



readers'

FORUM

Character and Maturity

A READER writes . . .

I have appreciated the tremendous thrust of your magazines, and their continuing movement into uncharted (for me) areas. I think of two areas I would like to see more light in. First is the work of Dr. Ernest M. Ligon of Union College in Schenectady—the Character Research Project. Isn't this frontier work with psychology? Doesn't this represent an outreach into unknown areas of human maturation and development? Perhaps he could present his theory of humans consisting of attitude clusters, and then you could get a Menninger, a May, and a few others to criticize it. Also, his theory of the eight areas of human character development in fatherly love and experimental faith. A real evaluation of this work might be both of interest to many, and of significance to the ongoing Christian education work.

Secondly, Elliott Dunlap Smith's article, "The Attainment of Maturity" in the February, 1957 issue, was grand. It suggests the dynamic interrelationship of two personalities, permitting the growth of both. I wonder if this could not also be expressed as the development of the human will? Is it not possible that counseling is the cautious facilitation of the self-development of the human will? "Will" may not be

an exclusive term; "soul," or "individuality," or anything else might do as well, but doesn't this suggest an area of investigation? Aren't there some hot Rankians who would give us something of real substance on this? Perhaps to this second unit a good theologian-counselor could go to town on the will being the essence of the person, and relating the will to sin, to the rejection or acceptance of Christ, and to evangelism and salvation.

May I commend you on the many things I have read in your magazine? Thank you so much for printing chapters from books which you have selected. Thank you for May, Jung, Freud, and the limited work in spiritual growth (let's have more!) by Paul F. Douglass (October, 1956). Many thanks for Fromm, Tillich, and for Burkhardt, who is different. It certainly doesn't hurt to be a little different. He has contributed much. May I mention Buber, and then the fraternity—the boys: Hiltner, Oates, Wise, Johnson, etc., who carry the load.

WILLIAM C. ROGERS
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On Erich Fromm

A READER writes . . .

Anything Erich Fromm has to say warrants careful reading. Indeed he has the power to confront and shock

new challenge emerges as
GEORGE B. ARBAUGH



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Saints**

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us from our lethargy. The article, "Love and Its Disintegration," (November, 1956) makes some sweeping assumptions which, I believe, are not as valid as they may sound at first glance.

The undercurrent of his reasoning seems to say that the character of modern man is the product of western capitalistic society. It is true that every man is profoundly affected by the culture and society in which he lives. However, if this were the whole truth, then it would follow that if we could create a more perfect society, we would then have more perfect men. This is what might be called spiritual socialism, akin to the social gospel, whose error is the more subtle because it is a half-truth.

It would be difficult indeed to draw a clearcut line to show how much the world is what it is because of what man is, and how much man is because of what the world is. The reciprocal nature of the man-world relation, however, should not excuse Dr. Fromm from noting that man is the creator of this "world" that then exercises such evil influence upon him. Might we not say as well that western capitalistic society is what it is because it accommodates the alienated nature of man? It is not the world or a society that alienates man from himself, his true nature, and from his fellow man; it is man alienated from God who structures a subjective-objective "world" which the Scriptures call evil. But we must here look with 20th century knowledge at the nature of the "evil" world, and not again unduly oppose spirit and nature, or spirit and flesh, creating a false and dangerous tension.

At any rate, far from making so much ado about the immaturity or blindness of the world, is the task of bringing light. God sent His Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. In short, any positive suggestion that helps us to overcome (or transform) the world is worth a hundred diagnoses that avail little. It is of no use to bemoan the state of our modern world. We will always have this, or a similar world, in our time. Our task is not to condemn the world, but transform it, insofar as we ourselves are transformed by the Spirit. "Be of good cheer," said Jesus, "I have overcome the world." Dr. Fromm is quite right—it is love that overcomes and transforms.

I want to commend PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY for bringing so many insights to help the whole man.

EDWARD DANRICH
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