

The Roman Catholic Church Is the Unchanged Enemy of Civilization!

Is there any one who doubts that the Roman Catholic Church is completely, unrelentingly, malignantly the enemy of culture and civilization? Then let such a doubter take full and thoughtful heed of the significance of the latest edition of the Catholic *Index Expurgatorius*, which has just been published by the Vatican City Press with the "authority" of the Pope and all his pomp and presumption. Catholicism has not changed in its essential, anti-civilized position since the darkest of the Dark Ages. The poison of malice against all free and cultured and humane values is still engendered viciously in the heart of "Rome." The hard, hateful face of bigotry is still the real face of Catholicism. Some years ago it used to be said that the final conflict in modern times would be a conflict between "Rome" and Reason. It is better to say—and it is the cold and reflective truth—that there can be no compromise between Catholicism and Civilization.

The great power of the Roman Catholic Church—its heyday of hell-on-earth—was during the Dark Ages. Catholic supremacy—the Ages of Faith—the nightmarish barbarism of a thousand years in a Europe that was Christianized into brutality and corruption and ignorance and a life of terrific degradation: in that most awful stretch of history the Catholic "ideals," Catholic method and dogma, Catholic war-to-the-death-against-life, all were perfectly demonstrated. That was Catholicism. That is Catholicism. A world of Catholics could only be a world of cowards and slaves ruled by merciless, mind-hating bigots.

The hostility to every principle of a progressive, intelligent, humane civilization which is the head and front of the Roman Catholic Church's dogmas, designs, and declarations is not a matter of guesswork. It is not a matter of interpretation. It is not a matter of suspicion. The real, sinister meaning of Catholicism is so flagrant that no one is excusable for not perceiving it and no one is excusable for trying to put in a weak, indifferent, obscuring viewpoint the vicious significance of this highly organized, sleepless, unscrupulous, incorrigible enemy of mankind.

There is no excuse for lightly and casually minimizing the anti-civilized attitude of the Roman Catholic Church, because that Church plainly enough publishes its principles and aims. In the *Index Expurgatorius*, for instance, the Church says bluntly that freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom of life is not the right of human beings. The Catholic Church claims today, precisely as it did a thousand years ago, the right to dictate the thoughts and behavior of mankind. It claims unyieldingly to be the one and only true Church—the one Church which should be forcibly maintained by the State—the one infallible and tyrannical fountain head of "authority" in saying what life should be (or, as Catholic rule has always worked out, in saying what death life shall become). The spirit of the Catholic Church is still that of the Dark Ages—and it would, given the power for which it has never ceased to scheme, hurtle our human world, amid the catastrophic fragments of a wrecked civilization, back into the Dark Ages.

Directly dictating to Catholics what they should not read, the *Index Expurgatorius* is at the same time a full and flagrant revelation of the kind of Catholic policy which the Roman Catholic Church would enforce when and where it might dare to do so. The Roman Catholic Church is—in its dreams, in its designs, and in actual power and policy wherever today it is entrenched—the Church of Universal and Unrelenting Bigotry. What this Church says to its members in the *Index Expurgatorius*, it said to mankind but a short yesterday ago and it would say again to mankind. It is superstition, tyranny, censorship, anti-civilization, and the blackness of barbarism incarnate.

Specifically, the *Index Expurgatorius* warns Catholics of the books they are forbidden to read. As recently stated in an editorial in The American Freeman, the complete works of Alexander Dumas are on this list of books—books which the Roman Catholic Church damns in dogmatic terms and which it would destroy with cold callousness to culture if it should gain but briefly and securely the power to express in full action the hatred which it expresses constantly in principle against all the values, all the liberties, all the hopes of civilization. The complete works of Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian dramatist and essayist, are likewise forbidden to Catholics. Oliver Goldsmith and Sir Richard Steele are among great English writers placed—in this modern age—under the medieval ban of Catholic bigotry.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* is on this *Index*, anachronistic and yet actually sinister in its sweeping import—a hellish book, Darwin's scientific masterpiece, which Catholics are ordered to avoid absolutely: a book which Catholics might burn in hell for reading, for which Darwin burns (theologically) in hell for writing, and which Catholicism would burn out of the libraries and lives of civilization if it could, even as it would have burned Darwin could it have done so.

That splendid work of history and literature, that cultured survey of the cultured ancient world and of the follies and fanaticisms of the Christianity—the Catholicism—that howled dismally and raged bloodily amid the ruins of a great civilization—Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Holy Roman Empire* is also damned to hell as wicked, intolerable, un-Catholic reading. Catholics are commanded to close their eyes and minds against the knowledge that is in Gibbon's masterly work. And let there be no mistake—the extensiveness and the forcefulness with which the Roman Catholic Church lays down such barbaric edicts is measured simply by its actual power. Would this Church make all the world Catholic? Certainly that is its unrelinquished wish, its unrelenting effort, and its unsundered claim to power. What follows logically upon this claim is plain enough—the Roman Catholic Church would impose upon the literature and upon the life of the world that vile, degrading, death-dealing servitude of an *Index Expurgatorius*.

This indictment of the Roman Catholic Church is not thoughtlessly nor aimlessly made. It is not rhetoric. It is not an over-statement. It is the stern, straight, simple truth about Catholicism. It is the truth about the Church's position as framed in official statements by the Church itself. Thus in explaining the purpose and pretensions of the *Index*, Cardinal Merry del Val declares that "there is nothing more absurd or harmful" than free thinking. Sneeringly, boastfully, crudely in the very spirit of Catholic medievalism he says—this high Catholic spokesman of the Vatican, writing in the year 1929, says: "Only those infected by that moral pestilence known as liberalism can see in a check placed on unlawful power and profligacy a wound inflicted on freedom."

What a poor liar this Cardinal proves himself to be! Unctuously and with the phrases of bigotry yet smoking on his lips, he

insinuates that the intolerance of Catholicism is not in the nature of "a wound inflicted on freedom." The Roman Catholic Church would not WOUND freedom—no, it would only CRUSH freedom. It would only stamp out "the moral pestilence of liberalism." It would only kick over, into a hellishly waiting abyss of Catholic barbarism, all the fine and free values of the modern world, values that were won in such a terrific struggle with this old and still unregenerate arch-enemy of mankind, the Roman Catholic Church. It would only dictate with an iron hand what books should be read, what ideas should be expressed, what behavior should be tolerated, what rights (that is to say, what tyrannies) should be granted to men by the "sacred" permission of sinister Catholic power.

The "logic" of the Roman Catholic position is sharply and ominously apparent. Edicts and threats which apply to Catholics will—if the Church can in any crooked or cruel way obtain the power of enforcing its "holy" conspiracy—apply to every one. For only Catholicism is "Truth" and only Catholicism should hold the club of complete rulership over men—that is the medieval claim of the Roman Catholic Church, which is asserted with the old audacity (though fortunately not with the old, crushing power of physical tyranny and terrorism) in the modern world.

Even the right to kill heretics, says Joseph McCabe, has never been relinquished in vicious theory by the Roman Catholic Church. "Heretics" in Catholic "law" (the Canon Law of the Church, which the Church holds to be superior Law, which theoretically no laws of State have a right to cancel or supersede) are those who have once been Catholics, by birth or conversion, and who disagree from or withdraw from the Church. "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic," is the attitude of the Church: the individual Catholic has no right to be anything else: he is a slave who dare not, in the strict Catholic construction, call his mind his own. What this Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church said in 1901 about "heretics" (and what it threatened more widely to non-Catholics) is quoted exactly by Joseph McCabe as follows:

When the inviolable right of any society begins to be assailed and denied, we have then above all to assert and vindicate it. Now, if ever this was done, it is especially in our age that we see the right of inflicting upon the guilty whatever penalties be necessary, however severe, particularly what is called "the right of the sword," denied to the perfect society, and the death sentence buried among dead laws. . . . Against these Regalists and their modern followers we affirm that the Church has a coercive power even to the extent of the death sentence. We start with the vindication of this right for the Church, both on account of opponents who loudly accuse our mother the Church of unjust and wicked action in sentencing heretics to death, especially of putting to death certain leaders of heresy and apostates, and because from the right to inflict capital punishment we easily deduce the right to inflict lesser penalties (vol. 1, p. 142).

The death sentence is a necessary and efficacious means for the Church to attain its end when rebels against it and disturbers of the ecclesiastical unity, especially obstinate heretics and heresarchs, cannot be restrained by any other penalty from continuing to derange the ecclesiastical order and impelling others to all sorts of crime, particularly ecclesiastical crime. . . . When the perversity of one or several is calculated to bring about the ruin of many of its children it is bound effectively to remove it, in such wise that if there be no other remedy for saving its people it can and must put these wicked men to death (vol. 1, p. 143).

On page 270 of this same amazing declaration of Catholic Law—a code of Law which the Roman Catholic Church asserted to be absolutely binding and inviolable, not to be set aside by any State law—the despotic claim of "Rome" is repeated in plain language, as follows: "Unbelievers, who have at one time belonged to the faith, such as heretics and all apostates, may, absolutely and by common law, be visited with corporal punishment, and even death, for deserting the faith, and may be compelled to resume it." That is as bold a threat as ever rumbled from the harsh throat of despotism. And let no one be so innocent as to fancy that only Catholics, or those who at one time have professed to have been Catholics, are touched by this threat. Catholicism is not simply an assertion of tyranny over Catholics but a prodigious and incorrigible menace of tyranny over all the world. For the Roman Catholic Church still claims to be the only religion of truth and authority. The Roman Catholic Church still claims to be above the State. The Roman Catholic Church still is equipped and designed to use its power with unrelenting, ultimate harshness. The number of its victims, and the extent of its use of absolute, terroristic tactics, is limited only by its power.

The Roman Catholic Church asserts that it should be the sole, severely dominating, State religion in every country—that, for example, "Catholic Law" should be supreme in England and in the United States. Popular propaganda of Catholicism in these non-Catholic countries seeks to deny or evade or falsely interpret the real claims and the real beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. The answer is that the Roman Catholic Church is at once inflexible in its official claims and aims and treacherous in its lying, deluding, Jesuitical methods. Obviously an organization which in its considered, deliberate, official statement of "Public Church Law" asserts such absolute authority, which speaks with callous, direct bigotry of "death for heretics," is not to be trusted—not to be trusted by any one—not to be trusted for a moment.

There is no conscience, properly speaking, in Catholicism: its sophistry is a vile trap, and a glance detects the crushing jaws of the trap: its smile is bright and hard like the flash of the sword.

The "children" of the Roman Catholic Church are as many as can be made its miserable slaves. Commenting waningly on the declaration of "death for heretics," Joseph McCabe says: "But the people who have not been baptized in the Catholic faith must not feel too secure. The 'Vicar of Christ' has his eye on them. It seems that 'unbelievers' (in the Catholic Church) who live under a Catholic monarch (such as the Vatican hopes some day to see in England and the United States) 'are to be compelled to accept the faith, if it is possible, so that they may not obstruct the faith, either by blasphemy or by evil persuasion or by open persecution.' Once baptized, of course, they come under the law of 'heretics.' The Church not only may, but must, put them to death."

The Roman Catholic Church naturally does not scruple to use diplomacy, misrepresentation, falsehood, where the immediate means of force are not in its hands. It is not of course recklessly shouted from the house-tops in non-Catholic countries that the Church is today, even as it was in the Dark Ages, mediocrally cruel and treacherous and arrogant. Propagandists and apologists of Catholicism say nothing if they speak, they speak with bland and treacherous evasiveness about "death for heretics" and about the dogmatic Catholic view of the relations of Church and State. Thus in the

Code of Canon Law published in 1918 the assertions of authority made in 1901 (which have never been definitely and honestly repudiated and which, indeed, are clearly implicit in the Catholic position) are not made again, and the impression is conveyed by Catholic propagandists that the Church is now tolerant and tame. But in an English translation of this new Code, Dr. S. B. Smith, the translator, asks the significant question: "Has the Church the power to inflict the penalty of death?" His answer, of sinister significance, is: "It is certain that the Pope and Ecumenical Councils have this power at least mediately—that is, they can, if the necessity of the Church demands, require a Catholic ruler to impose this penalty."

Let there be no mistake. The truth is damnably plain. The Roman Catholic Church is the old leopard of lethal prey, with spots unchanged, with the same poison in its heart, with the same disposition to use its fangs and claws.

The crafty apologists who say that the new Code is tolerant do not tell their hearers what is really its nature. It does not conflict with because it does not cover the same ground as the Code of 1901. The Code of 1901 deals especially with the public law of the Church, while the Code of 1918 deals with the private law of the Church. McCabe says: "The new Code is, in fact, taken up to the extent of nine-tenths with purely domestic clerical discipline and hardly ever notices the relations of the Church to the State, or public law." Moreover, the new Code contains the following ominous expression in Clause 6: "If any of the other disciplinary laws which have hitherto been in force are not contained, either explicitly or implicitly, in the Code, it is to be held to have lost all force, unless it is found in approved liturgical works or is a law of divine right, positive or natural." The words italicized by McCabe show that the full harshness of intolerance of the 1901 Code is retained without a sign of civilized yielding to "the moral pestilence of liberalism"—the Code of complete bigotry is retained ever ready to be used, wherever and whenever Catholic power is able to enforce Catholic policy. It is explained by McCabe that "the powers claimed for the Church in De Luca [compiler of the Code of 1901] and all the older canonists are expressly held to be derivations from 'natural divine right.' So the new Code has abrogated none of them. And in case any canonist should be disposed to dispute it, Clause 4 of Canon VI says: 'In case of doubt whether anything in these Canons differs from the old law, the old law must be adhered to.'" Corrupt and brutal and menacing, the Roman Catholic Church can never be anything but the implacable foe of civilization.

Unchanged also—medieval in every line of mingled effrontery and treachery—is the Roman Catholic view of the relations of Church and State. The political pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church, as published in pompous and cynical language by Pope Leo XIII, are the same today as they were yesterday and as they were in the abysmal yester-night of the Dark Ages. This is the voice of Roman Catholicism, the voice of virulently perverse and persistent medievalism, the voice of inveterate hatred toward modern freedom, culture, and civilization. Uttered by Pope Leo XIII, standing today as the inflexible theory (its practical policy depending simply upon its degree of power) of the Roman Catholic Church, these are the words of Catholicism:

Justice itself forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless, or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges. Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary to the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true.

Although, in the extraordinary condition of these times, the Church usually acquiesces in certain modern liberties, but because she judges it expedient to permit them until, in happier times, she can exercise her own liberty.

If the laws of the State are manifestly at variance with the Divine Law, containing enactments hurtful to the Church, or conveying injunctions adverse to the duties imposed by religion; or if they violate, in the person of the Supreme Pontiff, the authority of Jesus Christ, then, truly, to resist becomes a positive duty, to obey is a crime.

According to Pope Leo XIII, and according to unyielding Catholic dogma, Catholicism is the religion "which alone is true" and which "must be professed." And by the compulsory profession and the compulsory imposition of the Catholic religion as the sole "Truth" is meant sweepingly that the Catholic view of life, that the Catholic view of culture, that the Catholic view of all human beliefs and actions, that in short Catholic barbarism and bigotry should prevail once more upon a dark and howling earth.

This is the truth about Catholicism in every crossed "I" and in every dotted "i." It is the truth which is not even concealed in the ominous, official statements of the Roman Catholic Church, although it may be craftily obscured and enmeshed in sinister, scheming lies by Catholic propagandists, who will resort to ANY POLICY in order that they may obtain ALL POWER. This is the truth spoken in a spirit of solemn warning.

That the spirit, that the claims, that the dogmas, that the designs and dangers of the Roman Catholic Church have not been abated in their audaciously malignant medievalism is again proved—when proof has already been piled upon proof prodigiously—by the latest edition of the *Index Expurgatorius*. The very existence of such a work is in itself an appalling affront to modern civilization. And the explanation or defense of the *Index* in the commentary by Cardinal Merry del Val is more than an affront—it is a threat to all that mankind has won in the struggle from barbarism to civilization. It is a threat of what the Roman Catholic Church will do precisely insofar as it extends its bigoted Catholic power. It is a threat, not lightly uttered but pronounced in all positive gravity and menace, against what the Cardinal calls "the moral pestilence of liberalism." Referring to the *Index's* ban upon the Bible except in Catholic versions, the Cardinal says: "Those who wish to feed the Holy Scriptures to people without any safeguards are also upholders of free thinking, than which there is nothing more absurd or harmful."

Free thinking—yes, that is what the Roman Catholic Church fully threatens. A free and decent life, a life of material and cultural advancement, a life of nobility and dignity and decency, a life of civilization—yes, that is what the Roman Catholic Church threatens in the swollen, harsh, rotten spirit of medievalism.

The Roman Catholic Church is the enemy of modern, as it was the enemy of ancient, civilization. It is the enemy of mankind.

We repeat the noble, uncompromising words of the great Voltaire: "CRUSH THE INFAMY!"

The Twilight of Christianity

[The following address by John H. Dietrich, who fills what he attractively calls *The Humanist Pulpit* under auspices of *The First Unitarian Society*, 1526 Harmon Place, Minneapolis, Minn., is a discussion of Harry Elmer Barnes' recent book, "The Twilight of Christianity." The address will appear in this issue and next week's issue of *The American Freeman*. Here we are told how Mr. Barnes came to write his notable book and the extended nature of his attack upon Christianity in its every feature and claim.]

By John H. Dietrich

The popular religion of western civilization is today facing the most serious crisis of its entire history. Time and time again Christianity has been placed before the bar of human reason and subjected to a rigid scrutiny. It has been examined and tested and indicted and pronounced a failure by scholars here and there during the whole period of its regime. It has been attacked ethically because in all its long history it has failed to produce better individual characters or an improved social condition. It has been attacked philosophically because its theology does not fit in with the best philosophical thinking of the age. It has been attacked historically because of the uncertainty of its historical foundations. It has been attacked scientifically because its doctrines outrage the results of scientific investigation. It has been undermined by the study of comparative religions because its doctrines and ceremonies seem to be nothing but a sublimated form of the superstitions of primitive man. But today there is a concerted attack from these various points of view, which would indicate that Christianity is in the last stages of a long decline, and sooner or later will pass from the scene of human history. This thought is suggested by the title of the book I am to review this morning "The Twilight of Christianity," by Harry Elmer Barnes— the most fundamental and devastating indictment which has yet been launched against the established religion.

You all know Professor Barnes? He is the professor of historical sociology in Smith College. He is one of the outstanding educators of America. He is an unusually dynamic personality, and when he becomes interested in a problem he devotes all his brilliance and energy to its solution. His books on sociology and history have attained an international reputation, and he is recognized as one of the foremost intellectual leaders in the world today. His interest in religion was aroused by his contact with this society through reading its printed addresses. For many years, although he had been brought up in a rigidly orthodox family, he had discarded religion entirely as a matter of no personal interest, and studied it merely as a factor in human development in his historical and sociological researches. But recently he began to feel the vital importance of religion as a social factor—the dangers connected with a dogmatic and supernatural religion and the possibilities involved in a secular and humanistic religion. In fact, he

says: "It is the thesis of the writer that the orthodox religious complex is . . . the most active and pervasive menace to civilization which confronts mankind today, compared with which war and poverty are unimportant incidental details." It is because of the stimulation received from contact with our work, and I hope I speak without conceit, that he dedicated the book to me and makes considerable use of my material in developing his argument. He writes me thus: "I have long regarded you as the unchallenged leader of progressive religious thought in the United States; and such inadequate reference as I have made to your work is a very slight reciprocation for the splendid aid and encouragement which I have received from your printed sermons." And a letter received from him yesterday says, "I am sure that at the best my writings on religion are no more than a faint echo of your much more learned and profound sermons. If I can be the vehicle for giving your work wider dissemination, I shall rest quite contented." While such remarks are very flattering, this book has no resemblance of an echo, much less an echo of anything that I may have said. It contains a wealth of knowledge and a method of attack, which greatly overshadows my feeble efforts. Nevertheless I appreciate beyond words, no matter how undeserved, this gracious tribute.

Professor Barnes first engaged actively in the religious field, when last January he delivered an address before the historical branch of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the general trend of which was that mankind needs a new concept of God. This lecture provoked nation-wide controversy, and brought forth a rebuke from Professor Osborn, the president of the Association, who blamed Professor Barnes for injecting religious controversy into a purely scientific conference. Professor Barnes felt that the time had come when historical science should turn its instruments of investigation upon the prevailing religion. This address was followed by a full-page article in the Sunday New York Times giving the public the content of this address. His campaign was then continued by articles and debates in well-known magazines, such as *The Forum*, *Current History*, *The Scientific Monthly*, and others, and now Professor Barnes has given us a thorough analysis of the whole subject in his new book. And what a book! With his tremendous knowledge of contemporary thought and literature, he has mobilized all the factors that make for the demolition of Christianity. It is a devastating indictment of the Christian religion, ethically, historically, philosophically, scientifically. He analyzes the whole religious problem as few men are capable of doing, and hurls his unanswerable arguments like a thunderbolt against a decaying institution, which had already been honeycombed by the washing tides of modern thought; and when it strikes with the terrific force of its scholarship and logic it will shatter the whole structure for men of discerning mind.

This book should have a tremen-

dous influence upon the religious thought of the future. There may be books that were more carefully written. It has already been charged that the book was written too hastily, but I have not been able to find any important mistakes in it. I think these people have in mind principally the arrangement of material and the rounding out of phrases. In this respect I think it could have been improved, but Professor Barnes writes as he speaks, in one continuous flow of enthusiastic and dynamic language. He is more interested in getting the thing said than in how it said. It is a polemic and not an essay, interested in the unassailable argument and not the polished phrase. And while some will try to throw a smoke screen over this book by saying it has been hastily written, and thus try to give the impression that it is not authoritative, I should like to say that this book carries in it a challenge to the Christian religion which its leaders dare not ignore without admitting defeat. It is a complete and authoritative analysis of the whole religious controversy. Every important phase of the situation has been exhaustively examined and carefully analyzed. It is amazing the amount of erudition which he has brought to bear upon the subject, and the book is a lasting monument to the cultural background, scientific training, and moral courage of its author. If this book does not blast the "Rock of Ages," then surely that rock must be impregnable.

I trust that you do not gather from what I have said that Professor Barnes writes with rancor. Just because it is a terrible indictment of the popular religion does not mean that he maliciously attacks what people consider sacred. The indictment lies in the fact that he removes the foundation from the structure and watches it tumble. In fact, the book is written in fine spirit with the express purpose of examining the main tenets of the contemporary religion in the light of modern knowledge. Indeed the book may be regarded as a friendly critique of religion, because, as the author suggests, even though it undermines the sacred tenets of our contemporaries, the ultimate result will be favorable to the construction of a religion really suitable to a twentieth century civilization.

My purpose this morning is to give you an idea of the contents of this book, and so I shall very briefly and very inadequately outline the arrangement of his material and the arguments he presents, hoping that it will inspire you to read the book and if possible to own it, because it contains all the material which people with our point of view should have accessible at all times.

The first chapter is entitled "Cultural Contrasts," in which is pointed out the discrepancy between science, technology and industry on the one hand and our opinions and institutions on the other; how our material culture is based on scientific ground while our thinking is largely still pre-scientific. This is discussed first from the standpoint of natural science with its application to human understanding and social problems—the tremendous expansion of space in the field of astronomy and the modern conception of existence in the realm of physics and chemistry, as well as the tremendous extension of time and the changed conception of life in the fields of geology and biology. It deals also with the social sciences, such as psychology which has given us a purely naturalistic understanding of the problems of human behavior and has thoroughly undermined the older vision of conduct; and sociology which reveals in a purely naturalistic manner the origin and growth of our institutions as well as the evolution of human ideas and conceptions which underlie those institutions. At the same time our opinions and institutions have altered but slightly, the intellectual outlook of the masses remaining much the same as it was in primitive times. Our law is founded upon ancient theories and practices; our attitude and usages with respect to property are equally full of primitive vestiges. We have been especially reluctant to bring the control of sex and the family into harmony with contemporary scientific and esthetic considerations. Our educational system has by no means kept pace with the vast alteration of our ways of living. Journalism has not adapted itself to the new type of life, so as to provide educational direction to the problems of modern living. But above all religion is entirely out of step with modern developments in knowledge and life.

While there have been religious revolutions in the past, none of them are comparable to the present situation. Those were mere changes in religious forms, today the situation is very different. We are now in possession of a body of knowledge and a resulting set of intellectual and social attitudes which offer a complete challenge to contemporary religion. Modern science renders the whole set of assumptions underlying the accepted religion absolutely archaic and preposterous; and if we are to understand the nature of the present religious revolution and its far-reaching effect upon our mental and social life, the problem must be approached with intellectual candor and courage. Professor Barnes

then proclaims his right to discuss the religious problem. Hitherto such discussion was supposed to rest with the theologians because religion was regarded as a unique phase of human experience due to the influence of the spirit world; but now it has been thoroughly demonstrated that religion is a purely human product, an aspect of human behavior. This being the case then religion can be intelligently studied only by the methods of psychology, anthropology, history, sociology and the other sciences. This part of the book is intended to answer those theologians, who tell Professor Barnes that he would be much wiser if he stuck to his field of sociology and left religion to those who are competent to understand it.

If any of you have grown somewhat indifferent toward the religious problem as presented from this platform you surely ought to read the next chapter entitled "What Price Religion." The author tells us that many of his friends have told him that they could understand his having risked criticism and popular disapproval by revealing the causes of the war, which was a worthy cause, but they cannot understand his taking even greater risk in dealing with the relatively unimportant matter of religious emancipation. But important as the problem of war guilt and universal peace may be, he regards the religious problem as infinitely more important, because it colors and determines to a large extent the thinking which people bring to bear upon all other problems, and insists that there is little hope of settling the other problems satisfactorily until the people have been relieved of their orthodox religious complex. He then devotes sixty pages to revealing how great are the evils which religion is able to accomplish. He passes over all the pain and sacrifice which lie in the religious train of the past, and deals with contemporary influences. First, in the intellectual world by the mental attitudes which it engenders, leading men to place dependence on outside forces instead of trusting in their own abilities and resources; the feelings of inferiority and guilt which it spreads; the creation of reactions opposed to intellectual freedom and open-mindedness; the inhibitions which it places upon the mental attitudes which are necessary to meet the daily tasks and opportunities of this life; and the gloom which it spreads by reason of its holy days and sacrificial aspects, having a stupefying and paralyzing influence upon the intellectual life.

Then he turns to politics and law and shows the many ways in which traditional religion obstructs the most intelligent and efficient approach to the state and political problems, especially with its reverential attitude toward the state which is a carry-over from the doctrine of divine right; and the injection into political affairs of religious prejudices and partisanship. In law this reverential attitude not only prevails, but our statute books are clogged with laws which involve offenses, not in any sense anti-social, but purely religious; while the religious point of view has led to a doctrine of criminal responsibility and the treatment of criminals which obstructs progress toward any rational method of dealing with the crime problem. He shows also the pernicious influence religion has had upon our economic problems and business affairs, and journalism and art, and education, restricting them in such manner as to prevent a frank and intelligent attitude toward life. Especially has it been a menace to a sane attitude toward sex, treating sex as a necessary evil and leaving in its train all the maladjustments which have been degrading and demoralizing to both men and women. And finally he points out that all the statistic inquiries of recent years discredit the conventional notion that orthodoxy promotes such desirable moral traits as honesty, reliability, and unselfishness. In fact, an elaborate test on three thousand children showed definitely that the tendency to lie, cheat and the like was in direct proportion to their knowledge of the Bible and religious precepts.

I need not spend much time on the next chapter which deals with the origin of religion, entitled "How Mankind Got Religion." It traces the evolution of religion in much the same way as I did in the published address *How the Gods Were Made*, and shows that the Christian ethic with all of its ramifications is but an elaboration and sublimation of the superstitious fears of primitive man in the presence of unknown forces, which he personalized and attempted to appease by means of offerings and sacrifices and prayers. The next chapter can also be passed hurriedly. It deals with the Bible, and after a careful review of the history and results of biblical criticism, comes to the conclusion, which you have been taught, that the Bible is of course significant as providing the outlines of the religious philosophy and history of the Jews and early Christians, but of little value to the modern world except as a source for such study. There is no reason for taking the biblical views on religion any more seriously than we do the religious beliefs embodied in the other contemporary

cults of the Orient, no reason for accepting its history as any more accurate than the exaggerated writings of the secular historians of that period, and no more reason for believing its science than the scientific writings of Pliny the Elder. Today we read the Persian scriptures, the history of Herodotus and Pliny's *Natural History* out of historical curiosity, and we should approach the chapters of Genesis with the same attitude of mind. Of course the author points out the outrage which has been perpetrated upon mankind by making it the word of God and forcing human life to conform itself to this ancient and fixed standard. He submits the Ten Commandments to a searching scrutiny and shows that they are entirely unfitted and inadequate as an ethical code or as a means of social control in this modern time.

The next chapter, entitled "The Faith of Our Fathers Living Still," is an outline of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian church, summarizing the essentials of the Christian attitude toward the physical universe, God, man, and the good life, as held by religious persons, not only of the past, but even in twentieth century America. He shows their cosmology to be a purely geocentric one in which the earth is believed to be of peculiar significance in the universe. Along with this geocentric interpretation of the universe naturally goes a crude and literal anthropomorphic view of God, which he describes with considerable detail. The orthodox notions of the purpose of life and of the nature of virtue flow naturally from this same cosmology. Life here on this planet is of little consequence. It is significant only insofar as it affects our eternal destiny; and the source of guidance for human life is to be found not in the sciences of nature and of man, but in the Bible, which is supposed to reveal God's wishes and directions with respect to that life which merits divine approval and will achieve eternal salvation. This chapter also deals with the doctrine of free will and the existence of the soul, especially with regard to its supposed survival after death and the places where it will reside—heaven and hell. Professor Barnes recognizes that while the Fundamentalists would accept this as a true statement of Christianity the Modernists would resent the identification of Christianity with these orthodox doctrines; but he shows very conclusively that the orthodox Christians infinitely outnumber those who accept the liberal interpretation of the Christian epic, and that even the liberals when

driven to bay, fall back upon the old statements of faith, however allegorically they may interpret them; so that he is not setting up a man of straw and unaware of religious developments as some would accuse.

[To be concluded next week.]

McCabe's Book On Shaw

A number of readers of *The American Freeman* have recently mentioned Joseph McCabe's book on George Bernard Shaw—some have read it with profound pleasure and others have not been so fortunate as to lay hands upon it. H. J. Stanley (Brooklyn, N. Y.) inquires whether the Haldeman-Julius Publications can include it in their list. In February Mr. Haldeman-Julius will see Mr. McCabe in Kansas City (where McCabe is to deliver a series of lectures at All Souls Unitarian Church) and in Girard (where he will visit the Haldeman-Julius home and the plant which is known as the headquarters of cultural and debunking literature). Mr. Haldeman-Julius will then discuss with Mr. McCabe the publication of the book on Shaw for the benefit of his hundreds of thousands of admirers among Haldeman-Julius readers.

This study by Joseph McCabe is probably the best analysis of Shaw's mind, his philosophy of life, and his place in modern thought.

Atheists Maintain Chicago Forum

There is in Chicago an English-speaking branch of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism which meets at 8 p. m. on Thursdays at the Art Colony, 124 W. Delaware Place. The Chicago atheists maintain an open forum and will be glad to have any preacher or other person meet them in fair and unhampered discussion of religion. "Sky pilots" can have their say fully before this group—but they will have to "stand the gaff" from the atheistic side too, and that might not be so pleasant for clergymen who are accustomed to a pompous sway over uncritical audiences.

Programs of coming addresses and debates may be obtained by writing to James E. Even, 1122 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill.

What makes us suspicious of so many "great men" is that their title of greatness is conferred by the mass opinion of little men.

Suppose we say that the devil will find mischief for idle minds, and that the mischief is believing in gods and devils?

How Voltaire Dealt Great Blows With Little Books

Will Durant in Voltaire and the French Enlightenment (*Little Blue Book No. 512*).

Voltaire, like another Cato, began to end all his letters with "Crush the infamy." He sent out his *Treatise on Tolerance*; he said he would have borne with the absurdities of dogma had the clergy lived up to their sermons and had they tolerated differences; but "subtleties of which not a trace can be found in the Gospels are the source of the bloody quarrels of Christian history." "The man who says to me, 'Believe as I do, or God will damn you,' will presently say, 'Believe as I do, or I shall assassinate you.'" "By what right could a being created free force another to think like himself?" "A fanaticism composed of superstition and ignorance has been the sickness of all the centuries." No such perpetual peace as the Abbe de Saint-Pierre had pleaded for could ever be realized unless men learned to tolerate one another's philosophic, political and religious differences. The very first step towards social health was the destruction of the ecclesiastical power in which intolerance had its root.

The *Treatise on Tolerance* was followed up with a Niagara of pamphlets, histories, dialogues, letters, catechisms, diatribes, squibs, sermons, verses, tales, fables, commentaries and essays, under Voltaire's own name and under a hundred pseudonyms—"the most astonishing pell-mell of propaganda ever put out by one man" [says Robertson]. Never was philosophy phrased so clearly, and with such life; Voltaire writes so well that one does not realize that he is writing philosophy. He said of himself, over-modestly, "I express myself clearly enough: I am like the little brooks, which are transparent because they are not deep." And so he was read; and soon everybody, even the clergy, had his pamphlets; of some of them 300,000 copies were sold, though readers were far fewer than now; nothing like it had ever been seen in the history of literature. "Big books," he said, "are out of fashion." And so he sent forth his little soldiers, week after week, month after month, resolute and tireless, surprising the world with the fertility of his thought and the magnificent energy of his seventy years. As Helvetius put it, Voltaire had crossed the Rubicon, and stood before Rome.

*Tolerance of Others, by Voltaire (*Little Blue Book No. 28*).

"Providence" is only another word for "hope."

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Around the Table

Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

By E. Haldeman-Julius

LANGDON-DAVIES AND MONTANA STUDENTS

Intriguing remarks concerning John Langdon-Davies and the degree of daring thought at the University of Montana are offered for our table talk in a letter from *Ezra Ruyle* (Vandalia, Mont.). Before discussing this main interest of his letter, however, let me answer a couple of inquiries by Mr. Ruyle. He wants to know if the lectures by Joseph McCabe, to be delivered at All Souls Unitarian Church, Kansas City, Mo., in the month of February, will be conveyed over the radio. I cannot now say what arrangements of this kind can or may be made; but I shall gladly suggest the idea to Mr. L. M. Birkhead, pastor of the Kansas City Unitarian Church in which free thought is nobly (please forgive the foolish common quotation) "put in the place of" religion.

Mr. Ruyle also inquires whether The American Freeman has "lost" Harry Elmer Barnes as a contributor. That is not exactly the word to use. Mr. Barnes was only a temporary contributor to The American Freeman. He may write, though not regularly, for this paper in the future. We have, however, a schedule of ten Little Blue Books by Mr. Barnes, some of which are already in print, the rest of which will be printed shortly. It is too bad that we can't have Mr. Barnes—that we can't have every interesting exponent of modern thought—writing each week for The American Freeman; but, in one form or another, all the significant events and thoughts and tendencies of our world will be reflected in The American Freeman; and Mr. Ruyle and all others who are interested in free thought and an intelligent review of the human spectacle will be strongly satisfied with our work.

And now about John Langdon-Davies, who is still engaged specially as a contributor to The American Freeman. Mr. Ruyle writes as follows:

And by the way, I have something interesting about John Langdon-Davies. Last winter in Missoula he gave a lecture concerning the future of marriage. The university students received him very unfavorably. Do you know why? The students said he was afraid, that he was afraid of embarrassing his audience, and that

he didn't say any more about marriage than "everybody already knew." In an editorial of a campus publication of the school of journalism he was accused of "playing safe." A young lady instructor in the biology department stated that he was "very dull" compared to the "usual brilliance" in his writings. She was "really disappointed." Although his lecture was instructive he plainly "played safe" with his audience. I doubt that he realized how liberal his audience was. The State University of Montana is a tiny establishment—less than two thousand students—and he may not have been aware that there were university students in Missoula. However, a university organization secured him to lecture. If he knew that over half of his audience consisted of members of the student body and faculty of the State University of Montana, he must have doubted that the students of a small far-western university were any more liberal than the natives of a small mid-western city.

The same university organization that obtained Mr. Langdon-Davies to lecture at Missoula secured another lecturer who was bold and a genuine smasher of shams. He was our old friend, Vilhjalmur Stefansson. He is excellent.

Of course the most accurate and enlightening answer to this letter can be made by Mr. Langdon-Davies; and I am forwarding Mr. Ruyle's letter so that, in an early issue of The American Freeman, Mr. Langdon-Davies can in a *Window on Europe* take a backward look at America and tell about his lecturing—and this particular lecture—in this country.

Meanwhile I can only say that if any large number of students at the University of Montana are so advanced in viewpoint that John Langdon-Davies (whom I certainly cannot imagine making a conservative, narrow talk on marriage or any other subject) seemed commonplace or tame to them, that is surprising and delightful news. I had not heard that the University of Montana is a center of radical thought, any more than a number of other universities, where there is invariably to be found a brilliant, curious, aggressive minority of free-thinking students. I know that at the University of Kansas, for example, there is a fine group of young

thinkers—but they do not exemplify the attitude of the main student body.

It is possible that Mr. Ruyle, in talking over Mr. Langdon-Davies' lecture with a few of his (Mr. Ruyle's) own advanced circle, mistakenly assumed that the opinions of this group were fairly typical of the opinions of the audience as a whole or as a majority. Doubtless many, perhaps most, of those who heard Mr. Langdon-Davies thought that he was anything but tame. It may be, too, that Mr. Langdon-Davies' quiet Oxford manner was deceiving. Like Bertrand Russell, he may quietly announce the most profound revolutionary ideas—ideas, too, that have wide critical implications. Again, I do not know just how startling a lecture was expected from Mr. Langdon-Davies.

Even so, it is encouraging to have another report of the freedom of thought which is animating significant groups—even though they be minorities—in our modern universities. Youth, to state a platitude, will command the future. And naturally it is youth which most readily and enthusiastically grasps the ideas which are to emancipate and enlighten the future—which are doing their great work of liberation in the present.

I am sure we shall all look with interest for what Mr. Langdon-Davies has to say about this occasion in an early issue of The American Freeman.

WHAT IS INTOLERANCE?

Once more we are reminded that it is important to agree on the meaning of terms. It is very confusing when words are used incorrectly, or carelessly, or with a shade of definition which is correct enough but is not quite the shade that is meant by another with whom one is discussing a subject. Here, for example, is the word "intolerance" causing a lively little difference, as reported in the following letter from M. V. Caywood (Montrose, Calif.):

Will you please drop a note or just say a few conciliatory if not final words regarding a much heated argument between a friend and myself? Now please do not wonder why I had to "pick" on you, among all other modern learned scholars, because I know that you must be very busy. I just had to ask someone in whom I have confidence, so I jumped on you. Now the essence of our whole argument is this: I say that science is intolerant; there would be no progress without intolerance. I think that the term "intolerance" means "disrespect for other people's honest opinions." Now if science were not intoler-

ant, according to my definition, it would never have said that the world moves around the sun, in spite of the fact that the majority of people honestly believed otherwise. Or, for example, many noted scientists are intolerant in that they deny the existence of a Superior Power, even though the majority honestly believe otherwise. I will not state my friend's argument, as I think you can readily perceive why he says science is tolerant. I am sure that the cause [solution?] of the trouble lies in a proper definition of the term "intolerance." Now I certainly will appreciate it very much if you would not only enlighten me upon the subject as to whether or not science be tolerant or intolerant, but also as to a proper definition of the term "intolerance" as used in our instance.

It is clear what Mr. Caywood means. Science has not been satisfied to accept the common unsensitized views and therefore it has progressively given mankind truer and wider views of life. This, however, cannot be described as "intolerance." Mr. Caywood has confused non-conformity with intolerance. He has confused intellectual honesty, curiosity, and hardy persistence in the search of convincing truth with intolerance. To be sure, scientists, libertarians, all free and forward-moving thinkers are determined to think out the issues of life clearly, regardless of whose opinions are contradicted or offended in the process. Free thinkers refuse to conform slavishly to the prejudices and the sophistries and the arguments of self-interest that abound in a world which is still growing toward knowledge and, more significantly, is still advancing toward the ideal—within sight, let us say, but not yet reached—of a common understanding and use of knowledge.

In the dictionary (the one I have at hand is Webster's *New International Dictionary*) there is a very simple and correct definition of "intolerance" as follows: "Not tolerating difference of opinion or sentiment, especially in religious matters; refusing to allow others the enjoyment of their opinions, rights, or worship; not tolerant; unforbearing; bigoted. 'Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere.' Cowper." So what we mean when we say that certain persons or organizations are "intolerant" is that they oppose forcibly, insofar as they have the power, the right of others to hold or express beliefs which do not agree with the beliefs of the intolerant persons or organizations. One may have disrespect for another's opinion, yet not be intolerant; one may express an opinion with the greatest forcefulness and conviction at one's command, yet not be intolerant; one may attack and ridicule the ideas of others, yet not be intolerant—so long as one would not deny another's right nor hamper another's freedom in the expression of any opinions.

Intolerance as a law of the State is not so dangerous and critical a problem in our age—thanks to the grand warriors of free speech, the Voltaires (and the great Voltaire himself heading all others) of enlightenment and liberation. We have still to keep a weather eye on the tactics of censorship. We have still to resist the designs of organizations, treacherously combining bunkistic religion with bunkistic moralism and bunkistic reformism, which attack in this way and that way our liberties. But there is, in a legal sense, almost complete freedom of thought and freedom of the press; and of course one very important use of this freedom is continually to maintain and defend this freedom.

Intellectually, and in the shape of various influences, sometimes open and sometimes subtle, there is still an unhappy spirit of intolerance. Bigots are still offensively and treacherously numerous. They cannot put us in jail. They do, however, assail modern ideas, not in a spirit of true discussion however widely it may reveal disagreement, but in a spirit of suppressing, damning, beating down such ideas intolerantly. These bigots, although fortunately the law does not support them with its forcible arms, do insist that ideas contrary to their religion, their moral code, their cut-and-dried scheme of life have no right to be uttered.

That is intolerance, Mr. Caywood—and you see that even Webster's *New International Dictionary*, which is certainly not a propaganda work, identifies intolerance especially with religion.

An Atheists' Radio Hour

Are there any atheistic addresses broadcast over the radio? D. V. Osborn (Hereford, Texas) wants to know. We know of only one such broadcasting, by the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, over Station WEVD, New York City (231.6—1300KC), regularly on Saturdays at 6 p. m. This will be interesting news for readers of The American Freeman who are within reach of this station.

"We shall not rest," says the latest official report of the 4A society, "until we have a high-powered station of our own on full time."

There is nothing in life that cannot be regarded humorously at certain moments; but this humor should proceed from truth and not from error.

"Ideals" as men misuse the term, are too often the faded flowers placed upon the tombs of dead prejudices.

Have It My Own Way

BY JOHN W. GUNN.

Unkind critics may say that, now the executive offices of the White House have been almost destroyed by flames, Mr. Hoover's administration can at last demonstrate, even though in a small way, its constructive genius.

Bandits recently stole away in the night with ninety bushels of a Kansas farmer's wheat. Sin and crime and nicer things affect us all in widening, anonymous circles. A number of persons will eat, without knowing it, dishonest and tainted loaves of bread.

"ON THE OTHER HAND"

Embalmed essence of book-reviewing clichés is displayed by Hendrik Willem Van Loon in the December *Survey Graphic* as follows:

1 "I read the book at one sitting."
2 "His story fairly made my hair curl."
3 "He has done it again."
4 "The book fairly took my breath away."
5 "A magnificent piece of constructive thinking."

To be fair, Mr. Van Loon's humor is hilariously in his illustrations, which I cannot reproduce. However, there is another side of book reviewing. It may be said that the following lines are almost literally rendered:

1 "I read this indecent book through—just to see how bad it was."
2 "The author's story may be true, but why did he choose such a subject to write about?"
3 "This is not a bad novel, but Chapter XV could have been shorter, Chapter XXII would have been the better for a different chapter heading, and the first ten chapters should have been told in a single chapter. On the whole, a novel which is not perfect."
4 "This book is too unpleasant—it is too disillusioning—I couldn't stop reading it, although I had *The Ladies' Home Journal* at my elbow."
5 "This writer is destructive. He says that we should think for ourselves, and tear down the thinking that somebody has already done for us."

On sweeps the salutary, sanguinary reform: a Louisiana sheriff killed a farmer in a liquor raid. The moral is to make life, health, and morals safe.

A University of Nebraska professor says that "the feminine mind is irrational." He would have been somewhat more adroit if he had said that the irrational mind is feminine—then he could have defended himself by saying that of course he realistically included the millions of men who are neither brilliant nor steady in a display of rational thinking. To have been really complete and careful, he should have said that the average person, man or woman, is irrational. Not crazy, perhaps; not stupid, necessarily; but irrational—and this word stretches immensely over a territory which is not confined to one sex nor to one social class. To be very skeptical, to be very just, to be very judicious and vigilant and altogether discreet, I am willing to include myself among the irrational hosts of earth. Sadly am I irrational at moments when, forgetting history and human nature, I expect things to happen intelligently.

The First Paragraph of a Precious News Item: "Bethlehem, Dec. 25.—Beneath a mellow oriental sky that only a short while ago looked down upon the bloody international riots which struck terror to the heart of the Holy Land, this ancient little town today relived the birth of Christianity." That's enough.

"Bad Faith to the Philippines" is the heading of an editorial in the *Kansas City Star*, which says with the firmness of well-controlled paths that it would be an injustice to the Filipinos if the United States were to grant them independence. Who so cynical as to describe this as an unkind world? It is paradoxically a world of beatified extremes which merge in mellow, sweet perfection. Masters in the past had only the good of their slaves—employers today have only the good of their employees—touching at heart. Rulers simply cannot bear to surrender their authority over their subjects, in tender-hearted fear lest their subjects come to grief. Conquering nations are always inspired by the most altruistic concern for the comfort and joy of the conquered. Exploitation is a benevolent means of relieving people who cannot help themselves. Evil cannot be evil when it is universally done that good may come. Even among the lower animals, the fangs and claws of nature are used mercifully to end the uncertainties of a life that is never safe. This is so good a world that it is no wonder metaphysicians doubt whether it is true.

Bellyaches in Bedlam

Ambrose Bierce in *The Devil's Dictionary* (*Little Blue Book No. 1056*).
Soul, noun. A spiritual entity concerning which there hath been brave disputation. Plato held that those souls which in a previous state of existence (antedating Athens) had obtained the clearest glimpses of truth entered into the bodies of persons who became philosophers.

Plato was himself a philosopher. The souls that had least contemplated divine truth animated the bodies of usurpers and despots. Dionysius I, who had threatened to decapitate the broad-browed philosopher, was a usurper and despot. Plato, doubtless, was not the first to construct a system of philosophy that could be quoted against his enemies; certainly he was not the last.

"Concerning the nature of the soul," saith the renowned author of *Diversiones Sanctorum*, "there hath been hardly more argument than that of its place in the body. Mine own belief is that the soul hath her seat in the abdomen—in which faith we may discern and interpret a truth hitherto unintelligible, namely that the glutton is of all men most devout. He is, said in the Scripture to 'make a god of his belly'—why, then, should he not be pious, having ever his Deity with him to freshen his faith? Who so well as he can know the might and majesty that he shrines? Truly and soberly, the soul and the stomach are one Divine Entity; and such was the belief of Promasius, who nevertheless erred in denying its immortality. He had observed that its visible and material substance failed and decayed with the rest of the body after death, but of its immaterial essence he knew nothing. This is what we call the Appetite, and it survives the wreck and reek of mortality, to be rewarded and punished in another world, according to what it hath demanded in the flesh. The Appetite whose coarse clamoring was for the unwholesome viands of the general market and the public refectory shall be cast into eternal famine, whilst that which firmly though civilly insisted on ortolans, caviar, terrapin, achovies, *pates de fois gras* and all such Christian comestibles shall flesh its spiritual tooth in the souls of them forever and ever, and wreak its divine thirst upon the immortal parts of the rarest and richest wines ever quaffed here below. Such is my religious faith, though I grieve to confess that neither His Holiness the Pope nor His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (whom I equally and profoundly revere) will assent to its dissemination."

Seen From the Reviewing Stand

Editorial in The Pittsburg (Kans.) Sun, Dec. 20, 1929.

The *Big American Parade* is a description of the pageant of American life as seen by the Girard writer and publisher from the reviewing stand. It is quite apparent that Haldeman-Julius got his eyes full. He describes sections of the pageant ranging from American materialism to the growth of American culture and American education, throwing in pictures of sin and sex, the motor car and the movies, jazz and journalism, the rights of man and the role of the church, politics and prohibition, advertising and art and finishes with a scene which outlines American progress. The author thinks that a new America is here and he is pleased with the prospect.

As an afterthought, we may remark that nine martyrs out of ten have had the courage of their errors. Their persecutors have added the crime of murder to the absurdity and bigotry of their (the persecutors') errors.

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ST. BOTOLPH'S TOWN

Boston, as you may not know, is named after an English city which, in turn, was named after St. Botolph. We have a St. Botolph Street in the Hub, but very few inhabitants ever dream that there is any connection between the name of that street and the name of the city. They called Botolph "Bot" for short; it is a simple step from Bot's Town to Boston, and there you have it. Perhaps that is why the city is under such a compulsion to remain saintly. Anyway, the latest is that you may not say "damn" in Boston on a Sunday; not, that is, on the stage, and perhaps not on the street or in the home, if you are overheard by the officials of the State.

The Hub, as this center of all things cultural is known, seems determined to smear itself all over with grease. The censors are in the saddle. They have had the taste of blood in the past few years, and seemingly they lust for more. Gradually, but insistently, the various departments of city and state have begun to vie with one another in the promulgation of stupid edicts. The enlightened populace is weak from laughter; but the laugh, let me remind you, is still on them. For the censors have it pretty much their own way, and protest has thus far availed nothing.

The cream of this jest is that the word "damn" is precisely a Sunday word. If it hadn't been for the Calvinistic doctrines of damnation that were preached by fire-and-brimstone churchmen of the Puritan days, the very word "damn" might not have survived. "Damn" is a church word, kept alive by the Church. It was born out of the sadistic self-righteousness of the churchfolk. It has engendered an imagery that gluts the cruelty behind all this censorship compulsion.

And if "damn" must go, can "hell" be far behind?

How long a step is it from "damn" to all words implying a hot time in the old hell tonight? How far from the suppression of Sunday "damns" to further suppression of all secular activities on Sunday? Are we to have the old "blue laws" back? Are we to be thrust willy-nilly into a revival of fettered Puritanism?

Can such asinities as these have any psychological connection with the recent change of the Drama League of America to the "Church and Drama League of America," under the presidency of the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, D. D.?

They can. The League, which once might have stood for drama, is now safe for stupidity. The lion and the lamb have lain down together, with the lamb inside the lion. Another victory—if only a Pyrrhic victory—for the Church. What it cannot destroy it engulfs. I look to the newly churchified League, so far as drama is concerned, for exactly nothing. Its endorsement should render one suspicious of the play endorsed. And I am suspicious of Dr. Cadman when he winds up a recent article in this sanctimonious manner: "The spirit of aspiration expresses itself in art as in religion and he who stands uncovered in the presence of beauty is close akin to him who prays."

Get out of our light! Our beauty has no need of your unctuous approval. Don't spoil our fresh air with your incense. Our "damns," even on Sundays, have a beauty that not all your prayer comprehends. Back to your churches, and leave our theaters free from your contamination. Back to your death-in-life and leave us our life-in-death.

TALKIE NOTE.

The other evening I wandered into one of the Keith houses of the nation. I have no alibi. I enjoy the talkies even when they're bad. As a sort of relief from the daily grind of reading and writing, if as nothing else. I can easily adjust my esthetics to my surroundings. And I'm usually willing to meet the movies and the talkies and the radio half way. Well, I ran into the wind-up of a trailer on Rudy Vallee. (An imitation name, of course, intended to echo the nouns and consonants of Rudolph Valentino.)

The caption on the screen read as follows:

"The men hate him! The women love him!"

Sufficient unto that night became—for me—the evil thereof. For Rudy isn't important enough to win any man's hatred. And I know plenty of girls and women who consider him a movie sap. "He makes love to millions of women!" Thus screecheth the screen. But Rudy is hardly a candidate for Casanova honors. He has no voice. He isn't much of a musician. He has—and here I take my courage in both hands—he has no looks.

If he is ever put over on the American public, it will be one of the jokes of the generation.

Why do I run on in this strain? I don't know Rudy; he may be, in private life, one of the finest gen-

tleman in creation. I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. But I dislike to see how a belated applicant for the post left vacant by the real Rudy is groomed for the place and thrust upon the eyes of the movie-talkie millions. If we must have professionally handsome males, let them be handsome; let them have voices; let them have a presence:

But then, maybe the talkie people really believe that Vallee is the darling of the sounding films. If he gets by with it, I'm a bad, bad guesser.

AN EMERGING DRAMATIST

The Theater Guild has just produced another drama by S. N. Behrman, author of "The Second Man" and the dramatization of "Serenity Blandish." The name of the new play is "Meteor," and deals chiefly with a young man who believes himself possessed of prophetic powers. He foresees events, and builds upon that foresight. He talks like one suffering from delusions of grandeur; has no manners; tramples over everybody in his mad ascent to power. Nor does he spare himself. The fellow, in fact, is a trifle cracked, yet circumstance so plays into his hands that he is convinced beyond reason of his godhood among mortals. His wife's battle with him away from his superiority back to fallible humanity is as tragic as it is futile. He himself derives small pleasure from his gifts, if gifts they be.

There comes a moment at last when his fortunes threaten to collapse. Now if ever he is to be won to reason, to love. For a moment the cure seems about to work. But no. It is the way of delusions to create ever the fanciful rationalizations by which they live. After a measureless hesitation he renews the game more madly than ever. He is not yet a failure! He foresees the way out, the ultimate triumph of his undefeatable self.

My outline is of the sketchiest. Behrman has achieved something that, without being a masterpiece, provides a rare evening in the theater. He has made character interesting in its own right, and not for what it performs in physical action. He has made conversation absorbing. He has even fashioned certain of those moments that few of our dramatists, with the exception of O'Neill, know how to imagine, much less to execute. The major premise of the play is hard to grant; the hero's mad delusion is not sufficiently motivated. But once this is accepted by the spectator, the play moves on with surprising authenticity.

Keep your eye on Mr. Behrman.

Sad Saga of a Soap-Boxer

An old Socialist soap-boxer, whose mind apparently is closed tightly against any form of "heresy" or free discussion that will scare away votes from the platformers of political Socialism, heaves several large paragraphic bricks in *The New Leader* (New York City) at Bertrand Russell. The offense of Mr. Russell is that he has dared to discuss marriage and morals in an unconventional, philosophic light. Russell is a debunker in all the fields of thought and behavior—he applies his keenly critical, invigorating, and humane mind to all our social as well as personal problems—whereas this soap-boxer, S. A. de Witt, seems to think that Russell should confine himself narrowly to the Socialist official book of beliefs and subjects.

Russell is a Socialist in his economic opinions, though he has not signed away his mind and life to any party. And it seems to be, or so we infer from Mr. de Witt's heated remarks, a dictum of Socialist purity that no man calling himself a Socialist shall express views favoring of what is vaguely and rapidly called "free love." And we suppose, that Russell, to be a loyal Socialist and not frighten a possible recruit to the Socialist voting strength, should keep quiet on the subject of religion. He should never, never open his mouth excepting to repeat the statements of the Socialist official platform.

That Mr. de Witt's grievance against Russell is personal, political, vote-vamphish and soap-boxish is sufficiently indicated by the following sad cry:

Haven't we always denied in full vehemence the gross accusation that Socialists believe in free love? Gosh, I've sweated for hours under a street lamp before hundreds of quibblers and hecklers to disprove that canard. So have we all.

It has been used by the churchmen to keep their flocks away from the "despoilers of maidenhood" and "destroyers of the home." . . . And just when we have almost succeeded in establishing some faith in the doubting populace as to our righteousness, Comrade Bertrand Russell, philosopher, Fabian, outstanding factotum in Socialist history, and calls us all a lot of hypocritical swindling fakers on that score.

Says he in newspaper reviews, given out as puffs for an impending private financial venture between him and Mr. Powys, in the form of a debate, that infidelity during the marriage relation is O. K. It helps prolong the union, and some other such observations, as have long been proven through practice among the privileged upper classes. Yea, long before the world had come into

the glad estate of Comrade Russell's philosophy.

It is natural, we suppose, that Mr. de Witt should write in a hot-tempered, harangue, vituperative, soap-boxish vein: it is hard to live down early training; and when a man has "sweated" for years in Mr. de Witt's fashion, it is likely that he will always sweat and fume and drag himself down to a wilted-collary level when he meets ideas that are outside the safe, domesticated scope of the Socialist platform. As one "comrade" to another, de Witt cries indignantly that Russell is engaged in a "private financial venture"—i. e., he is doing something very, very bad when he accepts payment for a debate or a lecture. And Russell is accused of saying something which he did not say. Says de Witt: "[He] calls us [Socialists] all a lot of hypocritical, swindling fakers on that score." It is not on record that Russell discussed the Socialist official position on "free love" or implicated that party in any way in his own opinions about marriage and morals. Russell—just imagine his temerity—was proceeding on the very modern assumption that he had a right to express his, Russell's, views on any subject under the sun without going to the Socialist party or to de Witt and begging the official seal, imprimatur and "God-bless-you" to his remarks.

"I guess I'm thin-skinned," says de Witt. That or something seems to be wrong with the man. He implies, with a flourish that is characteristically soap-boxy, that marriage and morals are to be regarded peculiarly (i. e., from the de Wittish-Socialist point of view, politically) with relation to "the upper classes." Would de Witt have us believe that marital infidelity never, never happens among "the lower classes"? And is he trying to say that it is always, always "upper classish" even to discuss new ideas of sex behavior and morality?

"Votes for Socialism" is evidently the soul aim and criterion and range of de Witt's limited mind, and all the rest—all other ideas and discussions which spread over the edges of the Socialist platform and cover over aspects of life—must be howled down partyotically. The astonishing wreck made of de Witt's mind by years of soap-boxing could not be more awfully demonstrated than by this statement:

I'd rather Bertrand the Brilliant would fill his breast pockets with pictures of nude women and brothel scenes and sell them furtively to crowds of pasty-faced boys on Fourteenth Street. That might be an excusable way of averting poverty. But to gather together a thousand or more of horribly perplexed souls and pour forth into their timid ears a "frank and free" expression of "free love" is at best a murky performance.

Obscenity, then, is better than philosophy—selling "dirty" pictures is to be preferred before a candid, intelligent discussion of sex problems—that is the amazing, distorted conclusion of one who, wherever he goes and whatever he does, is doomed to be incorrigibly a soap-boxer to the end of his days.

"Timid ears . . ." De Witt's use of that expression betrays him. If de Witt and other Socialists who share his resentment at Bertrand Russell's freedom of speech wish to play entirely safe with all the "timid ears" leading to timid minds, why don't they join the Republican party and be "safe in the everlasting arms" of all the orthodox sheep-folds?

Men worship a god because they say this god has blessed them greatly; at other times they worship this same god because they say he has been careful not to bless them to their own vanity and undoing. Men worship a god because they say this god has punished them, which, even though they have difficulty in perceiving the justice thereof, demonstrates the god's power; and, again, they worship this same god because they say he has punished or hurt them somewhat, or maybe a great deal, but not nearly so badly as he might have done. Such "logic" seems to us more spiritual than spiritual.

What contradictions there are in life! Timid minds, for instance, are often exceedingly violent in their reaction to ideas which call in question their pet notions. Intellectual fear, intellectual hate, intellectual intolerance—after all, they go fittingly together, and the contradiction resolves itself into the illogical familiarity of human nature.

When he is a bit upset in temper the office boy speaks rather brightly. He says, for present instance: "Who'd be so foolish as to pray to a stone image? But even that is not so foolish as to pray to a god who is out hiding somewhere in the ether." But of course the ethereal god isn't even as substantial as ether.

Common epithets are often used unfairly. Thus a "coward" may be simply a careful man, a very sensible and realistic fellow indeed, who knows when danger is confronting him and who knows further that it is better to avoid danger than to meet it headlong.

A good deal of what is called luck consists of the wit and timeliness to know when one is lucky.

Kansas City Man Invents a Nickel "Slot Machine" For Vending Little Blue Books

And now—very soon—a nickel in an attractive, easily worked "slot machine" will place a Little Blue Book in the hands of a hurried, traveling reader. Such a machine, very clever and useful, has been designed under the supervision of Mr. Don Henry, President of The American Perfume Vending and Manufacturing Company, 1334 Oak St., Kansas City, Mo. As an experiment, ten of these machines will be established in Kansas—probably in Santa Fe railroad stations, which ought to prove very popular, will mean that immediately a thousand of these machines will be put in operation; and before long they may familiarly and alluringly greet the eyes of passersby everywhere—in railway stations, in hotel lobbies, in theater lobbies, and other spots of ready public convenience.

The credit for devising this ingenious yet simple arrangement belongs to Mr. Don Henry. His company, as its name suggests, has been principally engaged in vending perfumes by handy machines; and Mr. Henry extended the idea to the useful, handy conveying of Little Blue Books—although a special machine, of course, had to be constructed for the books.

In a letter just received, Mr. Henry informs us:

We are completing our first model to handle the sale of these books, and same will be ready for operation within the next ten days or two weeks. When we have the details of this model worked out to our satisfaction, we intend to build (hand construction) about ten more machines, which will be placed on location, probably in Santa Fe stations in Kansas. From the operation of these ten machines, located in ten different stations, we will be able to ascertain whether or not they will sell the books—how the public takes to them, etc. If they prove successful, and this can be determined in from 60 to 90 days' operation, we will then go into the production of our first 1,000 machines.

The books will be placed in the machines titles alternately—i. e., 1-2-3 with a capacity of 75 books, 25 titles each. The machine will be 6 inches wide, 4 1/2 inches deep, and approximately 16 inches high, finished in solid nickel, chromium plated, so that it will always look new, bright and shiny to attract attention in any railway station. Further, it is made small, with only one compartment, to take up as little space as possible on the wall of the waiting room.

You understand the machine is not selective. Front of machine will show the three titles and authors. Possibly, some customer desiring Mark Twain, and getting Jack London the first time he puts in a coin, would keep putting in until he got the one he wanted, as the books will be placed in the machine 1, 2, 3, so that with three coins he can get the entire assortment in the machine. The cost of a selective machine would be too high, and it would be too bulky.

It goes without saying that the millions of Little Blue Book readers will be greatly interested in this new experiment for the spreading of good literature. Doubtless Little Blue Book "fans" who are in business would be delighted to have these machines installed in their stores; or they may be glad to suggest their installation in stores and hotel lobbies and the like.

As will be observed in Mr. Henry's letter to us, this Little Blue Book vending machine—made especially and exclusively for the distribution of this popular series—is necessarily at first an experiment. Success will, of course, mean eventually an even better machine with a wider range of usefulness. We shall let the readers of the Haldeman-Julius Publications know what is the public verdict, demonstrated by sales, on these new machines. Naturally, Little Blue Book "fans" can and will have an important share in determining the verdict.

Wisdom is wealth of the mind—wealth which cannot be taken away from one—wealth which accelerates in value at a rate far more prodigious than financial compound interest—wealth which is continually used yet is never lessened—wealth which may be possessed in unlimited measure by one man without injustice to other men, since all men may have it in profusion, being equally free to obtain wisdom from the great books of the ages, from the events and discussions of the passing hour, and from the thought-provoking spectacle of life and human nature.

What! If the soul can fling the dust aside, And naked on the air of heaven ride,

Were 't not a shame—were 't not a shame indeed— In this clay carcass crippled to abide!

Thus old Omar in his always fresh, always sparkling *Rubaiyat*. But how the most devout Christian does labor diligently to keep his "soul" in what the preachers call this "prison-house of the flesh"!

It is regrettably often the case that when a man says, "I think thus and so," he really means, "I believe (without thinking) thus and so."

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