

Romans Seven and Eight

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to emerge and to realize its potential by accepting the illumination of the Holy Spirit. In the latter, it is the spirit which gives meaning to his body and to his mind, and at the same time assures their harmony and unity. The Spirit constitutes the center of the polarization of the person.

Natural or Psychological Man

Concentrating now on the natural man, or the one whose spirit still remains undeveloped, we find it characterized by tension. As Dr. Paul Tournier, in his "The Meaning of Persons," writes: "The serious conflict of conscience is not merely a psychological fact; it is an intimate and spiritual event which expresses itself in two ways at once—in a physical manifestation and in physical symptoms." The best psychoanalysis of unredeemed, or the psychological man in all literature, is the seventh chapter of St. Paul's "Letters to the Romans".

Here is the ego with all of its tensions, conflicts, contradictions, self-mockery and despair. Verses 13 through 25 of this chapter tear at the self to discover whether it is good, because it approves what is good, or whether it is bad, because its performance does not come up to the Ideal.

Who is talking in this chapter? Is it the converted Paul, dead to sin, living "the new life of the spirit" (7/6), or is it autobiographical? Is it Saul before his conversion? Is it a pre-Christian experience, not only in his life, but in the life of Every Man? There is no doubt that it is the tortured self of Every Man, for the words "I," "mine" or "me" are used over 45 times in chapter seven.

In chapter eight, the word "I" is used only a few times, for this is the spirit vivified by the Spirit. A double gravitation exists in nature: one, physical gravitation in which things are drawn to the earth; the other, spiritual gravitation by which the soul seeks to fly back to Love. This double pull is the source of all uneasiness: "The evil which I will not that I do, the good which I will that I do not". Divided against ourselves, we are inwardly identified with a summons that beckons us upward, and also outwardly liable to follow the pull downward. Vergil said facile descensus Averno — easy is the descent to hell; but actually it is not just the same as the fall of a stone from the hand. For every inch of the descent, we violate the finer instincts of the soul, we struggle with the authority of conscience, we have to beat down self-respect and tear asunder the social bonds which bind us to good behavior.

It is not easy to debase the natural inclination of anything, for example, to make the limbs of the tree which climb upward to the sun to bend downward to the earth. As our stomach was made for food, and the eye for vision, so the spirit of man was made for God Who has already put the upward gravitation in our inmost being: "When I act against my own will, this means that I have a self that acknowledges that the Law is good, and so the thing behaving in that way is not myself, but sin living in me" (Rom. 7/17).

Conflict in the Psychological Man

The downward gravitation is the sin which inclines us to disobey the very law of righteousness to which we consent. It is a kind of foreign element in our nature, like a speck in the eye, for we are not what we ought to be. Its expulsion is possible, but not through our own efforts alone, as we shall see later. Until the spirit soars, however, we discover that there are not two tenants in our self, but a tenant and a burglar, someone who has a right, and the other who would forcibly take over the building. The conflict in man does not mean that he is intrinsically evil.

As Ruskin says: "There is hardly a road side pond, or pool which has not as much landscape in it as above it . . . if you look deep enough, you may see the dark serene blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds". This inner civil war is between what is called man's better self and his worse self. It is this that makes the strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde so appealing; it is a portrait of every person. "I desire", says Thomas a Kempis, "to enjoy Thee inwardly, but I cannot take Thee. I desire to cling to heavenly things, but fleshy things and unmortified passions depress me".

As Tennyson put it:
"Now it seems some unseen monster lays
His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
Wrenching it backward into his;
And spoils my bliss in being".

Failure of Law to Dissolve the Conflict

Though the primary reference in chapter seven is to the law of Moses, it also refers to any law, such as a moral law, that may be summed up in the Ten Commandments. Let the word "law" be extended as much as one pleases, nevertheless, it does not completely reconcile man to himself and give him inner peace. The law does reveal a higher standard of duty, but it does not give the strength to follow it. While the law would oppose sin, it sometimes reveals it all the more.

St. Paul takes the Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet". This law does not make avarice vanish, on the contrary, it brings it out of seclusion. Thus, as the rays of the sun call forth all of the possibilities that are in the seed and brings them to full growth, so the law calls forth a sin that slumbers, and the result is a conscious opposition to God: "Once, when there was no Law, I was alive; but when the Commandment came, sin came to life, and I died: the Commandment was meant to lead

me to life, but it turned out to mean death for me" (7/9).

No law can ever effectually get rid of the tendency to sin which is in man. The flesh still makes its demands, and no law alone can root it out. Laws are made against gambling, but gambling goes on; laws are made against the drink traffic, but drunkenness goes on. Prisons and penitentiaries have been reared to testify to what St. Paul wrote in this chapter, that knowledge alone is no guarantee of obedience. The law is good in itself, but it has to work through a sinful nature. The only powers to which it can appeal in man are those which are already in rebellion.

Law brings no new vitality into humanity, no new Spirit to unify body and soul, no new Love to direct the lesser and petty ones. Very few citizens ever surrender to the trumpet blasts from Mount Sinai. Here, incidentally, is one of the mistakes that is often made in catechetical teaching, namely, to try to develop the moral and spiritual life of a child, or of youth around the Commandments instead of around the Spirit.

What a Wretched Man Am I!

This extraordinary seventh chapter of Paul, which must be read to be appreciated, is the most honest psychoanalysis that was ever made of the human heart. When it was all over, St. Paul the psychoanalyst himself, ended the chapter: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to death?" (7/24).

This is not a cry of gloom, all is not a Camus, a Kafka, a Sartre. It is merely the human self-confessing in the moment of its confusion worst confounded, that it cannot heal itself. While there is longing, there is hope; while there is a consciousness of a wound, there is the possibility of a physician; while there is protest against the evil within, there is hope of good coming from without. The spirit is beginning to emerge from the soul, which now feels that it has come to know itself for the first time, and that knowledge begins as the knowledge of self as evil.

The very outcry for deliverance bears witness that over and above the superficial, ordinary self, there is an unsuspected self which will make war on the ordinary self until the last day. So long as the battle goes on, the more conscious one will become of the terrible and tyrannous power of the lower self.

This cry is not of a chained captive to be set free, but of a soldier in battle who shouts for success. Instead of denying his guilt, and facing up to his sins, and forgetting them, he seeks to be delivered from them. The soul, however, lost, darkened and defaced, still retains some lineaments of the Divine Impression with which it once was stamped. The Image haunts us always; the Spirit is ever seeking for its true habitat.

If this be an autobiographical sketch of Paul, there is the immediate answer to his question about who will rescue his body doomed to death: "Thanks to be to God, through Jesus Christ Our Lord" (7/24).

Then begins chapter eight, in which the ego and its conflicts, and the tension of the law and sinful instincts no longer exist, but there is the unity of the spirit with the Spirit: "If Christ is in you then your spirit is Life itself, because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then He Who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit living in you (Rom. 8/10-11).

No other power than the Power of the indwelling Spirit of Life can set one free from all degradation, and every spiritually taught Christian knows that as well as the Apostle. Education will not do it, psychology will not do it, culture will not do it, self-torturing of the body will not do it, the best resolutions in the world will not do it — we need a Divine Power within us to arouse the spirit, and that is "the Spirit of Life in Christ". Thus, does man pass from self-consciousness of conflict, to the God-consciousness of peace and joy.

"To vision of that one Power which guides the world
How should men find it?
Only through those doors,
Which opening inward in each separate soul
Give each man access to that soul of all
Living within each life, not to be found or known,
Till looking inward, each alone meets the unknowable and eternal God".

(Alfred Noyes)

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

SING-A-LONG AT HOCHSTEIN
The Hochstein Music School, 12 Hoeltzer Street, will sponsor a neighborhood sing-a-long on the school lawn at 7:30 Tuesday night, July 22. Sing-Out People on the Move and Al Heckman will take part.

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Adult Club Holds Picnic

Members of Rochester Catholic Adult Club — single persons 25 years of age and older—held annual picnic July 4 at home of Gordon Vogt, 18 Country Club Drive, East Rochester. Club officers are, from left, Tom Mastromatag, St. Francis of Assisi parish, Rochester, president; Sylvia Szatkowski, St. Stanislaus, secretary; Gordon Vogt, St. Jerome's, vice president; Roger Redfield, St. Patrick's, Victor, vice president. Club moderator is Father George S. Wood, pastor of Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

Confrontation

Most Popular Text

By JOAN ZUMMO
The CCD text most widely used in the Diocese of Rochester at the present time is the "On Our Way" series published by the Sadlier Co. There are several probable reasons for the popularity of this particular series.

One very practical reason is that Sadlier has a complete series of CCD texts for grades 1 through 8 while several of the other most used texts are still not complete through all the grades. Many teachers and administrators prefer to use a series that can be continued through all the grades and many others choose Sadlier to fill in or round out an incomplete series.

Another reason the Sadlier series may appeal to some is that it is a bit more "traditional" in its approach and organization than others.

The general outline is as follows. In the first grade, salvation history is presented in terms of Old Testament preparation for Christ, and from the New Testament, His life and death. Also considered are Baptism and the Mass. In grade two the life of Jesus is considered as well as the church, eternal life, the Mass, the law of love, and the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and Confirmation. Third grade repeats the themes of first grade but with a consideration of all seven Sacraments.

The fourth grade again teaches the Sacraments and the Mass, and also the Commandments, the works of mercy, and Christian response. Grade five topics are the Church, the Sacraments, and Scriptural Revelation. In the sixth grade themes from

the Constitution on the Church are considered, as well as the Church as the body of Christ, and the theme of self discovery. Another feature of this series that may contribute to its use is the fact that it has a home work book for each grade level. Teacher manuals are available for each grade level and the student texts include notes to parents and suggestions to parents on the religious formation of their children at home.

Sadlier also has a First

Communion preparation manual and teachers guide and a Confirmation preparation manual and teachers guide and They also publish a pre-school program which includes a classroom crafts and activity kit. Although it was published several years ago they do also have a summer school program for grades one through six. Other publications include a kit for exceptional children which has a corresponding teachers and parents' guide, and a religious visual aids kit (Vatican II) for grades one through three.

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