

That Old-Time Religion

by Robert Crisman

The road to heaven is littered for miles with dead sinners, or more precisely, the sides of the roads are lined with crosses on which the sinners are nailed.

It has always been so, since time started ticking for Civilized Man.

A *Danube* of crosses, lengthening mile by mile through the years toward the wastes as all sinners--blasphemers and those who steal from the rich above all--are run to earth, sentenced, and nailed.

In the morning on weekends all children are brought by their keepers to file down the road and throw rocks at the sinners who writhe on the crosses, some screaming, some silent as those who are already dead.

The children are told that this throwing of rocks will absolve them of sin, and protect them in years when the hunting of sinners grows fevered and no one is safe.

The subsequent gouging of flesh from the legs of the sinners, with knives sold by priests at the side of road, serves as further release for the children and also as *proof* that they've been absolved from their misdeeds, so long as the chunks are blessed by those very same priests for a nominal fee...

