

No error is greater in modern religion than to believe Unitarians "think anything they please." Very definite and disciplining principles have controlled the minds of Unitarians over the four centuries of their corporate life. No cardinal of Rome has more faith than the earnest religious liberal in a Unitarian church. The nature of faith is a subject of fundamental importance to the free mind. Probing the depths of existence to discover the meaning and value of life is as central to the Unitarian as it is to any other searcher after truth. The method and substance of faith considered here is a subject of highest priority in religion. Three tenets of a free man's faith are discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER

4

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A FAITH FOR FREE MEN

Some Guiding Principles for a Liberal Faith

ALL men are faithful, but not all men can distinguish between faiths and separate the good from the evil. Even the great, good words of ancient religion do not always draw upon a full treasury of great and good faith. The words can circulate as a debased currency, a currency that can be used for illicit traffic in credulity.

The very age and the universal appeal of religion make it almost inevitable that its words shall degenerate into a debased coinage, a coinage that sometimes deceives even the elect and that repels those who would prefer moral and intellectual integrity to "piety." Every sharp ear would detect the counterfeit ring of this debased coinage of "faith," this brummagem currency of credulity. With good reason a modern prophet has said, "The beginning of all criticism is the criticism of religion."

Not only religion as ordinarily understood requires this criticism. Religion can disguise itself in Protean ways. A new faith can hide behind what appears to be irreligion. The criticism of religion must include the criticism of the faiths that are concealed behind seemingly irreligious words and acts.

What, then, is faith?

To many people the word signifies the acceptance of something that puts a strain on the intelligence. Accordingly, faith is to them a belief in what is not true or in what is by nature not fact but wish.

To others the word "faith" signifies the acceptance of some belief simply because a church, a tradition, a state, a party, demands it. They may recall that St. Ignatius Loyola once said, "We should always be disposed to believe that that which appears to us to be white is really black, if the hierarchy of the Church so decides." With some justification, then, they hold that faith is a belief in "some nice tenets," a "dear deceit" (as archaic as those phrases suggest) which relieves a man of the responsibility of thinking or which even prevents him from thinking for himself; it is therefore a positively dangerous thing, a form of bigotry that will brook no questioning or criticism and that dresses itself up as "the cure for modern pride" and as "humble obedience to the will of God."

But conventionally "religious" people have no monopoly on credulity. Those who reject the inherited "faith" are sometimes only the victims of a new credulity. Nothing could be more credulous than the belief that faith dies when some traditional belief dies. Our world is full to bursting with faiths, each contending for allegiance. Hitler claimed to teach men again the meaning of faith. Mussolini shouted to his disciples, "Believe, Follow and Act." "Fascism," he said, "before being a party is a religion." Those who were called to put down the battalions of the brown shirts and the black shirts were asked to show the faith that lies behind freedom.

So the procession of the gods passes over the stage of our world. Human history is not the struggle between religion and irreligion; it is veritably a battle of faiths; a battle of the gods who claim men's allegiance.

Not long ago I heard a German exile tell a story of Nazi horror. As he reached the end of his story he became mute with revulsion and indignation. How could he speak with sufficient contempt of what the Gestapo had done to his friend? Painfully he groped for words, and then, speaking with revived fear of the Gestapo officers who had committed the murder in cold blood, he asked, "Are these men completely without awe, are they completely without faith?" Immediately he answered his own question: "There is," he said, "no such thing as a man completely without faith. What a demonic faith is the faith of the Nazis!" We can readily understand what he meant. The differences among men do not lie in the fact that some have faith and others do not. *They lie only in a difference of faith.* The Gestapo put its confidence in obedience to the Führer, in obedience to the call of "blood and soil." Its victim placed his confidence in something thicker than blood, in something stronger than death or fear of death. Whether or not this particular victim used the word "faith" or any other words from religious tradition, we do not know.

but it is evident that he put his confidence in something more powerful and commanding than the Gestapo. It is possible that his was a faith for free men. In any event, such a faith did rise up against the Gestapo.

Fortunately, not many of us have had the experience of confronting Gestapo agents. We have liked to believe that we did not share *their* faith, yet we have all had some part in creating or appeasing Gestapos — and we could do it again. We have also had some part in stopping the Gestapo. In fact, the spirit, if not the brutality, of the Gestapo has to be stopped in ourselves every day, and we are not always successful, either because of our impotence or because of our lack of conviction. The faith of unfree men can raise its ugly head even in a "free" country.

Recently this fact was impressed upon me in an unforgettablely vivid way. During the second World War it was at one time my task to lecture on the Nazi faith to a large group of American army officers who were preparing for service later in the occupation army in Germany. As I lectured I realized that together with a just resentment against the Nazis I was engendering in the students an orgy of self-righteousness. This self-righteousness, I decided, ought somehow to be checked. Otherwise, I might succeed only in strengthening the morale of a bumptious hundred-percent "Americanism," and that was not the faith we were supposed to be fighting for. Towards the end of the lecture I recapitulated the ideas of the Nazi "faith," stressing the Nazi belief in the superiority of the Teutons and in the inferiority of other "races." I also reminded the officers of similar attitudes to be observed in America, not only among the lunatic and subversive groups but also among respectable Americans in the army of democracy. Then I asked these army officers to pose one or two questions to be answered by each man in his own conscience. First: "Is there any essential difference between your

attitude towards the Negro and the Jew, and the Nazi attitude toward other 'races,' — not a difference in brutality but a difference in basic philosophy?" "If there is an essential difference," I said, "then the American soldier might logically become a defender of the Four Freedoms, but if there is no essential difference between your race philosophy and that of the Nazis, a second question should be posed: 'What are you fighting for?'"

I blush when I think of some of the responses I received. I was immediately besieged with questions like these: "Do you think we should marry the 'nigger?'" "Aren't Negroes a naturally indolent and dirty race?" "Haven't you been in business, and don't you know that every Jew is a kike?" Questions like these came back to me for over an hour. I simply repeated my question again and again: "How do you distinguish between yourself and a Nazi?" Seldom have I witnessed such agony of spirit in a public place.

Many of these Americans who could not distinguish between themselves and Nazis came from "religious" homes, or they claimed to be representatives (or even leaders) of the American faith. Apparently their faith was quite different from the faith behind the Four Freedoms. On the other hand, many of them no doubt would have disclaimed possessing anything they would call faith, yet all of them, whatever their answers to these questions, spoke the faith that was in them, and for many of them it was a trust in white, gentile supremacy — faith in the blood.

Faith is by no means dead in the world. A devil's plenty of it is loose on the planet. "A man bears beliefs," said Emerson, "as a tree bears apples." He bears beliefs about himself, about his fellows, about his work and his play, about his past, about his future, about human destiny. What he loves, what he serves, what he sacrifices for, what he tolerates, what he fights against —

these signify his faith. They show what he places his confidence in.

Right or wrong, our faith must needs express itself and have its consequences for woe or weal. There is no escape. We cannot escape history, whether it be the history around us, the history behind us or the springs of history within us, for all of these are forces that make history—and we are caught in history. Down among the nerve cells and fibers, up in the brain cells as well as out in the world around us, faith is at work—or, rather, a multitude of faiths is at work.

The question concerning faith is not, "Shall I be a man of faith?" The proper question is, rather, "Which faith is mine?" or, better, "Which faith should be mine?" for, whether a person craves prestige, wealth, security, or amusement, whether he lives for country, for science, for God or for plunder, he shows that he has faith, he shows that he puts his confidence in something.

The faiths of the twentieth century have been as powerful and influential as any that have ever been. They have created its science and its atom bombs, its nationalisms and its internationalisms, its wars and its "peace," its heroisms and its despairs, its Hollywoods and its Broadways, its Wall Streets and its Main Streets, its Gestapos and its undergrounds, its democracies and its Fascisms, its socialisms and its communisms, its wealth and its poverty, its securities and its insecurities, its beliefs and its unbeliefs, its questions and its answers.

We must not believe every "pious" man's religion to be what he says it is. He may go to church regularly, he may profess some denominational affiliation, he may repeat his creed regularly, but he may actually give his deepest loyalty to something quite different from these things and from what they represent. Find out what that is and you have found his religion. You will have found his god. It will be the thing he gets most excited

about, the thing that most deeply concerns him. But speak against it in the pulpit or in the Pullman car, and he may forget what he calls his religion or his god and rush "religiously" to the defense of what really concerns him. The veins on his forehead will be distended, his eyes will flash, he will begin to raise his voice. What moves him now is more important than his creed or his atheism; it gives meaning and direction to his life, to his struggles and even to his foibles.

The fact that every man, whether he wills it or not, must put his trust in something, is no basis for any particular faith. Rather, the necessity as well as the fact shows only that man must *choose*. He cannot escape making a choice, nor can he escape the responsibility for the choice he makes, any more than he can escape its consequences. He cannot hide behind someone else's authority or choice. When a man delegates the decision to someone else, or to the Bible or a church, *he* makes the decision. The decision is his, and the claim that humility dictates the decision does not make the decision any the less *his* decision.

We cannot escape from freedom and its responsibilities. Every attempt to do so is an act of freedom, an act that must be implicitly repeated at every moment. Freedom is man's fate as well as his birthright, and he cannot, even if he wishes to, slide back into vegetability. Even the abuse of freedom is a use of freedom. Hence in our kind of world every faith is, in a certain sense, a faith of a free man, whether it is a faith that takes him with the prodigal son to eat with swine, or a faith that shackles him to a political or an ecclesiastical Führer, or a faith that generates freedom. *We have no choice but to be free in the choice of our faith.*¹

¹Contrast here the attitude of Pius IX who on December 8, 1864, "infallibly" condemned the following proposition as heresy: "Everyone is free to adopt and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he holds to be true."

Just because we are compelled to make a decision and a choice we are compelled to have faith in ourselves. Even the man who says he cannot trust his judgment will have to do so to the extent of deciding what he can trust. Indeed, the man who claims to be able to identify an infallible authority "above" himself really claims to be himself infallible. Such a claim as this presupposes an unwarranted (and credulous) faith in man.

Even the less credulous faith that acknowledges human fallibility also requires a faith in man. This faith in man may be a more modest one than that of orthodox belief in infallibility, but it holds that a more reliable object of faith can be found if men are free to learn from each other by mutual criticism, free to discard old error, free to discover new insight, free to judge, free to test. The free man's faith is not merely a faith in himself; it is a faith in the capacity of sincere men to find freely together that which is worthy of confidence. John Milton, the great Puritan apostle of freedom, epitomized this faith in discussion, in those ringing words that are always quoted when freedom of printing and of speech seems threatened: "Who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

The free man is not bound to accept a faith "once delivered." Indeed, he sees no virtue in accepting a faith simply on the ground that it was determined before his birth. In his view, consensus, not compulsion, free and open discussion, not docile obedience, should rule in matters of faith. The denial of the right and duty to discuss one's faith is tantamount to making credulity a work of piety.

The free man does not live by an unexamined faith. To do so is to worship an idol whittled out and made into a fetish. The free man believes with Socrates that the true can be separated from the false only through

observation and rational discussion. In his view the faith that cannot be discussed is a form of tyranny.

An unexamined faith is not worth having, for it can be true only by accident. A faith worth having is a faith worth discussing and testing. To believe that a fence of taboo should be built about some formulation is to believe that man can become God (or his exclusive private secretary) and speak for him. No authority, including the authority of individual conviction, is rightly exempt from discussion and criticism. The faith of free men, if it is to escape the tyranny of the arbitrary, must be available to all men, testable by all men (and not merely by an élite), valid for all men. It is something that is intelligible and justifiable.

As creatures fated to be free, as creatures who must make responsible decision, what may we place our confidence in? What can we have faith in? What should we serve?

The first tenet of the free man's faith is that his ultimate dependence for his being and his freedom is upon a creative power and upon processes not of his own making. His ultimate faith is not in himself. He finds himself an historical being, a being living in nature and history, a being having freedom in nature and history. The forms that nature and history take possess a certain given, fateful character, and yet they are also fraught with meaningful possibilities.

Within this framework man finds something dependable and also many things that are not dependable. One thing that is dependable is the order of nature and of history which the sciences are able to describe with varying degrees of precision.²

²For other discussions by the author see *New Perspectives on Peace*, chap. 11; *On Being Human—The Liberal Way; The Changing Reputation of Human Nature*.

How long the order of nature will continue to support human life is beyond the ken of man and his science. Probably our earth and our sun will one day cool off and freeze. Moreover, every man is condemned to what we call death. Whether beyond this death there is a new life is a matter of faith, of a faith that trusts the universe as we have known it. Like one of old we may say to this universe and its ruling power, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Whatever the destiny of the planet or of the individual life, a sustaining meaning is discernible and commanding in the here and now. Anyone who denies this denies that there is anything worth taking seriously or even worth talking about. Every blade of grass, every work of art, every scientific endeavor, every striving for righteousness bears witness to this meaning. Indeed, every frustration or perversion of truth, beauty or goodness also bears this witness, as the shadow points round to the sun.

One way of characterizing this meaning is to say that through it God is active or is fulfilling himself in nature and history. To be sure, the word God is so heavily laden with unacceptable connotations that it is for many people scarcely usable without confusion. It is therefore well for us to indicate briefly what the word signifies here. In considering this definition, however, the reader should remember that among Unitarians, as well as among certain other religious liberals, no formulation is definitive and mandatory. Indeed, the word God may in the following formulations be replaced by the phrase, "that which ultimately concerns man," or by the phrase, "that which we should place our confidence in." Perhaps it would be well for the reader to make these substitutions.

God (or that in which we may have faith) is the inescapable, commanding reality that sustains and trans-

forms all meaningful existence. It is inescapable, for no man can live without somehow coming to terms with it. It is commanding, for it provides the structure or the process through which existence is maintained and by which any meaningful achievement is realized. (Indeed, every meaning in life is related to this commanding meaning which no man can manipulate and which stands beyond every merely personal preference or whim.) It is transforming, for it breaks through any given achievement, it invades any mind or heart open to it, luring it on to richer or more relevant achievement; it is a self-surpassing reality. God is that reality which works upon us and through us and in accord with which we can achieve truth, beauty or goodness. It is that reality which works in nature and history, under certain conditions creating human good in human community. Where these conditions are not met, human good, as sure as the night follows the day, will be frustrated or perverted. True freedom and individual or social health will be impaired. It is only because of this reality that

. . . Spirit with Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

The only person who is really an atheist is one who denies that there is any reality that sustains meaning and goodness in the human venture. He is one who recognizes nothing as validly commanding. It is very difficult to find this sort of atheist, perhaps impossible.

This reality that is dependable and in which we may place our confidence is, then, not man — in it man lives and moves and has his being — nor is it a mere projection of human wishes; it is a working reality that every man is coerced to live with. In this sense the faith of the free man is not free; man is not free to work without the sustaining, commanding reality. He is free only to obstruct it or to conform to the conditions it demands for growth. This reality is, then, no human con-

trivance; it is a reality without which no human good can be realized and without which growth of meaning is impossible. Theists and religious humanists find common ground here. They differ in defining the context in which human existence and human good are to be understood. (Many humanists would not accept some of the formulations in the present chapter even though they might grant the validity of the intention.)

The free man's faith is therefore a faith in the giver of being and freedom. Man's dignity derives from the fact that he participates in the being and freedom of this reality. If we use the terms of historical Christianity we may say, man is made in the image of this creative reality. Under its auspices he becomes himself a creator.

But man not only participates in this divinely given being and freedom. Through the abuse of freedom he also perverts and frustrates them. He distorts or petrifies the forms of creation and freedom. Hence the free man cannot properly place his confidence in his own creations; he must depend upon a transforming reality that breaks through encrusted forms of life and thought to create new forms. The free man puts his faith in a creative reality that is re-creative.

The second tenet of the free man's faith is that the commanding, sustaining, transforming reality finds its richest focus in meaningful human history, in free, co-operative effort for the common good. In other words, this reality fulfills man's life only when men stand in right relation to each other. Man, the historical being, comes most fully to terms with this reality in the exercise of the freedom that works for justice in the human community. Only what creates freedom in a community of justice is dependable. "Faith is the sister of justice." Only the society that gives every man the opportunity to share in the process whereby human potentiality is realizable, only the society that creates the social forms

of freedom in a community of justice (where every man is given his due), only the freedom that respects the divine image and dignity in every man are dependable. As Lincoln put it, "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it."

A faith that is not the sister of justice is bound to bring men to grief. It thwarts creation, a divinely given possibility; it robs man of his birthright of freedom in an open universe; it robs the community of the spiritual riches latent in its members; it reduces man to a beast of burden in slavish subservience to a state, a church or a party—to a man-made God. That way lie the grinding rut and tyranny of the Vatican line, the Nuremberg line and the Moscow line, different though these lines are from each other in their fear and obstruction of freedom.

To try to manipulate or domesticate the integrity of freedom is to rely upon the unreliable — an attempt that ends in reliance upon arbitrary power and upon arbitrary counsels. Sooner or later the arbitrary confronts either stagnation from within or eruption both from without and from within. The stars in their courses fight against it.

This faith in the freedom that creates the just community is the faith of the Old Testament prophets. They repudiated the idea that the meaning of life is to be achieved either by exclusive devotion to ritual or by devotion to blood and soil, the idols of the tribe. The "holy" thing in life is the participation in those processes that give body and form to universal justice. Injustice brings judgment and suffering in its train. It is tolerated only at the peril of stability and meaning.

Again and again in the history of our civilization this prophetic idea of the purpose of God in history comes

to new birth. Jesus deepened and extended the idea when he proclaimed that the kingdom of God is at hand. The reign of God, the reign of the sustaining, commanding, transforming reality, is the reign of love, a love that fulfills and goes beyond justice, a love that "cares" for the fullest personal good of all. This love is not something that is ultimately created by man or that is even at man's disposal. It seizes man and transforms him, bringing him into a new kind of community that provides new channels for love.

Jesus uses the figure of the seed to describe this power. The power of God is like a seed that grows of itself if man will use his freedom to meet the conditions for its growth. It is not only a principle by which life may be guided; it is also a power that transforms life. It is a power we may trust to heal the wounds of life and to create the joy of sharing and of community. This is the power the Christian calls the forgiving, redemptive power of God, a power every man may know and experience whether or not he uses these words to describe it.

Not that it demands no wounds itself. It drew Jesus up Golgotha to a cross. Thus Jesus was not only a martyr dying for his convictions, but also the incarnation of the affirmative power of love transforming life, even in death, and creating a transforming community, a fellowship of free men yielding to the tides of the spirit.

This commanding, sustaining transforming power can, at least for a time, be bottled up in dead words or in frozen institutions. (The cross has been smothered in lilies.) The sustaining, transforming reality can be perverted by wilful men, abusing their freedom, into a power that up to a point supports evil — yet, if man could not so abuse his freedom, he would not be free.

In history and in the human heart there are, then, destructive as well as creative powers. These destructive

powers are manifest in the social as well as in the individual life, though they are most subtly destructive in the social life where the individual's egotism fights under the camouflage of the "good" of the nation, the race, the church, or the class. These destructive impulses (thoroughly familiar to the psychologist if not to their victims) seem veritably to "possess" men, blinding them, inciting them to greed, damaging the holy gifts God provides. This is precisely the reason for the need of the redemptive, transforming power. Indeed, "pious" men are often the most in need of the transformation.

The third tenet of the free man's faith is that the achievement of freedom in community requires the power of organization and the organization of power. The free man will be an unfree man, he will be a victim of tyranny from within or from without, if his free faith does not assume *form*, in both word and deed. The commanding, transforming reality is a shaping power; it shapes one's beliefs about that reality, and when it works through men it shapes the community of justice and love.

There is no such thing as poetry without poems, art without paintings, architecture without buildings, and there is no such thing as an enduring faith without beliefs. The *living* spirit, says the poet Schiller, creates and molds.

There can be no reliable faith for free men unless there are faith-ful men and women who form the faith into beliefs, who test and criticize the beliefs and who then transform and transmit the beliefs. This process of forming and transforming the beliefs of the free faith is a process of discussion; it is a co-operative endeavor in which men surrender to the commanding, transforming reality. The only way in which men can reliably form and transform beliefs is through the sharing of tradition and new insights and through the co-

operative criticism and testing of tradition and insight. In other words, men must sincerely work with each other in order to give reliable form and expression to faith. This is the only way in which freedom *from* tyranny can be fulfilled in freedom *with* justice and truth.

Belief in merely individualistic, fissiparous freedom of faith can lead only to vapidty, to a faith in "I know not what," to faith in the arbitrary.

Faith in and knowledge about the commanding, sustaining, transforming reality cannot be "just any faith." If it is to make a difference, if it is to enable us to distinguish between ourselves and Nazis, then it must have a definite, particular form. Religious liberals who say that religious liberalism encourages people merely to think as they please no longer believe there is a commanding reality. They have become "faith-fully" neutral, and this neutrality is only a halfway station (if not already a camouflage) for an unexamined faith, for an unreliable, destructive faith. Neither the vague nor the neutral "faith" can be overcome except in a faith-ful community.

The free church is that community which is committed to determining what is rightly of ultimate concern to men of free faith. It is a community of the "faith-ful" and a community of sinners. When "alive," it is the community in which men are called to seek fulfillment by the surrender of their lives to the control of the commanding, sustaining, transforming reality. It is the community in which men are called to recognize and abandon their ever-recurrent reliance upon the unreliable. It is the community in which the living spirit of faith tries to create and mold life-giving, life-transforming beliefs, the community in which men open themselves to God and each other and to commanding, sustaining, transforming experiences from the past, appropriating, criticizing and transforming tradition and giving that tra-

dition as well as newborn faith the occasion to become relevant to the needs of a time. These roots of faith grow in the individual as he participates in the worshiping, educating, socially active fellowship of the church. And certainly if they do not grow in the individual they will not grow in the family, if they do not grow in the family they will not grow in the community, and if they do not grow in the community they will not grow in the nation and the world.

Now the idea of forming a community of such a faith is a bold venture. It means that men must be willing not only to recognize their frustration of the transforming reality, but also to re-form themselves and their faith. As we have suggested, not every kind of freedom is permissible in this kind of community. Doctrinal tests are not the way to determine the character of the community, but if the community possesses no recognizable form and criterion (except that it offers absolute freedom), then it will be utterly undependable. It will degenerate into "faith-ful" and ethical neutrality.

An example of this degeneration recently came to light in a prominent congregation. The minister had been preaching vigorously and calling for action against race discrimination. Certain members of the board of trustees in the church did not like this sort of interpretation of the brotherhood of man; apparently they thought that freedom of faith should permit freedom to believe in race discrimination. They called their minister to task and charged him with jeopardizing the principles of a free church. He was wrong, they said, in assuming that the church must stand unambiguously against race discrimination. Some people in the group made this assumption, they admitted, but some did not. Therefore, if the church was to remain a free fellowship, these different ideas about race discrimination should be given equal respect. Otherwise, the freedom of faith would be violated! In effect these "Christians" wanted

their church to go the straight and narrow path — between right and wrong. They repudiated the “faith for free men” by trying to conceal injustice behind a simulated ethical neutrality.

In another recent instance of this sort of proposal of “faith-ful” neutrality, the minister is reported to have agreed to the request of the protesting members — on the condition that they would delete the phrase, “the brotherhood of man,” from the hymnbook and the liturgy. The proposal was dropped. Here we see the perennial task of the liberal faith, — to keep religion ethical.

A faith that creates no community of faith and a faith that assumes no definite form is not only a protection against any explicit faith, it is probably also a protection for a hidden idolatry of blood or state or economic interest, a protection for some kind of tyranny. It is not the faith of free men. The faith of free men must tangibly make them free in a community of human dignity and equal justice.

The community of justice and love is not an ethereal fellowship that is *above* the conflicts and turmoils of the world. It is one that takes shape in nature and history, one that requires the achievement of freedom with respect to material resources as well as with respect to spiritual resources. Indeed, the one kind of freedom is not genuine without the other. Freedom requires a body as well as a spirit. Man liveth not by spirit alone. A purely spiritual religion is a purely spurious religion; it is one that exempts its believer from surrender to the sustaining, transforming reality which demands the community of justice and love. This sham spirituality, far more than materialism, is the great enemy of religion.

Now, anything that exists effectively in history must have form, and the creation of a form requires power, not only the power of thought (mentioned above) but

also the power of organization and the organization of power. There is no such thing as goodness as such; there is no such thing as a good man as such. There is only the good husband, the good workman, the good employer, the good churchman, the good citizen. The decisive forms of goodness in society are institutional forms. No one can properly put his faith in merely individual virtue, even though that is a prerequisite for societal virtues. The faith of the free man must express itself in societal forms, in the forms of education, in economic and social organization, in political organization. Without these, freedom and justice in community are impossible. That there is something radically wrong with the social institutions we have inherited from the laissez-faire epoch is clear from the fact that in the United States nine hundred thousand out of our first two million young men of draft age were in 1940 rejected because physically or mentally unfit, and from the fact (which partially explains the first fact) that three quarters of our rural population alone are denied the medical care necessary to prevent physical deterioration. This means that there is something wrong with our power of organization.

The faith of a church or of a nation is an adequate faith only when it inspires men to give of their time and energy to shape the various institutions—social, economic and political—of the common life. A faith in the commanding, sustaining, transforming reality is one that shapes history. Any other faith is thoroughly undependable; it is also impotent. It is not a faith that molds history. It is the "faith" that enables history to crush man.

Here we confront a fact that can be ignored only at our peril. The creation of justice in community requires the organization of power. Through the organization of power the free man ties into history; otherwise he cannot achieve freedom *in history*. Injustice in community

is a form of power, an abuse of power, and justice is an exercise of just and lawful institutional power.

The kind of freedom that expresses itself only within the family and within the narrow confines of one's daily work is not the faith of free men. It is as lopsided as the other kind of "freedom" that tries to express itself only in larger public affairs and forgets that the health of the body politic depends upon the health and faith of its individual members. At best it creates and expresses cloistered virtues of loyalty, honesty and diligence. This kind of faith can be oblivious of the injustices of the economic and political order; it can be a form of assistance to the powers of evil in public life and consequently also in the private life. That is just what it is in many of our American cities. The corrupt machines of these cities, for example, could not exist were it not for the impotence and indifference of the "nice" people. These "nice" people have the faith that is the sister of injustice. If this "sorority" is inadequate to cleanse a city government, what likelihood is there that it can create a world community?

Today we are living in a time of sifting. No mere "return to religion" in the conventional sense will give us the vision or the power to match the demands. "Return to religion" as usually understood restores only the ashes and not the fires of faith. In a time when we must determine whether we will have "One World or None," only a costing commitment to a tough faith in the commanding, sustaining, transforming power of God will even start us on the steep path towards a world in which there will be room for men of a free faith. If we can get such a world without a struggle for justice, it will, like an unexamined faith, not be worth having. In fact, we shall not have it for long — for the Lord of history will not fail nor faint till he have set justice in the earth, until he have burst the cruel yoke asunder and given

liberty to the captive and to them that are oppressed. This is the Lord of whom it is commanded, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Would any other Lord, of any name or no name, be lovable? If the men of a free faith do not love *that* commanding, sustaining, transforming reality, what else in heaven or earth could they or should they love? What else could they or should they have faith in?