

NEW RELEASE OF DYLAN'S CHRISTIAN MUSIC

"Trouble No More—The Bootleg Series Vol. 13, 1979-1981," is now available. It contains eight CDs and a DVD of Bob Dylan's recordings during the years when he was a Christian; never before released songs are also included.

Dylan was raised Jewish, converted to Christianity, and eventually separated himself from all organized religions, though he remains a "true believer." His religious migration mattered not a whit to practicing Jews or Christians, but it did matter to left-wing secular Jews and left-wing ex-Christians—they hated him for his embrace of Christianity.

It is worth recalling how these "open-minded" liberals greeted Dylan's Christianity. In 1981, music reviewer Geoffrey Himes of the *Washington Post* was so deeply offended by Dylan's Christian lyrics that he almost had a nervous breakdown. He charged Dylan with "righteously divid[ing] the whole world between the evil of nonbelievers and the wonders of the Lord."

Why were these liberals so angry? In 1980, Canadian reporter Paul McGrath summarized Dylan's music at that time by saying the singer focused on such Christian themes as "abandonment and redemption, confusion and clarity, sin and salvation." Sin. That's scary stuff.

How did his old fans react when confronted with Christian lyrics? Like good liberals, they shunned him. In November 1979 the Associated Press put it this way: "When Bob Dylan made his debut as a born-again Christian, angry San Francisco fans stalked out of the concert." Yes, they no doubt felt more at home at a swinger's bar or in a gay bathhouse.

A month later *Newsweek* wrote that "500 of the faithful marched out during the intermission in San Diego" because of his

Christian lyrics. They would have stayed and cheered had he used a string of “F-words.”

Steve Turner, writing in the *Guardian* in 2012, wrote about Dylan and his Christian years, saying, “Nothing guarantees more scorn in rock ‘n’ roll circles than a man who gets religion.” True. If he gets AIDS, that is forgivable, but not if he gets religion.

That’s exactly right. The liberal gurus can stomach just about every perversity in the world—indeed many of them revel in it—just don’t push the God button.