

1.
eyes were on
(John) Carson's watched the minister in the pulpit. *letting thought wander.*

The congregation was being well harranged on the evils of letting the other fellow do it. We should become involved, thought John. Involved with what? It seemed that all present involvement *was in* has to do with raising enough money to keep the ministers salary paid up to date. The usual Sunday offering was steadily declining which meant that soon there would have to be a canvas among the local congregation and adherents. That used to take place once a year, usually in the late fall. Harvest was over then and subscriptions were more freely given. Harvest was over *now* though and Carson found his thoughts wandering away from the sermon and settling on the question in everyone's mind and on every tongue. No sales of wheat. Granaries bulging with grain in every farm yard, and in many districts piled in the fields. Potential wealth, money-wise. Life and health for hundreds of thousands of people the world over, people who needed *food &* medical care, who if they had medical care, *could have both* would die of starvation *either could reach them.* before the doctors could reach them.

Carson
Do we really care, thought John. What did becoming involved really mean? Did it mean committees, meetings, driving home late at night, brain foggy from sitting in.

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a smoke filled room, mind reeling with facts and figures that meant nothing but lines on fancy embossed paper sent out from head office, 'answer requested', -polite synonym for demanded, at earliest convenience. Statistics! The word hung in ^{his} Carson's mind like ^{as} it always did whenever he heard it. An old friend saying to him forty years before.

" John, there are three kinds of lies in the world. Lies, damn lies, and statistics!" Funny thing to think of, sitting in church. Why, damn was a swear word. One never swore in church ~~although~~ one was often inclined that way. Perhaps the minister felt like it too. Poor beggar, he was trying his best. He really did not have much to work with ! Or did he ? If any one of us really needed help, ^{Carson} thought John, these people round me would be the first to offer. In the name of the church ? No ! Because a fellow man needed help, they'd be there. The product of years of Christian training, Perhaps. But did not so called savage tribes draw together when danger threatened. Family solidarity? But in this small world are we not all the human family. The Christian belief. All sons of the one Father. But do we really believe that ! Are we Christian ? One needed help. There did not seem to be much coming from the pulpit ~~and~~ in these days when ministers, especially the younger men, had become executives, whose business

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precluded them from any home visiting. Who did one turn to in times of frustration and despair. It would be a relief to talk some of these things over with the man in the pulpit but ^{he} ~~the guy~~ ^{did?} just does not have the time. The thought just occurred to Carson, who did Jesus have to talk to ? Goodness knows he was in trouble enough. He prayed. This humble yet proud man prayed. To God, whom he called Father. He had no one else. No minister to talk out his troubles to. Only His Father ! Questions, answers, questions, answers . What answer ? Is the church necessary ? Bury the dead ! "Let the dead bury their dead!" If Christ prayed to his Father, why cannot we pray to our Father ! " Behold , I am in the Father and the Father in me ! " " I am with you to the end of the age ." Then is that chap up there necessary ? Is that pulpit he stands in necessary ? Does he represent God, or an institution ? Questions. No answers ! The answer my friend is blowing in the wind, blowing in the wind. I am. This person, sitting in this seat is me, an individual, I see, hear, smell , taste, move, ~~live~~, I am. But who am I ? Why am I here ? Where do I go ? Questions, questions, no answer. Can that man up there tell me . I think not. He is as perplexed as I am, he wonders if he serves God or an institution. He is trying to bolster up my faith, our faith, and at the same time strengthen his own. Then why not share our experiences /

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We are a congregation. We should support one another.
That means the man in the pulpit too. How can we ?
We cannot communicate, I search for God, we ^{or false, seek} look for
God. ^{The man of God} He speaks as his institution directs him. Are
we free ? Is this man before me free, or is he too, like
us, bound on a wheel that forever turns and forever
reaches ? Nowhere! Nowhere ! Nowhere! Questions,
questions .No answer!

reminded him
An old jingle ran ^{through} across Carson's memory. ^{mind something} Perhaps
the minister ^{said, recalled it to memory} had reached away back. It was a bit of
a poem that he had copied for a manuscript one time
How did it run ? "So many faiths, creeds, crooked ^{tracks} tracks,
That, leading nowhere, craze the mind, When just more
humans who are kind Is all this old world lacks."

Just more humans who are kind !! How kind have
I been, thought John. That verse, poetry, thing of the
soul, across all the years. Summertime, an evening,
peaceful with the darkening green of summer# leaves
scarcely astir in the soft breeze. The smell of curing
hay from a nearby field. Two people walking. A young
man. A young woman. The girl, she was only a girl,
much the younger of the two. Happy ? No! The constrained
silence of unhappiness lay between them like a wall.
Both knew that this was the end of something that might
have been beautiful for both. On their return from
this walk their paths ~~divided~~ would divide. He unhappy
because he knew this girl loved him with all the ardency

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of her youth, doubly unhappy because he knew that in his vanity he had encouraged her, had drawn her toward him, using her young trust. She unhappy,, knowing that never again would she feel the same way toward anyone else. A child offering all it possessed to one it thought a friend and having the gift spurned. The first real love of a young woman, old beyond her years. 'But who shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better ~~than~~ for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea!!

She had heard that in Sunday School, but then she did'nt believe in this word of God business anyhow!

If this God ^{the man beside her} ~~that John said he believed in~~, was a just God, a loving God, would he let her father suffer, so lame, in pain every day, so crippled he could scarcely move. Would He have let her two loved brothers be killed on the seventeenth and eighteenth days of November in 'nineteen eighteen! Far off France!

No, France was never far off. ^{Their graves were there} This man at her side had never been to war, He knew nothing of sacrifice. But she loved him just the same. He had made no demands of her. At times she felt that he loved her a little and was happy. Then that awful quarrel. Would she ever forget it and would he ever forgive? "I search for God!"

His answer one day when she asked him what he was