

2A. THE SCRIPTURAL CASES OF APOSTASY: 5-7

3A. THE SUMMARY CASTIGATION OF THE APOSTATES: 8-10

The three O.T. illustrations of apostasy set forth three characteristics of apostasy in Jude's day, characteristics which will also exist in the Church in the last days before the Lord returns to execute judgment upon all (v. 15).

1b. The debauched dreamers: 8

8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Jude has already characterized these apostates in his day and in the latter days as those who are guilty of impiety, immorality and irreligiosity. Now he offers additional detail. He describes the acts of these apostates with the three verbs: pollute, reject and slander. These verbs serve as a comparison of the apostates with the unbelieving Israelites (v. 5), the rebellious angels (v. 6) and the perverted Sodomites (v. 7).

The term "likewise" links verse 8 with the foregoing section and the term "also these" places these intruders in the same tragic category.

1c. They are dreamers of defilement: 8a

They dream or see delusions. The participle "dreaming" appears to be a reference to the empty speculations of these men. Jude perhaps has the Septuagint (LXX) version of Is. 54:10 in mind which speaks of dogs that dream and make noise in their sleep. Dreaming could also be "a metaphorical description: they live in a subjective dream world of unreality. . . They substituted the unreal world of their fancies for the real world of divine truth and righteousness." (Hiebert, p. 242-243). The word dreamer applies to all three actions. They defile the flesh, despise dominions and degrade dignitaries. The verbs are in the present tense and middle voice, indicate their continuing condition resulting in self-gratification.

By defiling the flesh, they not only defile themselves but others. The defilement is not restricted to the physical body but extends to the moral nature as well. In Tit. 1:15 and Heb. 12:15 the verb denotes moral impurity. Not being satisfied to be polluted themselves, they drag others into their moral defilement. Their action is reminiscent of Satan who drew one third of the stars of heaven with him. (Rev. 12:4)

2c. They are despisers of dominion: 8b

They set at nought dominion. The word used is kurioteta, derived from the word "Lord" (kurios), hence ruling power or dominion. The reference here may be to (1) secular powers, (2) ecclesiastical offices, as well as (3) angelic rank. Hiebert suggests that the term refers to Christ's authority over the lives of His people (p. 245). While in 2 Pet. 2:10a they despise dominion, in Jude 8 this inner attitude becomes an action of a stubborn refusal to recognize divine authority. It is a continuous rebelling against the Lord's authority as the apostates themselves are the only authority which they recognize.

Coder rightly sees a similar situation of rebellion against the Lord and His authoritative Word today:

"Never before has there been such a concentrated assault upon the Person of Christ, as has been unleashed within the present century in the religious press and in the spoken utterances of many religious leaders. Men rail not only against the deity of the Prince of glory; they speak out against what is written about the purpose of His death, oppose the truth of nearly every other historic basis of Christianity.

If we were to look for further illustrations of the truth of this third characteristic of apostasy, we would find widespread ridiculing even of the existence of the personal Devil, who is revealed in the Bible as the god of this world. We would find Moses called a man who could not even write; Isaiah scoffingly given the name "Deutero-Isaiah"; Daniel described as a man who never even existed; the writers of the Gospels accused of falsehood; the apostle Paul referred to as a false teacher. Men and institutions truly honoring and obeying God in this generation are attacked and accused of all manner of evil." (p. 56)

3c. They are degraders of dignitaries: 8c

The term "and rail at dignities" is a difficult one. The particle de sets off the phrase, making the action different from the preceding one. The dignities are, literally, glories (doxas), a reference to majestic, illustrious persons. The probable personages may be the civil magistrates or ecclesiastic leaders but the context and the similarity with 2 Pet. 2:10-11 would indicate that doxas denotes a class of angelic beings, perhaps the holy angels.

Green suggests that these irreverent infidels "became disenchanted with the whole notion of angels, and regarded such enlightened Christians as themselves as emancipated from such primitive ideas. Perhaps they scoffed at the very existence of transcendent powers of evil. Perhaps they blasphemed the angels as agents of the Demiurge (the inferior god of creation) if they were at all far advanced along the road to developed Gnosticism. They could well have blasphemed by adducing the (fallen) angels as examples of and encouragements to fornication. Perhaps the orthodox reproached them with having fallen, in their immorality, under diabolical powers, to which they returned a mocking answer, regarding such powers, if they existed, as utterly impotent over themselves." (p. 169)

The irreverent railing (blaspheming, blasphemousin) of holy angels by the apostates in verse 8 stands in striking contrast to the respect Michael the archangel shows to Satan in verse 9.

2b. The abominable accusers: 9

1c. The implication of the verse:

The actions and attitudes of Michael the archangel are held up to underscore the audacity of the abominable accusers. Michael neither displayed a flippant attitude toward the Devil nor gave a rude answer to him. Both extremes need to be avoided in dealing with the satanic and supernatural. Apparently

9 Yet Mi'chaēl the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Mō'seš, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

the apostates were guilty of one or the other.

2c. The illustration:



Whereas these apostates rail against dignities, Michael did not blaspheme the devil while contending with him over the body of Moses. The force of the present middle participle diakrinomenos shows that the contending was "a continued altercation in which Michael was engaged with Satan in a prolonged verbal battle, yet in which Michael arrogated nothing to himself, archangel though he is, but turned the devil over to the Lord Himself--'The Lord rebuke thee!'" (Lawlor, p. 78).

Michael did not venture to bring against Satan any accusation or judgment but treated him with respect, knowing full well Satan's deadly and dangerous nature. During the disputation (dialogo) which raged back and forth, Michael at no time over-stepped the bound of his authority. And yet this is exactly what the apostate blasphemers in Jude's day did. In the words of Lenski:

"The logic is strong. Mockers, mere men, sinners--mighty angels, holy, heavenly, yea, Michael the archangel. No

provocation, only the mockers' own arrogant unbelief--the greatest provocation, even by the devil himself. Outright, direct, wilful, insulting blasphemies of Christ's own glories--not even a word too much against even the devil." (p. 638)

Michael whose name means "Who is like God?" is called here in verse 9 the archangel. He is mentioned 3 times in the Old Testament (Dan. 10:12,21; 12:1) and twice in the New Testament (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). He appears to be the special protector of Israel and at the death of Moses, he protects the earthly remains of the leader of Israel from the design of the devil ("accuser").

It is nowhere disclosed why this confrontation took place. Perhaps Satan laid claim to Moses' body since Moses was a murderer (Ex. 2:12). Satan as the father of all murderers (Jn. 8:44) demanded his right to dispose of Moses' body, having been deprived of Moses the person.

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
East of the Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

"That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling,
Or saw the train go forth:
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun.
* * * * *

"This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword,
This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word.
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

"And had he not high honor?
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state while angels wait,
With stars for tapers tall,
And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,
To lay him in the grave?

"In that strange grave without a name,
Whence his uncossined clay
Shall break again—O wondrous thought!—
Before the judgment-day,
And stand with glory wrapt around
On the hills he never trod,
And speak of the strife that won our life
With the incarnate Son of God.



"O lonely grave in Moab's land!
O dark Beth-Peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God has his mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
Of him He loved so well."

MRS. C. F. ALEXANDER.

The limits of Satan's activities toward the believer are set by God. Especially at the vulnerable time of the believer's death, the "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14) are active in behalf of the saints. It may be inferred from Jude 9 that angels protect the physical remains of the believer. It is clearly taught by the Lord that at the moment of death the angels conduct the soul and spirit of the saint into the presence of the Lord. Thus Christ relates that when the poor man Lazarus died, "he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). What a blessed assurance for every believer. Especially at the time of death the Lord envelops His own in His loving care, dispatching His special spirits to minister to our physical and spiritual remains.

Deut. 34:5-7



Angelic protection of the saint's physical remains

Luke 16:22



Angelic protection of the saint's immaterial being

3c. The inspiration:

Two questions need to be answered concerning the event only mentioned here by Jude. Where did Jude obtain his information? Is the story true?

Normally the apocryphal book called the Assumption of Moses is cited as the source. Clement, Origen and Didymus refer to the similarity between Jude's epistle and the Assumption of Moses. But none of these says Jude quotes it. They simply indicate that both Jude and the Assumption of Moses speak of the same event, never directly stating Jude's dependency on this apocryphal book. (Lenski, p. 629)





ST. LUKE 16

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into A'břā-hřām's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;



DEUTERONOMY 34

5 ¶ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.
7 ¶ And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Gleason Archer stresses the integrity of the Scriptures at this point and the reliability of the account.

Did Jude err when he cited nonbiblical sources?

Jude 9 and Jude 14 are the passages that raise this question. Verse 9 refers to a controversy between the archangel Michael and the Devil in regard to the disposition of the body of Moses after he had died on Mount Pisgah: "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" This account is not found in the Old Testament but is thought to have been included in a Christian treatise (now lost) entitled "the Assumption of Moses" (cf. Buttrick, *Interpreter's Dictionary*, 3:450), at least according to Origen (*On the Principles* 3.2.1). . .

It would be a logical fallacy to argue, however, that an inspired biblical author like Jude was strictly limited to the contents of the canonical Old Testament for all valid information as to the past. Both Stephen (in Acts 7) and the Lord Jesus (in Matt. 23) refer to historical episodes not recorded in the Old Testament. Apparently there was a valid and accurate body of oral tradition available to believers in the New Testament period; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were perfectly able to report such occurrences in connection with their teaching ministry. We are to deduce from this passage, then, that there was such a contest waged by the representatives of heaven and hell over the body of Moses.

(Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties,
p. 430.)

3b. Brute beasts: 10

II PETER 2

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

JUDE

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

1c. Their brutish conversation:

Like his brother James, Jude denounces the sins of the tongue frequently in his short epistle. He accuses them because they "speak evil of dignities" (v. 8) as well as "of those things which they know not" (v.10). He refers to the gainsayings of Core" (v. 11) and the "hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (v. 15) as well as the "murmerers," "complainers," "whose mouth speaketh great swelling words" (v. 16). (Wolff, p. 91-92)

2c. Their brutish conduct:

The repeated use of "but these" is a contemptuous reference to the apostates of whom Jude speaks with increasing bitterness (12,14,19,20). Verse 10 falls into two balanced statements with the particles men, "on the one hand" and de, "on the other hand."

1d. Their daring attitude to what they do not understand: 10a

1e. Their spiritual blindness:

They "rail at whatsoever things they do not know," literally,

"whatsoever things, indeed, they know not they defame." The railing (blasphemousin) reminds the reader of v. 8 as being a characteristic of their conduct.

The present tense suggests this to be their habitual reaction to "whatsoever things they know not," that is, the invisible spiritual world, including angelic beings.

Apostates do not personally know (oidasin) angels. They are naturally blind to spiritual reality (1 Cor. 2:7-14) and possess satanically darkened minds (2 Cor. 4:4).

2e. Their personal boorishness:

The less they know the more they blaspheme, rail, speak abusively. Since the tongue is an index of their inner character, in their reaction to the spiritual and supernatural realm they show their own abysmal ignorance.

2d. Their destructive actions in the things they do understand: 10b

1e. Their standard:

Over against the spiritual and supernatural things which they do not know stand "the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals" (NASB). Claiming to be Christian, these apostates know only that which the beasts instinctively know. Jude pictures their gross state. Professing Christians know only what the irrational animals know and allow themselves to be governed by animal instinct and passion.

2e. Their destiny:

Wolff fittingly remarks:

"Jude uses scathing irony: What they don't know they blaspheme and what they understand destroys them" (p. 93).

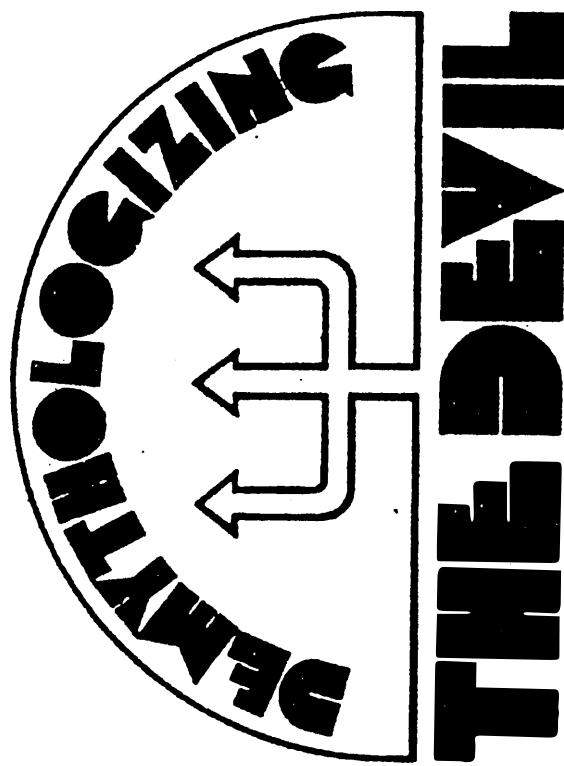
The apostates live like irrational beasts which perish (Ps. 49:12,20). They turned the evangel into Epicureanism, "perverting the grace of God into lasciviousness and made their belly their god" (Rom. 16:18).

The end result is their total destruction or perversion (phtheirontai). Since the verb is either middle or passive in voice, the destruction may refer to a fate similar to that of the unbelieving Israelites, rebellious angels or debauched Sodomites (v. 7), or it may indicate that by their excess they will bring ruin upon themselves. At any rate, the very things which they enjoy will destroy them.

The liveliest debate of the week-long assembly occurred during a discussion on "The Problem of a Personal Devil and Demons," a paper written by the theology and culture council in response to a resolution last year. Council member Harrison Taylor said that the film *The Exorcist* was the "straw that broke the camel's back." Many commissioners told of young people from their churches who were involved with the occult and Satan worship.

After discussing the literal and the symbolic interpretations of Satan and demons and what is meant by "personal," the paper comes out for a symbolic interpretation of Satan as "the absence or negation of the good which God is. . . . It concludes: "In answer to the question whether we believe in a personal devil and demons, we can only answer with a flat, 'Of course not!'"

Southern Presbyterians: Issues in Limbo



CHRISTIANITY TODAY
July 18, 1975
32 [1034]

APOSTASY IN HISTORY

APOSTASY IN THE CHURCH

APOSTASY TODAY

ARROGANCE OF THE ISRAELITES

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

DREAMERS OF DEFILEMENT

PHYSICALLY
IMMORAL



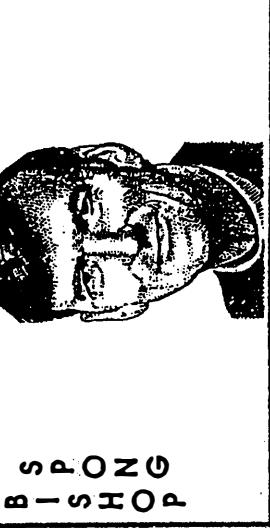
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APOSTASY OF THE ANGELS

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

DESPISERS OF DOMINION

INTELLECTUALLY
IN SUBORDINATE



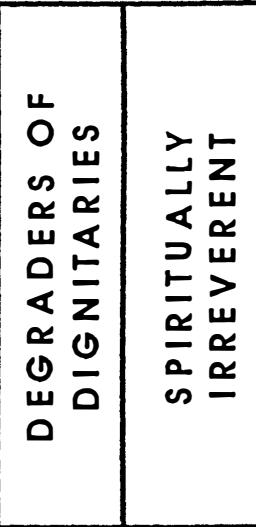
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ABOMINATIONS OF THE CANAANITES

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.



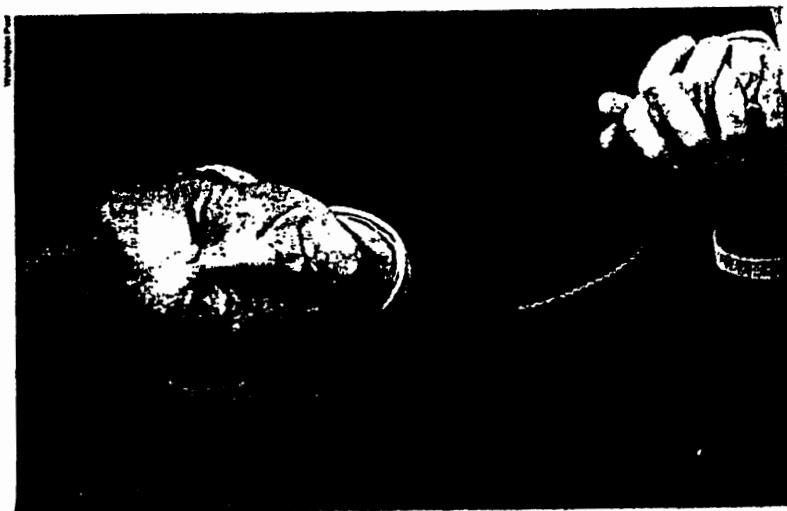
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DEGRADERS OF
DIGNITARIES
SPIRITUALLY
IRREVERENT



Ted Turner
1990 Humanist of
the Year



Episcopal bishop
John Spong of Newark



Paul Tillich

Jesus Christ, as portrayed in some New Testament passages, is “narrow-minded” and “vindictive.” The Gospel writers “twisted” the facts concerning Jesus’ resurrection, which was never meant to be taken literally. The virgin birth of Christ is an unthinkable notion, and there is not much value in the doctrine of the Trinity, or in the belief that Jesus Christ was sent to save fallen humanity from sin. St. Paul, the missionary of Christianity to the Gentiles, was a repressed and “self-loathing” homosexual. As for the Old Testament, it contains a “vicious tribal code of ethics” attributed to a “sadistic” God. The idea that Yahweh bestowed the Promised Land upon the Israelites is “arrogance.”



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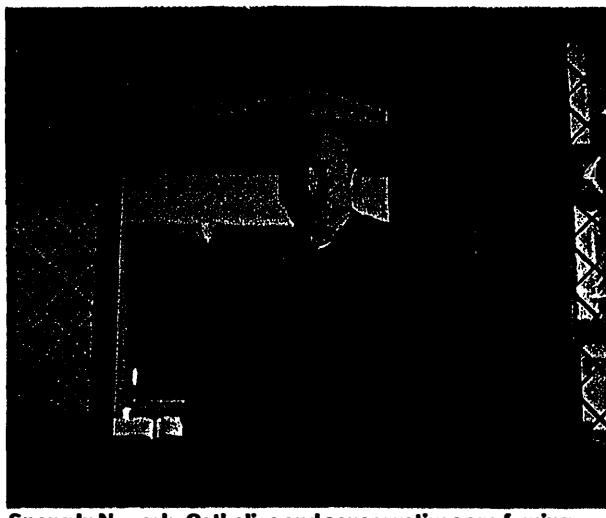
More Sponganeous Eruptions

An Episcopal bishop's unorthodoxy reaches epic proportions

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Excerpts from a tract by a staunch atheist? On the contrary, those are assertions offered by a bishop of America's Episcopal Church, John Spong of Newark, in his new book, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism* (Harper San Francisco, \$16.95). Spong's unorthodoxy is of long standing, but it has now reached epic proportions. His previous book, *Living in Sin?*, assailed Christian dos and don'ts on sex and asserted that nonmarital sex can be holy under some circumstances. After the work appeared in 1988, Spong ordained a sexually active gay priest, inspiring the Episcopal House of Bishops to "disassociate" itself from Spong's action.

The provocative prelate also has Ro-



Spong In Newark: Catholics and conservatives are fuming

Are there limits to what a churchman may disbelieve?

man Catholics fuming. A task force in his Newark diocese has just declared that Catholicism's view of women is "so insulting, so retrograde that we can respond only by saying that women should, for the sake of their own humanity, leave that communion." Spong handpicked the panel, and offers no particular criticism of its assertions, though he says he might have employed milder language. Newark's Catholic Archbishop, Theodore McCarrick, has decried the "offensive attacks" on Catholicism.

In *Rescuing the Bible*, Spong brands traditional Catholicism as a "destructive" creed. But he is even more offended by con-

servative Protestants who take a literal view of biblical exegesis. Spong, 59, held similar beliefs in his boyhood as a practicing Presbyterian, and has admitted that Fundamentalism gave him a "love of Scripture that is no longer present in the liberal tradition of the church." In taking aim at literalism, Spong declares his goal is to reveal the spiritual truths underlying the biblical text. Still, his book lashes out both at the conservative view of the Bible and at its adherents, who are, Spong says, consumed by "enormous fear" of doctrinal uncertainty.

Spong's wildly offbeat convictions raise an intriguing question: Are there any limits to what an Episcopal leader may believe—or disbelieve? His Paul-was-gay argument, based tenuously upon the Apostle's unmarried state and frequently mentioned sense of personal sin, is causing a growing uproar among traditionalists. But conservative Bishop William Frey, president of Pennsylvania's Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, doubts

any decisive stand will be taken by the church against his colleague's writings. "The House of Bishops has shown itself to be impotent in the face of challenges to the core beliefs of the church," Frey says. "We've been paralyzed by our politeness."

Los Angeles Bishop Frederick Borsch, who chairs the hierarchy's theology committee (on which Spong sits), explains that "we are not a confessional church that tries to write a definition of orthodoxy. A lot of us would defend this as the genius of Episcopalianism." Spong's latest work, however, leaves the genius somewhat embattled.

—By Richard N. Ostling.
Reported by Michael P. Harris/Newark

Milestones

DISMISSED. Eight state tax-evasion charges, against **Leona Helmsley**, 70, hotel operator; on the grounds of double jeopardy; in New York. Helmsley is appealing an earlier federal decision, on which she was sentenced to four years in prison, fined \$7 million and ordered to perform 750 hours of community service.

DIED. **Danny Thomas**, 79, comedian and philanthropist; in Los Angeles. In the 1950s and '60s he starred in the television series *Make Room for Daddy* and *The Danny Thomas Show* as the family's cranky but kind patriarch. Born Muzyad Yakhoo to Lebanese immigrants in Deerfield, Mich., Thomas made a name for himself more as a storyteller than as a jokester in nightclubs, radio and films. In 1962 he founded the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in

Memphis to treat cancer-stricken youngsters. The Saturday before he died he appeared in his son's TV show *Empty Nest*.

DIED. **James Knight**, 81, co-founder of the Knight newspaper chain; in Santa Monica, Calif. In 1933 Knight, with his brother, inherited the troubled Akron *Beacon Journal* and turned it around. The self-described "nuts and bolts" man of the empire, Knight later pushed his brother to purchase the *Miami Herald*, *Detroit Free Press* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In 1974 they merged with Ridder Publications; the Knight-Ridder chain now has 29 dailies.

DIED. **Pedro Arrupe**, 83, Spanish-born head of the Jesuits from 1965 to '83; in Rome. During his tumultuous reign over the largest Roman Catholic order, Arrupe was

considered one of the most influential superiors general in the Society of Jesus' 450-year history. In 1981 Arrupe, whose liberal stances frequently put him at odds with the papacy, suffered a stroke and in 1983 became the first superior general to resign instead of dying in office as his predecessors did.



DIED. **Dean Jagger**, 87, actor in more than 100 films who won an Oscar for *Twelve O'Clock High*; in Santa Monica, Calif.

DIED. **Aaron Siskind**, 87, photographer whose almost abstract black-and-white pictures were an influence on postwar Abstract Expressionists; in Providence.

The Pathetic Heresies Of Bishop John Spong

By PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

THE EPISCOPAL Church, it used to be said, was the Republican Party at prayer. Fortunately, the GOP is not quite that bad off.

At 2.4 million adherents and slipping, Episcopalians in the United States are now outnumbered by Muslims more than 2-to-1, by Southern Baptists 6-to-1. As both metaphor for, and explanation of, the decline and fall of the mighty fortress, Right Rev.

John S. Spong, Bishop of New Jersey, will do rather nicely. In a new book, Bishop Spong reaches the theologically novel, but commercially useful insight that St. Paul, the Great Evangelist, was a "self-loathing and repressed gay male."

"Nothing else," writes the bishop, "could count for St. Paul's self-judging rhetoric, his negative feeling toward his own body and his sense of being controlled by something he had no power to change." Bishop Spong picked up the idea in a 1937 work by Harvard professor of classics Arthur D. Nock, a professed atheist. From all quarters, the bishop is catching it. "Many are saying," writes The New York Times' Ari Goldman, "that this maverick voice of mainstream Christianity is fast losing credibility and may soon be regarded as little more than a street corner prophet."

"(D)emeaning and insulting," Archbishop McCarrick reportedly said. "As a Catholic man and a servant of the Church of Newark, I wanted to say, 'You don't talk about our women that way.'"

"The Episcopal Church, he went on,

"has apparently decided that ecumenism is a dead issue and interreligious relations should now be characterized

by open hostility and a call for

"I think Spong is self-destructing," said Rev. Todd Wetzel, the executive director of Episcopallians United, a conservative group based in Cleveland. "Much of his thinking will soon be dismissed."

Once again, the long pilgrimage of a mainstream Christian cleric, to make his faith "relevant" to a secular age, has ended in total irrelevance and secular ridicule. The title of the bishop's book is "Recapturing the Bible from Fundamentalism." But to call the Apostle to the Gentiles a closet homosexual is to insure that the Episcopalian young will take another look at fundamentalism.

Bishop Spong's Catholic counterpart, Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick of Newark, saw his opening and landed a haymaker on his separated brother: "This is not only shocking. It's one of the craziest things I've heard so far."

Bishop Spong had it coming. Earlier in the week, a draft report for the Episcopal convention over which Spong presides, declared: "One has to say that the Roman Catholic position with regard to women is so insulting, so retrograde, that we can only respond to it by saying that women should, for the sake of their own humanity, leave that communion."

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relations should now be characterized

by open hostility and a call for

Catholics to defect and leave the church," Archbishop McCarrick has the look of a contender.

This time, poor Spong went too far: no one is coming to his defense. Like the revered old professor who fell head over heels for the actress-tart in "Blue Angel," ending up as a clown act in her road show, there is something terribly pathetic about the bishop.

His career has been one long crusade for fashionable causes. In the '60s, he marched for civil rights; in the '70s, he came out for ordination of women; in the '80s, he called on priests to "bless" homosexual marriages. Determined to have "Trendier Than Thou" as epithet, the bishop says: "If Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles, then I am the apostle to the Church Alumni Association." Actually, the bishop has joined the alumni association, and just doesn't know it.

I am trying, he says, to make homosexuals more comfortable in the church. But active homosexuals, like active adulterers, are, in Christian doctrine, leading a life of sin. And it is not an expression of Christian love to make a sinner feel more comfortable about a life that can lead directly to the loss of his immortal soul.

... "This maverick voice of mainstream Christianity is fast losing credibility and may soon be regarded as little more than a street corner prophet..."

By PATRICK J. BUCHANAN
25
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1991
The Union Leader
Manchester, N.H.

The alternative Bishop Spong's Episcopal Church is offering Archbishop McCarrick says, "would be a church without morals ... a church without teaching, since each person could be his own pope, bishop, priest and deacon and someone could believe everything or nothing and still be a member in good standing."

Bishop Spong's embrace of abortion on demand and his trashy heresy about St. Paul raise other questions for Catholics. Of what value is ecumenical dialogue with an Episcopal bishop who is promoting such falsehoods? Ought we not be persuading some of Spong's remaining faithful to "defect and leave (their) church."

Four hundred years ago, men and women went to their deaths over differences between the Church of England and the Church of Rome that are not so wide as those between Archbishop McCarrick and Bishop Spong. Looking back, the benefits for the faith of pre-Vatican II evangelism seem somewhat more impressive than those of post-Vatican II ecumenism. Do they not?

There is sound counsel in the stilled voice of a dead poet.

"In God Without Thunder," his book on the spiritual futility of modern religion, John Crowe Ransom offers these maxims:

"With whatever religious institution a modern man may be connected, let him try to turn it back toward orthodoxy.

"Let him insist on a virile and concrete God, and accord no principle as a substitution."

So writes Henry Russell in the new

magazine, The Formalist; and, therein,

lies the road back to religious relevance.

At 2.4 million adherents and slipping, Episcopalian in the United States are now outnumbered by Muslims more than 2-to-1, by Southern Baptists 6-to-1. As both metaphor for, and explanation of, the decline and fall of the mighty fortress, Right Rev.

John S. Spong, bishop of New Jersey, will do rather nicely.

In a new book, *Bishop Spong* reaches the theologically novel, but commercially useful insight that St.

Paul, the Great Evangelist, was a "self-loathing and repressed gay male."

"Nothing else," writes the bishop, "could count for St. Paul's self-judging rhetoric, his negative feeling toward his own body and his sense of being controlled by something he had no power to change."



The Pathetic Heresies Of Bishop John Spong

His career has been one long crusade for fashionable causes. In the '60s, he marched for civil rights; in the '70s, he came out for ordination of women; in the '80s, he called on priests to "bless" homosexual marriages. Determined to have "Trendier Than Thou!" as epitaph, the bishop says: "If Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles, then I am the apostle to the Church Alumni Association." Actually, the bishop has joined the alumni association, and just doesn't know it.

I am trying, he says, to make homosexuals more comfortable in the church. But active homosexuals, like active adulterers, are, in Christian doctrine, leading a life of sin. And it is not an expression of Christian love to make a sinner feel more comfortable about a life that can lead directly to the loss of his immortal soul.

Ted Turner
1990 Humanist of
the Year



My parents weren't *real* religious, but they thought it was a good thing to do—you know, send the little ones to Sunday school and church. And then, later, I was sent to a Presbyterian preparatory school in Tennessee, and it was *extremely* religious. For the six years that I was there—from seventh through twelfth grades—we had the Bible as a required course. For six straight years, we had prayer meetings and chapel every day—that's five days a week, usually for half an hour, plus Sunday school and church on Sunday. And we had evangelists come every month to save our souls. There was no other influence in my life at that time, and it was pounded into us so much that I was saved at least seven or eight times.

Now, there are a lot of Christian ministers—and I spent a lot of time with them—who don't like wishy-washy Christians. And I'm not wishy-washy on *anything*, and wasn't then. Because, you know, if you accept the Bible for what it says—the New Testament at any rate, the way it's generally interpreted by the people I knew who believed in it—then everybody's going to hell. This life doesn't count for anything; it's just a transitory testing ground to see whether or not you're going to measure up to make it to heaven. You know, either you're going to be in paradise forever—and they don't tell you very much about it, what you're going to get; they just tell you that it's going to be so good you can't even *think* about it—or not. And they sure tell you a lot about that other place—about the everlasting torment there. And so, when I was 17, I agonized at night thinking about this. I said to myself, if that's the case, if this life doesn't amount to anything, then what I better become is a missionary and go out there and find the poor souls that aren't subjected to all this good religion as we are here in this school, that don't know they're gonna go to hell and spend the rest of eternity there. I'd better go out and help them.

So, for quite a while, I thought I was going to be a missionary. I got permission to go to church on Wednesday nights and Saturdays, as well as Sundays, plus vespers and all that other stuff. I mean, I was into it, okay? Then my sister got terminally ill. It took her five years to finally pass away. It was real harsh, and I prayed for her—I prayed and prayed and prayed, and nothing happened. And I couldn't understand why this loving, wonderful God that I had been taught was so

Humanism's Fighting Chance

by TED TURNER

The 1990 Humanist of the Year compares our world to the Titanic and raises to go down with the ship

Church panel on sexuality seeks reform

Louisville Courier-Journal

LOUISVILLE, KY. — A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) task force has recommended that the church permit ordination of homosexuals and ease restrictions on sex outside marriage

- two issues certain to spark fire-works at the denomination's General Assembly in June.

The Special Task Force on Human Sexuality was **commissioned** by the church in 1987 and **has** **BRIEFS** **with** **sensitive** **and** **sometimes** **controversial** **issues** **for** **three** **years**.

The task force asks that its work be studied throughout the 2.9 million-member denomination over the next two years. However, several presbyteries have filed recommendations calling for the General Assembly to scrap the report, said Fred Jenkins, director of constitutional services for the denomination's headquarters in Louisville.

APOSTASY IN THE MAINLINE DENOMINATIONS

Episcopal panel seeks ordination of gays

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP) — After three years' work, a commission of the Episcopal Church recommended Thursday that the way be cleared to allow ordination of homosexuals to the priesthood.

Under the Episcopal proposal, decisions about ordination would be left up to local diocesan bishops and their elected advisers.

Friday, March 1, 1991

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METHODISTS

Rethinking Homosexuality?

A United Methodist study committee recently voted 17 to 4 to recommend the church's 18-year-old statement, which says the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching," be changed. It wants the statement to say the church is "unable to arrive at a common mind" on the subject. The report acknowledged some support within the church for the current policy, but said others believe homosexuality is acceptable "when practiced in a context of human caring and covenantal faithfulness."

A minority of the study committee maintains that the present statement against homosexuality is correct. According to United Methodist news reports, one committee member, James Holsinger, a lay leader of the Virginia Annual Conference, reportedly resigned his seat saying he could not support the majority decision.

The committee's report will be considered at the 1992 general conference, the denomination's highest policy-making body.

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