

Three events put me in the mood and mold for this thinksheet: (1) A recent dream, (2) Last Sunday a.m., and (3) The splitting of close friends of ours (as in a Lincoln's Birthday letter yesterday, 1983). All three contributed to shaping the title, which I hope is both knowing and wise.

1. THE DREAM---In a N.Y. psychiatrist's home (where we had free beds for one of our monthly Manhattan plunges), I petted the cat, went to bed, and had what is very rare for me, a cat dream. A dead cat held by one of our children, who was weeping on its belly. "Why are you crying?" I asked. "Because you said cats don't go to heaven." "\_\_\_\_\_, I'm sorry I said that. How do I know whether cats go to heaven? Rather, now that my theology has become less rigid and more mature, I believe that all good within creation is taken up into God, Source of all good. Your cat, your beloved cat, was good, and has been taken up into God. I hope that means something good to you; it does to me." At breakfast, upon hearing the dream, the shrink said "Compensatory." I: "No doubt of it." Next time I was with this son of mine, I recounted the dream; and he said "How compensatory?" I hugged him, wept on his shoulder, and said "I'm sorry I wasn't a better father to you when you were little." When I was little, I had a close friend whose father dogmatized oppositely: no heaven for cats or anybody else....We have our children when we are young and know too much as well as too little, and have more energy than wisdom. "Animal spirits" carry us along through the diapers and fits and incessant demands; "natural love" keeps us at parenting, joy keeping at least slightly ahead of bother, human love and wisdom struggling to be born from the womb of the parent/child relationship, wisdom struggling against ignorance and false knowledge and false claims to both knowledge and ignorance. The Good Book says "Wait patiently for the LORD": it's a projection from the fact that the Good LORD waits patiently for us.

2. LAST SUNDAY---Loree and I had coffee in the pre-service gathering at Peale's church (next to the seminary), then walked a half block to the Little Church Around the Corner, where F.Temple preached a gem on resimplification. The sermon was biblical: the skipped sermon at Marble was (undoubtedly, predictably) heroic. Homer is heroic: his heroes achieve grandly more in the teeth of than with the help of the gods. In Peale's religion, the god so much stands ready to help the hero (= you, listener) that no existential distinction can be drawn between the god and the hero--an oddly hindu-ish American-business ontology, as in the phrase Peale often quotes, "The difficult we do immediately. Miracles just take a little longer!" (P.4 of the GUIDEPOSTS fluff-piece, "Expect a Miracle--Make Miracles Happen" (Guideposts/74)). In this success-religion (which today has a parallel in the growing business of health-religion), the biblical is commandeered by the heroic. E.g., on the same page: "The great people of the world are miracle-makers. ...The miracle is a cast of mind...well described in Ps.62: 'Wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.' Expect great things from God and you will receive great things from God. This is the basic principle known as the miracle principle. And those who live on the miracle principle have miracles popping up in their lives constantly." (Other preachers of this religion: Father Divine, Rev. Ike, and Robert Schuller of the glass cathedral.) In radical contrast to success-religion stand pathos-religions, which teach that instead of being miracle-makers we humans are mess-makers, hopeless without help from the god, from the Maker-Redeemer of heaven and earth. The Nazis were miracle-makers, and it was bad news for pathos-religionists (Jews & Christians). Ps.62 invites to expect *God*, not "great things." Though ordained as a Christian minister, Peale uses a tidbit of psycho-knowledge to rip off the Wisdom of the Cross, "which is foolishness to the perishing."

3. SPLIT---All my knowledge might function as less than nothing to protect my marriage: only a "wisdom from above" can hold, heal, give hope.

4. Computer-age distinctions: data, information, knowledge, wisdom.