

intervening stages, to supreme utterances of release and jubilation.

The day came when I put the finishing touch to "the book that would understand me," speak to my condition, and help me through life's happenings. A beautiful, sunny day it was. I went out, sat under a tree, and opened my precious anthology. As I went on reading, however, a growing disappointment came over me. Instead of speaking to my condition, the various passages reminded me of their context, of the circumstances of my labor over their selection. Then I *knew* that the whole undertaking would not work, simply because it was my own making. It carried no strength of persuasion. In a dejected mood, I put the little book back in my pocket.

But through a series of coincidences -- or providentially -- his wife secured a Bible. Cailliet relates the sequel.

I literally grabbed the book and rushed to my study with it. I opened and "chanced" upon the Beatitudes! I read, and read, and read -- now aloud with an indescribable warmth surging within . . . . I could not find words to express my awe and wonder. And suddenly the realization dawned upon me: This was the Book that would understand me! I needed it so much, yet unaware, I had attempted to write my own -- in vain. I continued to read deeply into the night, mostly from the gospels. And lo and behold, as I looked through them, the One of whom they spoke, the one who spoke and acted in them, became alive to me. This vivid experience marked the beginning of my understanding of prayer. It also proved to be my initiation to the notion of presence which later would prove crucial in my theological thinking.

The providential circumstances amid which the Book had found me now made it clear that while it seemed absurd to speak of a book understanding a man, this could be said of the Bible because its pages were animated by the presence of the living God and the power of his mighty acts. To this God I prayed that night, and the God who answered was *the same God* of whom it was spoken in the Book.<sup>33</sup>

And what about C. S. Lewis and C. E. M Joad and Malcolm Muggeridge, surely as modern and sophisticated as Bertrand Russell or Aldous Huxley or Rudolph Bultmann? They testify that the message of the Bible meets their needs intellectually and emotionally, satisfying mind and heart. So Joad, who as a professor of philosophy and psychology in the University of London was once fiercely anti-Christian, bears this witness to the faith which is biblically mediated.

... the belief in the fundamental, and in this life ineradicable nature of human sinfulness, seems to me quite intolerable unless there were some source of guidance and assistance outside ourselves to which we could turn for comfort. The more I knew of it, Christianity seemed to offer just that consolation, strengthening and assistance. And with that the whole Life force philosophy which I had hitherto done my best to maintain, came to seem intolerably trivial and superficial -- a shallow-rooted plant which, growing to maturity amid the lush and leisured optimism of the 19th century, was quite unfitted to withstand the bleaker winds that blow through ours. I abandoned it. Once I got as far as this, it seemed there was nothing to be lost and everything to be gained by going the whole way. What better hope offered than by the Christian doctrine that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners? But the assistance must be deserved as well as desired, to live in the way that Christ enjoined. Since it is impossible to live a Christian life alone, let alone to worship God by oneself, the next step was to join a corporate body of Christian worship, to return, in fact, to the bosom of the Church, and to set one's feet on the steep and slippery path that leads to Heaven.<sup>34</sup>

Or let Malcolm Muggeridge, one-time editor of *Punch* who with acid wit has assailed the shams and follies of contemporary culture, bear witness to the strange magnetism and impact of the Biblical documents.