT."

Cardinal Cooke:

'Good to Be Alienated'

"The young are indicating in word and act that man is truly, in his deep nature, religious," Terence Cardinal Cooke observed last week.

"To a civilization which is materialistic in fact, if not in theory, the young are plaintively asking if there is not more to life than the size of one's income, or automobile, or swimming pool."

The New York cardinal spoke at commencement exercises June 8 at St. John's University, Jamaica. He received an honorary degree.

Discussing the concept of "alienation" in contemporary life, Cardinal Cooke said "it can be good to be alienated, in the sense that we become more aware of our need for God and each other. It is the human condition to be alienated.

"The very definition of any believer is one who is away from his true home. In this life we are pilgrims,

not permanent residents. Our restlessness, our yearning for perfection, our ultimate dissatisfaction with any material thing are all signs of our alienation, implanted by God Himself."

A sense of alienation, he continued, "can lead to positive, valuable, even prophetic insights. We must not refuse to listen only because voices we hear are young voices; we must not become encrusted and immobile."

"We who are older in time have a duty to our own experience to tell it 'like it was,' and always will be. I think that as mature persons it would be helpful if we reflected calmly on the following points:

"That 'instant paradise' must always remain an illusion; that outrage may be the necessary origin of reform but never a permanent state.

"That reasonable men demand answers, not obscenity, violence, or rhetoric in reply to the question, 'What must be done?'"

Word for Sunday

God Looks for the Lost

By Father Albert Shamon

The fifteenth chapter of St. Luke is a Gospel within a Gospel. It contains three parables: the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. These parables were an answer to the Scribes and Pharisees. "This fellow (a contemptuous term), they said, 'receives sinners' and eats with them.' Christ did not deny the charge. Instead He told three lovely parables that said the same thing: God loves even the lost.

Our Lord, unlike the Scribes and Pharisees, seldom called men "sinners." Rather He spoke of them as being "lost." He seldom looked at men as headstrong rebels revolting against God, but simply as misguided and disillusioned persons, needing to be set back on the course.

In these parables He describes how men get lost. Some will stray off through sheer stupidity, like sheep. A sheep is a very stupid animal. It will stray off into the hills, get lost and not even know it is lost. So some men edge away from God. They don't openly oppose the Church—they only stop praying, stop Sunday Mass. They become faithless in "little" things. They slip away with the tide of the world and become spiritually numb. "Therefore ought we the more earnestly to observe the things that we have heard, lest perhaps we drift away" (Hebr. 2/1). Like heedless sheep, many men drift away from Christ.

Other men, like the coin, get lost because of somebody else's fault. The woman lost the coin: Children can get lost because of parental neglect in educating them to God. How many countries today are enslaved because

their politicians were not conscientious. Readers can get lost when newsmen and journalists distort the news. And souls can get lost when the people of God neglect to be witnesses by word and deed.

Sometimes a man is lost through his own willfulness, like the prodigal son. He wanted his own way. He had to learn for himself. And thanks perhaps to the prayers of a good father, he got the grace to come back to his senses.

Self-will is the root of sin and the downfall of man. How many deliberately, with eyes wide open, go off into a land far from God—throwing off all restraint, violating whatever law they choose. "My will, not yours, be done!" is their rule of life.

The point of these three parables is God's attitude towards the lost. Christianity radically differs from all other world religions. In all other world religions, in Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Mohammedanism, it is then who seek God. But in Christianity it is the other way round.

In Christianity it is God who seeks men. Francis Thompson dared to compare God to a hound—relentlessly pursuing the "runaway." No matter how a man gets lost, God goes out in search of him—like the shepherd, like the woman, like the father in the parables.

This is so, for God is a Father, and a father cannot rest till his children are safe and secure at home.

COURIER-JOURNAL
PUBLISHED DAILY EXCEPT ON SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

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260 C Fisher Diplom

Two hundred and sixty degrees June 8 at the commencement ceremonies of Fisher College, held in center.

Prof. H. Marshall McLuhan, professor of English at St. College, Toronto, and director of Center for Culture and the University of Toronto, the convocation-addressee received the honorary degree of humane letters.

McLuhan, author and lecturer, has been termed "the 20th century's high priest of communications" and has illuminated the large audience of theologians and epigrammatists in his address.

His interest and affection for Fisher College (he has several times been here) close relationships with Charles J. Lavery, CSB., the college, and Father Dorsey, CSB., academic advisor.

McLuhan told the graduates they are already consisting of "garbage heap" and that modern electronic media for their fate.

He said unrest, especially the young, is caused by identifiable attributes: television, satellites and other electronic devices.

Among McLuhanisms: 10 astronauts' attachment of Peanuts fame shows moon-grinding men "are 4 years old and they were year-old forever because want to grow up into it."

Special awards and grants to the following Rochester Diocese:

Rochester — James Thomas A. Dixon, Gary David A. Harradine, James Kirk V. Wiedemer, Ed Saral J. Andrusky, Kenneth F. Spahn, Jr., PH M. Christiano, Brighton DeCaras, Fairport — Richard A. Webster, O'Rourke, East Rochester Pacifico, Phelps — James Geneva — Richard A. I.

Mercy To Nei

Mother Mary Bridget, O.S.B., of the Rochester Diocese, has announced her plans for next Fall that join ventures with the Joseph.

She named two coordinators to take charge of parochial schools in other for two Elmira schools.

Among other appointees Sister Mary will be co-ordinator of St. Mary's, St. Patrick's (the Sisters of St. Joseph) and St. Joseph's schools.

In Elmira, Our Lady and St. Patrick's schools Sister M. Dominic as principal.

Other Elmira schools in staffs of both Sister Mary and Sisters of Mercy operative projects are: St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, St. Ignace's, St. Ann's, St. Elizabeth's, St. Vincent's, St. Francis, St. Peter's, St. James, St. Anthony's, St. Michael's, St. Raphael's, St. Gabriel's, St. Zachary's, St. John's, St. Paul's, St. Andrew's, St. Nicholas, St. Basil's, St. Constantine, St. Helena, St. Ursula, St. Agatha, St. Barbara, St. Katerina, St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, St. Dorothea, St. Margareta, St. Euphrosyne, St. Anastasia, St. Symon and Ioudaea, St. Titus, St. Proculus, St. Nereus and Prothimus, St. Pancras, St. Vitus, St. Modestus, St. Gervasius and Prothasius, St. Eusebius, St. Marinus, St. Pothinus, St. Felicitas and Perpetua, St. Agatha, St. Ursula, St. Euphrosyne, St. Anastasia, St. Symon and Ioudaea, St. Titus, St. Proculus, St. Nereus and Prothimus, St. Pancras, St. Vitus, St. Modestus, St. Gervasius and Prothasius, St. Eusebius, St. Marinus, St. Pothinus, St. Felicitas and Perpetua.

Other school appointees include:

St. Helen's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Joseph's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Ann's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Elizabeth's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Vincent's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Francis School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Peter's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. James School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Michael's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Nicholas School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Basil's School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Constantine School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Helena School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Ursula School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Agatha School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Barbara School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Katerina School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Agnes School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Cecilia School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Dorothea School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Margareta School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Euphrosyne School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Anastasia School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Symon and Ioudaea School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Titus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Proculus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Nereus and Prothimus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Pancras School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Vitus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Modestus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Gervasius and Prothasius School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Eusebius School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Marinus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Pothinus School, Ft. Erie, principal; St. Felicitas and Perpetua School, Ft. Erie, principal.

At the Rochester Mother Mary Raymond will post of house co-ordinator as health co-ordinator of the congregation.

Summer You City

When the City of Rochester revealed its ambitious Summer Youth Program, a Board of Urban Youth appointed by Mayor Joseph, was particularly interested in the program because \$300,000 is to be implemented in the program.

Program Director Joseph said that Remedial Education coordinated by Sister Mary, SSI, of Immaculate Parish, was one of the successful projects last year.

The other Urban Youth Residency Leaders may be lopped off if unable to raise additional funds. The bulk already raised came from Better Community, Co-Rochester Jobs, Inc., a local source.

Sister Joseph said that Remedial Education project by 12 teaching units, St. Joseph, St. Ann, St. Elizabeth, St. Vincent, St. Francis, St. Peter, St. James, St. Michael, St. Nicholas, St. Basil, St. Constantine, St. Helena, St. Ursula, St. Agatha, St. Barbara, St. Katerina, St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, St. Dorothea, St. Margareta, St. Euphrosyne, St. Anastasia, St. Symon and Ioudaea, St. Titus, St. Proculus, St. Nereus and Prothimus, St. Pancras, St. Vitus, St. Modestus, St. Gervasius and Prothasius, St. Eusebius, St. Marinus, St. Pothinus, St. Felicitas and Perpetua, St. Agatha, St. Ursula, St. Euphrosyne, St. Anastasia, St. Symon and Ioudaea, St. Titus, St. Proculus, St. Nereus and Prothimus, St. Pancras, St. Vitus, St. Modestus, St. Gervasius and Prothasius, St. Eusebius, St. Marinus, St. Pothinus, St. Felicitas and Perpetua.