

The True Crisis of Our Time

By Malcolm Muggeridge

(Transcribed from a speech given in 1985, A. D.)

The subject I'm speaking to you about today is the "True Crisis of Our Time."

It would be difficult for anyone looking around the world today to resist the conclusion that something has gone very badly indeed with what we continue to call "Western Civilization." This awareness tends to be distorted and muffled – if not obliterated – by the media, which manage to induce us to take for granted the continually explosive situations that confront us on every hand, and to see as an enlargement of our freedom and an enhancement of the quality of our living the steady and ominous erosion of the moral standards on which our traditional way of life has been based.

Regarding the reversal of moral standards, so that, as the horrid sisters chant in *Macbeth*, "Fair is foul and foul is fair," there are some apt words by Simone Weil. I don't know whether you are familiar with her: a French Jewess who is also a lady of great mystical insight, who actually died in this country in the recent War. Simone Weil, whose luminous intelligence and insights are among the most penetrating of our time and bear very clearly on this not just confusion between the concepts of good and evil, but the actual replacement of one by the other. "Nothing is so beautiful," she writes, "nothing is so continually fresh and surprising, so full of sweet and perpetual ecstasy, as the good; no desert is so dreary, monotonous, and boring as evil. But with fantasy, it is the other way around. Fictional good is boring and flat, while fictional evil is varied, intriguing, attractive, and full of charm."

Let me turn also to a similar theme to Pascal, who in his *Pensees* says this: "It is in vain, O Men, that you seek within yourselves the cure of all your miseries. All your insight only leads you to the knowledge that it is not in yourselves that you will discover the true and the good. The philosophers promised them to you, and have not been able to keep their promise. Your principal maladies are pride, which cuts you off from God, and sensuality, which binds you to the earth; and they have done nothing but foster at least one of these maladies. If they have given you God for your object, it has only been to pander to your pride; they have made you think that you were like him, and resembled him by your nature. And those who have grasped the vanity of such a pretension have cast you down into the other abyss by making you believe that your nature was like that of the beasts of the field, and have led you to seek your good in lust, which is the lot of animals." In other words: egomania and erotomania, the two ills of our time – the raised fist, and the raised phallus.

Let us also turn in our imagination to Carthage, in the year 410. When St. Augustine received the news that Rome, the great Rome, has been sacked, and the barbarians have taken over, his first thought is to reassure his flock. "If this catastrophe is indeed true," he tells them, "it must be God's will. Men build cities and men destroy cities, but the City of God they didn't build and cannot destroy. The Heavenly City," he goes on, "outshines Rome beyond comparison. There, instead of victory, is truth; instead of high rank, holiness; instead of peace, felicity; instead of life, eternity. There, take Aristotle, put him near to the Rock of Christ and he fades away into nothingness. Who is Aristotle? When he hears the words, 'Christ said,' then he shakes in Hell. 'Pythagoras said this. '; 'Plato said that.' Put them near the Rock and compare these arrogant people with Him who was crucified. Thus we come to see that in our fallen state, our imperfection, we can conceive perfection. Through the Incarnation, the presence of God among us in the lineaments of Man, we have a window in the walls of time, which looks out onto this Heavenly City."

This was Augustine's profoundest conclusion, and in his great work he enshrined it imperishably to be a comfort and a light in the dark days that lay ahead. In the year 430 the triumphant Vandals would come into Africa, reaching the walls of Hippo itself, as its bishop, Augustine, lay dying there. Today the Earthly city looks ever larger, to the point where it may be said to have taken over the Heavenly one. Turning away from God, blown up with the arrogance generated by their fabulous success in exploring and harnessing the mechanism of life, men believe themselves at last in charge of their own destiny. As we survey the disastrous consequences of such an attitude, the chaos and destruction it has brought, as Augustine did the fall of Rome and its aftermath, his word on that other occasion still stands applicable to all circumstances and conditions of men.

In the past too, of course, other efforts have been made to demolish Christianity in the name of superior knowledge and political wisdom. Blake, in his inimitable way, deals faithfully with such efforts. He writes, "Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau! Mock on, Mock on – 'Tis all in vain! You throw the sand against the wind, and the wind blows it back again."

Of course, Simone Weil wrote the words that I cited well before television had been developed – in due course to attract huge audiences all over the world, becoming incomparably the greatest fabricator and purveyor of fantasy that has ever existed, and occupying the attention of the average adult in the western world for some 35 hours a week, or 12 years of the 3 score years and 10 of a normal lifespan. It's an amazing thought, especially when one considers what appears on the TV screen, that so large a proportion of a lifespan should be devoted to staring into it. Its only merit, in my opinion, is that it has a splendidly soporific effect. It is not uncommon to see a whole family sleeping quietly around their television set. My own particular nightmare is falling asleep in front a TV set in the days when I used to appear on television, and then coming to suddenly, and noticing on the screen a figure, seemingly familiar, which turns out to be myself. It's a macabre experience that only an Edgar Allen Poe could have done justice to, and gave me a tremendous sense of the appalling danger of trafficking in images, which is what television is about. Shortly after this experience I decided to give up watching television and had my aerials removed – a painless operation, but one that makes you feel much better afterwards. The offerings of television bear out Simone Weil's proposition to a quite remarkable degree. For in them, it is almost invariably *eros*, rather than *agape* – translated as "charity" in that wonderful thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians – that provides all the excitement, success, and celebrity, that is made to seem desirable; and Jesus Christ Superstar, rather than Jesus Christ on the Cross, who gets a folk hero's billing.

Television, I should say – in the light of what I know about it; my memories of working with it – is the ultimate in fantasy: a sort of Caliban's Island; full of sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not, so that when we wake, if we ever do, we cry to sleep again. And it is precisely the transposition of good and evil in this world of fantasy that, in my opinion, lies at the root of our present malaise. Such was also Solzhenitsyn's first impression when he arrived in the West. "Our troubles," he said, "were due precisely to our loss of any awareness of good and evil." It is good and evil after all that provides the theme of the drama of our mortal existence. In this sense, you might capture them with the positive and negative points that generate an electric current; transpose the points, and the current fails, the lights go out, darkness falls, and all is confusion.

What I wish to put to you here is that the darkness falling on our civilization is likewise due to a transposition of good and evil. In other words, we are suffering not from an energy crisis, or an overpopulation crisis, or an unemployment crisis – from none of these ills that are commonly specified. The root cause of our trouble is that we've lost our sense of a moral order in the universe,

without which no order whatsoever – economic, social, political – is attainable. For Christians, of course, this moral order is derived from that terrific moment when, as is so splendidly put in the Wisdom of Solomon, “...while all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, Thine Almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of thy Royal Throne.” Leaped down, to dwell among us full of grace and truth. It was thus that our Western Civilization came into existence; deriving not from Darwin's *Origin of Species*, not from the *Communist Manifesto*, or even the American *Declaration of Independence*, but from the great drama of the Incarnation, as conveyed in the New Testament. To abandon or repudiate finally this almighty Word would assuredly be to wind up inexorably 2000 years of history and ourselves with it.

It is true, of course, that my own sense of a world hopelessly lost in fantasy to the point of being quite cut off from life, from its origins, from the true fount of its life and creativity, whether spiritual, moral, or even maternal – has been heightened by the practice of the profession of journalism – what St. Augustine called being a “vendor of words.” It's a phrase I like very much. In Augustine's case it applied to his professorship of rhetoric. Or, as he called it, his “chair of lies.” But it is equally applicable to editorial chairs and ancillary posts. I look back on more than half a century of knock-about journalism, comprising pretty well everything in the business – for instance, ultra-solemn leading articles, tapped out on a typewriter: “The people of this country will never for a moment countenance...” something or other that they're shortly going to countenance with the greatest of ease, if not indifference. On *The Guardian*, where I began my vendorship of words, we were supposed to finish up our editorials on a hopeful note, so we usually concluded our theme with some bromide like “it is greatly to be hoped that wiser counsels may yet prevail, and moderate men of all shades of opinion draw together.” Alas, as I soon discovered, wiser councils were notably not prevailing, and it was immoderate men who were drawing together. Then there were the pontifical dispatches hurriedly put together from our special correspondent – here, there, and everywhere, and tabloid features on why eating yogurt makes men live forever.

The fact is, there is built into life a strong ironical theme for which we should be duly grateful to our Creator, since it helps us to find our way through the fantasy which dulls us to the reality of our existence – what Blake called a “fearful symmetry.” God has mercifully made diversions whereby we seek to evade this reality: I mean the pursuit of power, of sensual delight, of money, of learning, of celebrity, of happiness – so manifestly preposterous that we are forced to turn to Him for help and for mercy. We seek wealth, and find we've accumulated only worthless pieces of paper. We seek security, and find we have the means in our hands to blow ourselves and our little Earth to smithereens. Looking for carnal satisfaction, we find ourselves involved in sterility rites. As looking for freedom, we infallibly fall into the servitude of self-gratification.

We look back on history, and what do we see? Empires rising and falling; revolutions and counter-revolutions succeeding one another; wealth accumulating and wealth dispersed; one nation dominant and then another. As Shakespeare's King Lear puts it, “the rise and fall of great ones that ebb and flow with the moon.” In one lifetime I've seen my fellow countrymen ruling over a quarter of the world, and the great majority of them convinced – in the words of what is still a favorite song – that God has made them mighty and will make them mightier yet. I've heard a crazed Austrian announce the establishment of a German Reich that was to last for a thousand years; an Italian clown report that the calendar will begin again with his assumption of power; a murderous Georgian brigand in the Kremlin acclaimed by the intellectual elite as wiser than Solomon, more enlightened than Ashoka, more humane than Marcus Aurelius. I've seen America wealthier than all the rest of the world put together; and with the superiority of weaponry that would have enabled Americans, had they so wished, to outdo an Alexander or a Julius Caesar in the range and scale of conquest.

All in one little lifetime – gone with the wind: England now part of an island off the coast of Europe, threatened with further dismemberment; Hitler and Mussolini seen as buffoons; Stalin a sinister name in the regime he helped to found and dominated totally for three decades; Americans haunted by fears of running out of the precious fluid that keeps their motorways roaring and the smog settling, by memories of a disastrous military campaign in Vietnam, and the windmills of Watergate. Can this really be what life is about – this worldwide soap opera going on from century to century, from era to era, as old discarded sets and props litter the earth? Surely not. Was it to provide a location for so repetitive and ribald a production as this that the universe was created and man, or *homo sapiens* as he likes to call himself – heaven knows why – came into existence? I can't believe it. If this were all, then the cynics, the hedonists, and the suicides are right: the most we can hope for from life is amusement, gratification of our senses, and death. But it is not all.

Thanks to the great mercy and marvel of the Incarnation, the cosmic scene is resolved into a human drama. God reaches down to become a Man and Man reaches up to relate himself to God. Time looks into eternity and eternity into time, making now always, and always now. Everything is transformed by the sublime dream of the Incarnation – God's special parable for fallen man and a fallen world. The way opens before us that was charted in the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The way that successive generations of believers have striven to follow, deriving themselves the moral, spiritual, and intellectual creativity out of which have come everything truly great in our art, our literature, our music, the splendor of the great Cathedrals, and the illumination of the saints and mystics, as well as countless lives of men and women serving their God and loving their Savior in humility and Faith. It's a glorious record – not just of the past, but continuing now. The books are open, not closed.

The Incarnation was not a mere historical event like the Battle of Waterloo, or the American *Declaration of Independence* – something that's happened, and then was over. It goes on happening all the time. God did not retreat back into Heaven when the fateful words “It is finished” were uttered on Golgotha. The Word that became flesh has continued and continues to dwell among us, full of grace and truth. There are examples on every hand; we have but to look for them. For instance, the man in Solzhenitsyn's labor camp who scribbled sentences from the Gospels that he pulled out of his pocket in the evening to keep himself serene and brotherly in that terrible place. Then, Solzhenitsyn himself – a product of this world's first overtly atheistic materialist society who yet can tell us in shining words that “it was only when I lay there, on rotting prison straw, that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either; but right through every human heart and through all human hearts. So, bless you, prison for having been in my life.” What insight, what wisdom, acquired in a Soviet prison, after a Marxist upbringing!

Again, there's Mother Teresa and her ever-growing Missionaries of Charity going about their work of love with their own special geography of compassion moving into country after country. Sisters, now of many nationalities, arriving in twos and threes at the troubled places in this troubled world with nothing to offer except Christ, no other purpose than to see in every suffering man and woman the person of their Savior, and to heed His words, “Insofar as ye did it to the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me.”

If the Christian Revelation is true, then it must be true for all times and in all circumstances. Whatever may happen, however seemingly inimical to it may be the way the world is going and those who preside over its affairs, its truth remains intact and inviolate. “Heaven and Earth shall pass way,”

Our Lord said, "but my words shall not pass away." Our Western Civilization, like others before it, is subject to decay, and must sometime or other decompose and disappear. The world's way of responding to intimations of decay is to engage equally in idiot hopes and idiot despair. On the one hand, some new policy or discovery is confidently expected to put everything to rights: a new fuel, a new drug, détente, world government, North Sea oil, revolution, or counter-revolution. On the other, some disaster is confidently expected to prove our undoing: capitalism will break down; communism won't work; fuel will run out; plutonium will lay us low; atomic waste will kill us off; overpopulation will suffocate us all or alternatively a declining birth rate will put us at the mercy of our enemies. In Christian terms such hopes and fears are equally beside the point. As Christians, we know that here we have no continuing city. The crowns roll in the dust and every earthly kingdom must sometime flounder.

Whereas we acknowledge a King men did not crown and cannot dethrone, as we are citizens of a City men did not build and cannot destroy. Thus, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome – living, remember, in a society as depraved and dissolute as ours, with its "TV" of "the Games" which specialized, as television does, in spectacles of violence and eroticism – exhorting them to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in God's Word, to concern themselves with the things that are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal but the things that are not seen are eternal. It was in the breakdown of Rome that Christendom was born. And now, in the breakdown of Christendom, there are the same requirements and the same possibilities to eschew the fantasy of a disintegrating world and seek the reality of what is not seen and is eternal – the reality of Christ. In this reality of Christ we may see our only hope, our only prospect, in a darkening world.

After all, even if one or other of the twentieth century nightmare utopias will come to pass; if men prove capable of constructing their Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, with abundance ever broadening down from one Gross National Product to another; and the motorways reaching from here to eternity; and *eros* released to beget a regulation two offspring, like a well-behaved child at a party taking just two cakes, otherwise frolicking in contraceptive bliss, all our genes counted and selected to produce only beauty queens and Mensa IQ's – the divergencies all thrown away with other waste products; and the media providing Muzak and music around the clock to delight and inform all and sundry; and the appropriate medicaments available to cure all actual and potential ills -- it may well be the case that Western Man has wearied of his freedom and is now consciously or unconsciously engrossed in shedding the burden it imposes on him, thereby, if he but knew it, headed inexorably for servitude. Yet in Christ, whoever cares to can find freedom, the glorious freedom of the children of God, the only lasting freedom there is. To quote once more St. Paul: "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Again, it may well be that Western man has turned away from the Cross in favor of an illusory pursuit of happiness. Yet, if the preaching of the Cross is indeed "to them that perish foolishness," to those who believe it continues to be the power of God whereby affliction is seen as part of His love; and out of a public execution burgeons the most perfect hopes and joys the human heart has ever attained. What then, is there to fear or dread?

Jean-Pierre De Crousaz speaks of the 'Sacrament of the Present Moment': to surrender ourselves to God's will, not with reference to yesterday or tomorrow, but now, fully, truly, whatever may or may not happen in the world, irrespective of the buffooneries of power, under whatever demagogue or dictators may be thrown up. Fortified with this Sacrament of the Present, we may laugh at the confusion of our present civilization; as Rabelais in the person of Panurge laughed at the antics of carnal Man; as Cervantes, in the person of Don Quixote, laughed at the antics of crusading Man; as Shakespeare, in the person of Sir John Falstaff, laughed at the antics of mortal Man. It is in the breakdown of power that we may discern its true nature; and when power seems strong and firm,

then we are most liable to be taken in and suppose that it can really be used to enhance human freedom and well being – forgetful that Jesus is the product of the losers', not the victors', camp, and to proclaim the first will be last, that the weak are the strong, and the fools are the wise.

It was through brooding on the strange phenomena of our time that I came to see that in the liberal-minded self intimations of a death wish, and to realize that its dominance in the Western world – especially since the emergence of the United States as the preponderant influence, and the development of the all-powerful media for whose fraudulent processes and procedures the liberal mind has a singular aptitude – was responsible for the Gadarene bias apparent in all of our policies and projects. In other words, there we were confronted not with a whole series of crises and problems, but with one crisis, amounting to a death wish – an urge to self-destruction – seeping into every aspect of our way of life, especially our values, our beliefs, our aspirations, how we see the past and our hopes for the future, the qualities we cherish, and those we hold up to obloquy. A touch of irony is added by virtue of the fact that this Gadarene course is associated with ostensibly optimistic views -- with the notion of a perfect society or Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, attained by human effort; in Marxist terms, by the final triumph of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie – whereupon the State may be expected to wither away and mankind to live happily ever after.

I can imagine it being all very puzzling to future historians (assuming, of course, that there are any) and amuse myself by supposing, for instance, that somehow or other a lot of contemporary pabulum – videos of television programs with accompanying advertisements, news footage, copies of newspapers and magazines, stereo tapes of pop groups and other cacophonies, best-selling novels, films, and other such material – all of this gets preserved, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, in some remote salt cave. Then, some centuries or maybe millennia later, when our civilization will long since have joined all the others who once were and now can only be patiently reconstructed out of dusty ruins, incomprehensible hieroglyphics and other residuary relics, archaeologists discover the cave and set about sorting out its contents and trying to deduce from them what we were like and how we lived.

What would they make of us, I wonder? Materially so rich and so powerful; despairingly impoverished and fear-ridden -- having made such remarkable inroads into the secrets of nature, beginning to explore and perhaps to colonize the universe itself; developing the means to produce in more or less unlimited quantities everything we could possibly need or desire, and to transmit swifter-than-light every thought, smile or word that could possibly delight, entertain, or instruct us; disposing of treasure beyond calculation, opening up possibilities beyond conception – yet haunted and obsessed by the fear that we're too numerous, that soon, as our numbers go on increasing, there will be no room or food for us. On the one hand a neurotic passion to increase consumption sustained by every sort of imbecile persuasion; on the other, ever increasing hunger and penury among the so-called backward or undeveloped peoples. Never, our archaeologists will surely conclude, was any generation of men intent upon the pursuit of happiness and plenty more advantageously placed to obtain their objective, who yet – with amazing deliberation – took the opposite course towards chaos, not order; towards breakdown, not stability; towards despair, not hope; towards death, destruction, and darkness; not life, creativity, and light: an ascent that ran downhill; plenty that turned into a wasteland; a cornucopia whose abundance made hungry.

Searching about in their minds for some explanation of this pursuit of happiness that became a death wish, the archaeologists, it seems to me, would be bound to hit upon the doctrine of "Progress": probably the most deleterious fancy to ever take possession of the human heart. The liberal mind's basic dogma – the notion that human beings as individuals must necessarily get better and better – is even now considered by most people to be untenable in the light of their indubitably outrageous

behavior towards one another. But the equivalent collective concept – that their social circumstances and conduct must necessarily improve – has come to seem almost axiomatic. On this basis, all change represents Progress, and is therefore good. To change anything is per se to improve or reform it. The archaeologists will also note how, with the abandonment of Christianity, the whole edifice of ethics, law, culture, and human relationships based upon it was likewise demolished; how sex and associated erotica and sterility rites provided the mysticism of the new religion of Progress; and education – a moral equivalent of conversion, whereby the old Adam of ignorance, superstition, and the blind acceptance of tradition was put aside, and the new Liberal Man born: enlightened, erudite, cultivated. So the bustling campuses multiplied and expanded, as did the facilities and buildings: more and more professors instructing more and more students in more and more subjects. As the astronauts soared into the vast eternity of space, on earth the garbage piled higher. As the groves of academe extended their domain, their alumni's arms reached lower. As the phallic cult spread, so did impotence. In great wealth, great poverty. In health, sickness. In numbers, deception. Gorging, left hungry. Sedated, left restless. Telling all, hiding all. In flesh united, but forever separate. So we pressed on, through the valley of abundance, that leads to the wasteland of satiety. Passing through the gardens of fantasy, seeking happiness ever more ardently, and finding boundless despair ever more surely.

So the final conclusion would surely be that whereas other civilizations have been brought down by attacks of barbarians from without, ours had the unique distinction of training its own destroyers at its own educational institutions, and then providing them with facilities for propagating their destructive ideology far and wide, all at the public expense. Thus did Western Man decide to abolish himself, creating his own boredom out of his own affluence, his own vulnerability out of his own strength, his own impotence out of his own erotomania, himself blowing the trumpet that brought the walls of his own city tumbling down, and having convinced himself that he was too numerous, labored with pill and scalpel and syringe to make himself fewer. Until at last, having educated himself into imbecility, and polluted and drugged himself into stupefaction, he heeled over – a weary, battered old brontosaurus – and became extinct.

I wanted to conclude in this way: Christianity, I want to say, is indeed essentially a religion of hope. A new, stupendous hope, born of the Incarnation, and creating a tidal wave of creativity and joy to revivify a world as tired, bored, and decadent as ours. If now its impetus seems momentarily to be spent, we need not despair; history – a continuing parable whereby God's purposes are revealed for those with eyes to see – will continue to surprise us. Who would ever have ventured to suppose that it would be from the Marxist East, not the ostensibly Christian West, that would be heard the voice most clearly and eloquently stating once more the great propositions on which our Christian religion is founded: that through love, not power; in humility, not arrogance; we may best understand our Creator's purposes for us here on earth? And that voice, Alexander Solzhenitsyn – one among many – and speaking on behalf of many of his fellow countrymen, thereby demonstrating irrefutably that the whole stupendous effort made at such a fantastic cost in blood and tears to condition man to a purely terrestrial existence – the whole monstrous exercise in what is called, in the jargon of Marxism, “social engineering” – has been a gigantic failure; a total fiasco, as such efforts must always be. Including, I might add, crazed projects in our part of the world to sort out our genes in some more appropriate manner; to dispose of lives we consider worthless and decide ourselves who should be born and who exterminated before leaving the womb; even to achieve some sort of immortality by replacing our spare parts – liver, kidneys, heart, brain boxes even – as they wear out, and so keeping us on the road indefinitely, like vintage cars.

Should we not then rejoice that once more it's been revealed unmistakably that God never abandons us? That however somber the darkness, His light still shines? And however full the air may

be of the drooling of Muzak and the crackling of music, truth will make itself heard? That in all conceivable and inconceivable human circumstances, what the apostle Paul called, “the glorious liberty of the children of God,” – the only enduring liberty there is -- is always available to us? What then is this Christian hope, valid when first propounded and expounded some 2000 years ago; buoying up Western man through all vicissitudes and uncertainties of Christendom's 20 centuries; and available today – when it's more needed perhaps than ever before – as it will be available tomorrow and forever, whatever the circumstances, whoever the individual or individuals in question, and however inimical to it may be the shape of human society and the manner of the exercise of authority by those who rule over it? The hope is simply that by identifying ourselves with the Incarnate God, by absorbing ourselves in His teaching, by living out the drama of His life with Him – including especially the Passion, that powerhouse of love and creativity – by living with and in Him we are suddenly caught up in the glory of God's love flooding the universe: every color brighter, every meaning clearer, every shape more shapely, every note more musical, every true word written and spoken more explicit; above all, every human face, all human companionship, each and every human encounter a family affair of brothers and sisters with all the categories – beautiful or plain, clever or slow-witted, sophisticated or simple – utterly irrelevant; and any who might be hobbling along with limbs or minds awry; any who might be afflicted particularly dear and cherished; the animals too, flying, prowling, burrowing, and all their diverse cries and grunts and bellowings; and the majestic hilltops and the gaunt rocks giving their blessed shade; and the rivers making their way to the lakes and the sea – all, all irradiated with this same new glory.

What other hope is there which could possibly compare with such a hope as this? What victory or defeat, what revolution or counter-revolution, what putting down of the mighty from their seats and exalting the humble and meek who then of course become mighty in their turn and fit to be put down, what going to the moon or exploration of the universe? A hope that transcends all human hoping, and yet is open to all humans; based on the absolute of love, rather than on the relativities of justice; on the universality of brotherhood, rather than the peculiarity of equality; on the perfect freedom which is service, rather than the perfect service purporting to be freedom. It is precisely when every recourse this world offers has been explored and found wanting, when every possibility of help from earthly sources has been sought and is not forthcoming, when in the shivering cold the last fagot's been thrown on the fire, and in the gathering darkness every glimpse of light has finally flickered out – it is then that Christ's hand reaches out sure and firm, that His words bring their inexpressible comfort, that His light shines brightest abolishing the darkness forever. So, finding in everything only deception and nothingness, the soul is constrained to have recourse to God Himself and to rest content.