

conditions.

In the 1970s there have developed two movements which are responding in opposite ways to this conflict of women and the family. On the one hand, the feminist movement, beginning in the late 1960s, revived the efforts of their grandmothers to mobilize women themselves for their own emancipation. Rather than simply accepting the contradictory roles into which they had been cast in patriarchal and advanced industrial society, women began to analyse and name these conditions as oppressive. They began to study the history and ideology that had shaped this contradictory situation and to project alternatives to it.

On the other hand, following soon on the heels of contemporary feminism, was a conservative backlash that has gained increasing political momentum by attacking feminist concerns in the name of the family, often evoking the authority of the Bible and Christianity. This movement not only opposes Equal Rights and reproductive self-determination for women, but also seeks to cut much of that sector of welfare and social services that provided some minimal support for women and children in poverty. In the final paper in this series, *Feminism, Church and Family in the 1980s*, which will appear in the May issue, I will examine the conflict between feminism and that movement that regards itself as a defender of the family and how we might move beyond it to some alternatives for those who seek the true welfare of both women and families.

On the Way to Damascus

Joan Armytage

He had no words to tell of Love,
His phrases, like the nets
Round which Leviathan swam,
Caught only what was not,
And all the warp, weft,
Cast, spread, space of them
Could not capture a mystery.
He had no words to tell of Love,
It was not like spring
Or anything he ever knew.