TRUTH AND RELIGION

One of the problems that confront me as I delve into the possible future of my life is the part religion is to hold in it.

My early life and associations were of a mildly religious nature. My parents, while not active in any church organization, are quick to come to the defense of any religious movement or to give their moral support to anything intended to strengthen the position of the church.

My first realization that there was something incongruous in the religious system came when I was asked to teach a Sunday School class in my home church. I had the feeling that here, with a group of young people, was a chance to attack some of the problems which we, as young people, faced. Perhaps the difficulty came because we decided that the criterion by which we would judge our habits and actions was "Will this action or habit add to or deduct from our permanent satisfaction as we continue into life." On certain questions this brought us into conflict with the standards of our particular Creed, so we were asked to confine our discussion to more "pertinent" questions. As the result of this I excused myself from further duty.

This incident activated my mind to question the literal truth as established by the Bible.

As I see it, if one attempts to establish the truth of religion by proving the facts it decrees he must ultimately tear out sections of the Bible as false, must regard many of its illustrations as trivial, and must frown on many of its laws as being inconsistent.
If one is to accept the Bible, as is claimed by many religious people, purely on faith, then one must blind himself to much that he sees and to the reasoning of his own mind: he must live in a completely idealistic world.

Again if one attempts to mold religious dogma to fit his particular concept of creation and life the whole scheme becomes arbitrary and without established basis.

Some writers, one a noted historian, believe that a few men, such as Christ, Confucius, or Buddha, have had the ability to analyze life and to formulate a faultless philosophy by which to rule its conduct; but when it became recognized by the established church of that time that here was a man who had a superior concept of human existence, speedy attempts were made to subject the new philosophy to the restrictions of the old order and to reduce or eliminate its effect.

It is not my intention to write destructively for I believe the human requires some philosophy, some religious concept to satisfy its desire for truth. I should hate greatly to be considered atheistic, yet I cannot honestly allow myself to believe that which my reasoning tells me is false.

- Halsey Rinehart - '38