

## In Memoriam J. M. Lalley

J. M. LALLEY, the beloved associate editor since 1963 and for most of that time book review editor of *Modern Age*, died in his home in Baltimore August 18th of last year in his 84th year. How indeed does one pay fitting tribute to a person one has never met personally, yet feels he knows better than most close friends after seventeen years of frequent and lively correspondence and phone conversations? Mr. Lalley's letters were a source of pure delight to this editor and other staff members of *Modern Age*. His observations, suggestions and criticisms were invariably couched in a most sincerely refined and diplomatic manner: "I seem not to have received such and such," or "I seem to be missing this or that." The contrast with usual academic bluntness hit this reader squarely.

Mr. Lalley is survived by his wife Spaulding, five sons, a daughter, eighteen grandchildren and one great-grandson. His love of his family and his strong feeling for family unity, love, and "oneness" caused him, I am certain, to be at one with Edmund Burke in calling for continuity through the forging of an eternal chain between living and dead, renewing excellence and the good life, generation to generation, unto Judgment Day. I think, in this regard, the quality of excellence which most touched me about Mr. Lalley was his inborn desire and incessant urge to impart to others, and always in a most courtly and kind fashion. He was therefore to his family and to all others the Great Teacher and his instruction came essentially through his writings by Example, a prime Confucianist virtue, and also a remarkably conservative one. He was, for this editor, a mandarin—"a prince among gentlemen."

Mr. Lalley gave to *Modern Age* sixteen years of the most professional talent available in book reviewing and finely honed writing. His articles and lead reviews in

their insights and erudition easily put the best Ph.D.'s to shame. I recall especially his article on the ancients pointing out the relationship of the "New Deal" in Old Rome and the inevitable decline of Empire, and his review of Mary McCarthy's *The Group* as masterpieces of conservative theory properly applied. Mr. Lalley suffered considerable agony as he wrote; he told his family that easy writing was not good writing. We—those of us who write—have all come to believe him!

Mr. Lalley's interests were broad and went far beyond professional journalism, though he made his greatest mark at the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Washington Post* for many years in editorial writing, and in reviewing for *The New Yorker* and *Human Events*. *Post* Publisher Katherine Graham wrote: "Jo' was such a fine spirit, a brilliant intellect, and a unique individual. He was so important a part of the paper in its early days."

And the same must be said of him with respect to *Modern Age*. His yearly editorial, "Christman Reflections," at the *Washington Post* so beautifully exhibited the qualities of teacher, good friend, and supremely gifted editor and writer he was to shower on his readers at *Modern Age* for so long. We can only say—sadly yet proudly—the world is a better place for his having been here and that we at *Modern Age* wish to express boundless gratitude for having known such a remarkable person. I am certain Mr. Lalley would have especially appreciated our calling in paraphrase on Melville's Father Mapple and his final remarks in "The Sermon" of *Moby Dick*: May he have the sweetest rest, for he goes now, with Him, to live out the life time of his God. *Ave, Frater, Ave atque Vale! Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.*

—David S. Collier