our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying, “You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know.” Do not seek for anything, do not perform anything, do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted. If this happens we experience Grace [the Child accepts].

Grace frees the Child from the laws of normal existence, the demands of the Parent. For the first time, the Child is liberated. He feels the joy of his humanity. He feels pride in his being. Becoming accepted, he comes to accept himself. He begins to feel “O.K.” He feels “O.K.” about his sexuality, his ambitions, his drives, his love for life. He finds self autonomy. He becomes an uncontaminated adult.

Look at the religious experiences of cheap grace. I believe it can be demonstrated clinically that what most people call “God” is nothing more than their Parent Ego State. They are not free. They live under a Parent script. As Berne noted, they are like individuals at a player piano—appearing to be playing the instrument, but having little or no control.

Time and again I have had troubled people talk about God with an obvious perception of their Parent Ego State. One lady thought she was “losing God.” When she was four years old, her father had died of a heart attack at her feet while scolding her. A young man, whose demanding mother could never be satisfied, had spent much of his early life hiding in his bedroom. Now he wanted to commit suicide because he could not live up to the “precepts of God.” In her childhood, another of my counselees had a father who left a note on her breakfast plate listing her duties for the day. Now she was opening her Bible each morning with closed eyes, pointing her finger and discovering “God’s will for her that day.” The list of people worshipping their Parent Ego State could go on for pages.

Unfortunately, the church has often encouraged this state. Preaching often comes from the pastor’s Parent Ego State. He is demanding and often causes the parishioner to feel guilty, little, and inadequate. Since this confirms the feelings already held, the parishioner congratulates the preacher: “It was a good sermon, you really stepped on my toes.” We hear it in their confessions or when they “walk the aisle.” Rarely is there an affirmation of God’s Grace and goodness—only agreements that they are “not O.K.” Some churches have become communities of “not O.K.” people whose fermenting guilt is acted out in dissension, anger, and division. To them, Grace was presented like geometry—a lot of laws and a few hypotheses. They have defined every step of the way with Christ and meticulously charted how you “should” or “ought” to respond. They have not listened to the “wind”—Ruach—Spirit. Submission is called “salvation” and rebellion is called “denial of the faith.”