

## "Christian Science"—A Death-Inviting Religion

It is a first principle of thinking to judge a theory by ascertaining what its effect would be if applied in practice. This method of concrete inquiry and exemplification is apt to reveal, in a more simple and more startling way than endless argument, the fallacy that lies at the heart of a theory. How will this idea or that system work in real life? That is the necessary question.

And how easy is this question answered with regard to the theory of Christian Science! At heart, and on the surface obviously to be detected, and through and through it is a miserable, evil fallacy. The test of Christian Science is the visualization of a world conducted on Christian Science principles. No: let us rather say a world left to perish vilely from filth and disease: a world defenseless against the most ordinary daily perils, a world given to ruin.

Imagine the supremacy of Christian Science: There would be no teaching of scientific physiology. There would be no scientific treatment of disease. Doctors and hospitals, and public health boards as well, would be abolished. The great systems of sanitation in the modern world would be destroyed—i. e., we should be forced to live in deadly, disease-breeding conditions and consequently we should be at the mercy of plagues such as killed millions in the Middle Ages. Inoculation against disease, segregation of contagious sick persons, all use of antiseptics and the like would be forbidden. The condition would be worse than that which obtained in the unscientific Middle Ages, for even then some simple remedies were used and some simple, though not always scientific, precautions were taken against disease.

In the Middle Ages, we should add, the masses did not know better how to live. But think how amazing it is that in this age of science, when even in the popular understanding there has been improvement in the knowledge and practice of health, cleanliness and all the means and needs of safety, a religious sect should exist which crazily preaches the antithesis of everything that is required for the simplest, fundamental welfare of society!

According to Christian Science—taking its votaries at their own word—there should be no legal standards and inspections to guarantee the purity of food and drink. Broken bones should not be set nor torn and diseased flesh mended by the surgeon's knife. Ventilation, as well as sanitation, should be disregarded. The infant death rate would be enormous. In fact, life in a Christian Science State would be utterly at the mercy of all the poisons, blows, cuts, and accidents of nature—and, indeed, it must be plain that life would be impossible for long under the rule of Christian Science.

For that matter, the "logic" of Christian Science would be to deny the material things of life absolutely by just sitting in a motionless attitude of thought—not eating, drinking, moving, or even breathing, for all these actions are material—and, in short, by committing suicide.

Obviously for a Christian Scientist to practice his preposterous theory would be for him to commit suicide, and not such a slow suicide at that! So, too, the rule of Christian Science would mean the destruction of our life.

Yet some persons, astonishingly, imagine they are being broad-minded instead of careless-minded when they say: "After all, there is some good in Christian Science."

The only good thing about Christian Science is that no one would ever conceivably try in a literal, complete way to practice such an impossible, such an unnatural, such a death-inviting theory.

Or let us say that what is chiefly "good" about Christian Science is that its devotees have not the numbers and the power to pass sentence of death upon the human race.

Recently we learned, along with other news of international unimportance, that the Prince of Wales and other high-class Englishers had tuned to knitting shawls as a hobby. Recently a serious writer in a sometimes serious magazine wrote a seriously unimportant article setting forth that, roused to the depths of his shallow nature by the illness of his father, the Prince of Wales was taking more earnestly the lofty duties and responsibilities of his (the Prince's) position, present and prospective. Just the other day we read: "The Prince of Wales today rode to hounds through the drenching rain for two hours and was in at the kill at the finish of the hunt." Probably the light was not right for knitting. There is a fine logic in the development or, after years of subconscious development, the obvious emergence of character.

Doubt is primarily the sign of a desire for knowledge.

Beneath the cynic's smile is the profound sense of irony.

Strictly speaking, a bore is any unintelligent person who talks.

In the view of a small-minded man, a genius is only a stranger sort of criminal.

Ignorance of life, combined with fantastic speculation, was the beginning of the fear of gods, god and God.

He who fights and runs away will have wisdom for what men call his cowardice: he will know better than to fight another day.

Is it too much to say that the average Christian's aim in life is to get out of the place and the position to which "God has called him"?

The notion of Heaven is only the believer's childish, and in its way pathetic, attempt (and only an attempt) to convince himself that he will not die.

Wise men talk little about "goodness" in the conventional or narrow sense. And the "good" men, who are always talking about "goodness," lack the essentials of wisdom.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" Every dead man, of all the millions who have died and who have stayed dead, has answered that question most convincingly in the negative.

Invariably, the statement that money isn't important comes from a man who has thought well enough of it to obtain a plenty. However, one never hears a man in good health saying that health isn't important.

If it be said that our admirations are drawn toward reflections of ourselves, we have still to regard what a wide distance of civilization separates the man who admires Billy Sunday and the man who admires Voltaire.

Fools are dangerous according to their number and the organized nature of their folly. That is why intelligent men, while laughing at folly, must nevertheless oppose their foolish fellows with the tactics of fighting, educating, earnestly practical progress.

Philosophers and theologians have sweated and struggled (and privately, no doubt, have yawned) in their efforts to show man a dogmatic Absolute; and the end of it all was that they achieved only relative nonsense—relatively the worst ever, but still relative.

A bigot is not simply a man who insists that he is right and others are wrong; he is a man who insists that others haven't the right to be wrong, that they are wrong to fancy themselves right in a different way, and that they should not even think when the bigot has settled a question once and for all in his own mind.

An idea should be suspected of containing foolishness when only one wise man smiles at it—and how palpably and wholly foolish must an idea be when all, or nearly all, wise men look upon it with derision. Millions, even in this age of comparative light, hold ideas which are not regarded by men of wisdom as worthy the respect of serious thought.

It is not, perhaps, so bad that people believe things which they don't know; that, when loosely a habit, is bad enough—but what is worse is that so many people believe things which are absolutely contrary to what they know. The major part of religion, it may be said, is less to be described as ignorance than as a stubborn, amazing denial of plain facts.

If we were to heed all the moralists who urge us to resist this and that and the other temptation, we should go to bed and wait for death to follow upon utter, unnatural inactivity. Of course, not all such morality is or could be represented in a single individual: each one is busy warning against the other fellow's temptation, while yielding to his own desires, which he does not think of as temptations.

What a lot of trouble some men will go to for a little of nothing! For instance, here is a Baptist preacher (Rev. George W. Truett) who carefully collected all his traveling things, packed his bag, bought his ticket, rode on a train for about sixteen hours from Dallas to Kansas City, in order that he might tell a group of churchmen: "The gospel of Jesus is still the salt of the earth, the leaven, the baking powder in the flour." He could just as well have said that in Dallas, and the Dallas papers would have published it as "news" even as did the Kansas City papers.

## Intolerance -The Most Hateful Thing

Intolerance is the most hateful thing in the world. By "intolerance" we do not mean denunciation or ridicule of an idea, the positive and strongly worded expression of a point of view about life, but the effort to prevent the consideration of other points of view. Naturally, if one has a conviction that centrally defines one's attitude toward things—naturally if one is sure in one's own mind of the truth and importance of certain ideas—one uses every weapon of intellectual and literary activity in behalf of this attitude and these ideas. The point, however, is that the tolerant man will not use nor by any kind of sophistry seek to justify, to encourage, to connive in the use of weapons of force or intimidation or lying.

To speak of toleration is not to suggest that there shall be no conflict of ideas. Far from it—the freest, liveliest warfare of ideas is the ideal of intellectual liberty and progress. But the man who wishes to disarm his opponent; who cries out that his opponent shall be stopped from carrying on his side of the fight; who seeks treacherously to deprive his opponent of the rightful activity of thought, or who by lies and intrigues places obstacles in the way of an open and honest conflict—he is the intolerant man. And organizations which say that this book must be read and that book must not be read, that this dogma shall be believed and that no other idea shall be considered, are intolerantly opposed to the first condition of truth and enlightenment: namely, free thought, free speech, and the free movement of ideas.

There are in our world such individuals—there are such organizations—which are active, not merely in putting forward their own opinions, but in trying to obstruct the expression of opinions which do not agree with their own. They uphold the dictum, most arrogant and intolerant, that their side of a question shall be heard and that no other side shall be heard. They do not stop at denouncing other ideas—but they denounce and would deny the right of publishing, speaking, agitating other ideas. They say that certain books should not be read. Appealing to the most unworthy, the most unfair, the most untruthful spirit of prejudice, these individuals and organizations say: "Here is a book that is bad, immoral, false, etc. Do not read the book for yourself, but take our word for it that the book is bad. Here is an idea that is bad, unrighteous, dangerous, etc. Do not consider this idea even slightly. Ignore this idea, and follow blindly what we say is true. Here is a way of thinking about life that we cannot tolerate, and we appeal to others that they should not tolerate nor investigate nor receive into their minds the simplest arguments for this way of thinking.

That, quite sharply and recognizably, is the attitude of intolerance. And it is an attitude which is not merely historical. It is upheld and encouraged today by many persons and by a number of groups, who insist that a discussion should be regarded as closed once they have spoken. Let us be realistic about this evil of intolerance. Books are not burned, as they were a few hundred years ago. Heretics are not burned. Laws, or tyrants above all law, do not deny us the right to express our opinions. But the sentiment, and even the dogmatically defended theory, of intolerance is still widely to be discerned in modern life.

There are countless men and women whose minds are closed—who, having thoughtlessly assimilated certain prejudices and preconceptions from their conventional environment or having been emotionally "converted" to some belief which in its official character demands the most dogmatic submission of mind, refuse to grant a moment's genuine hearing to history or controversy or descriptions of life which have a critical bearing upon their prejudices. There are many individuals who preach the theory—even the duty—of the closed mind: whose chief aim in life is to bring other minds into a corrupting, deadening obscurity and perversity of intolerance: whose influence—a considerable influence, constantly active, and charged with the most ugly spirit of fanaticism—is directed toward keeping other minds closed.

These intolerant individuals are not only harmful merely in their character as individuals who encourage in many ways the disposition to reject critical and contrasted thought without a glance—but, more significantly, these individuals are banded together in organizations that employ every weapon of force, intrigue, misrepresentation and confusion at their command to stifle, to turn aside, or to build up barriers against intellectual inquiries, discussions, criticisms, and histories which are not in agreement with the stupidly absolute and unarguable dicta of such groups.

It is still very seriously a necessity—a necessity that is primary to the purposes of all features of progressive life—to free the countless minds which are kept shut by these slavish restrictions, by this anti-thoughtful and anti-social pressure of intolerance, by this system of deliberate appeals to prejudice and animosity toward the free winds of thought and the free, wide vistas of vividly liberating culture. This restrictive, treacherous, at once arrogant and invidious force of intolerance is all too effective, in all too many instances, in accomplishing its designs: it is effective even when it can bring no law of the State to its support: what it chiefly needs for its success, and what it carefully seeks to maintain and to extend, is the spirit of dogmatism and ignorance and uncritical, unreading, unthinking partisanship.

It is true that minds which are amenable to such control are not good minds, not healthy minds, not—obviously—free minds. But it is precisely the purpose of all agencies of enlightenment to spread the habit of realistic, free thinking and to overcome steadily and increasingly the unhealthy, uncivilized habit of closed-mindedness. Free thought is not simply what this individual or that is content to enjoy in solitude. Free thought is concerned with social values. Its ideal is a free world. It cannot be indifferent to the ugly aspects and to the still uglier menaces of intolerance—of mental tyranny with its complement and consequence of mental slavery.

We who are free thinkers wish to extend the influences of intellectual freedom. We oppose intolerance, indeed, showing up its unreasonableness and cowardice: we oppose intolerance by persistently setting forth the unanswerable philosophy of toleration: and we oppose intolerance in a larger way and over a wider territory of thought and controversy by giving incessant and varied and full expression to the ideas and the criticism and the history and all-inclusively the culture which intolerant persons and groups seek to obstruct or obscure. The style of warfare to be used against intolerance is, obviously, the widest and freest and boldest dissemination of ideas.

Our strategy is, after all, very simple. Attack closed-mindedness with the ideas that, by their forcefulness and persuasiveness and reiterated familiarity, have the quality of opening minds. Bring ideas into the open—keep them in the open—call attention to them in every skilful and impressive way, and minds will not remain closed. We have not simply to argue for toleration but to practice toleration constructively by the spreading of definite criticisms, discussions, histories, mind-freeing and mind-stimulating literature. In other words, the good old way of fighting intolerance is to apply the principle which is its plain and complete opposite: the forces of intolerance would SUPPRESS a wide range of ideas, and therefore we must tremendously and tirelessly EXPRESS a wide range of ideas.

Intolerance is the defender of dogmatic falsehood. But primarily the significance of intolerance is not that it opposes the truth but that it opposes the principle and the practice of free discussion which is man's sole means of arriving at truth. In the most impudent spirit of paradox, the agents of intolerance say that men should accept certain ideas absolutely as true but that men shall not discuss nor inquire concerning these ideas and, by criticism and comparison and sound conviction, satisfy themselves about the claim that these ideas, now and forever, are the truth. The theory of intolerance is not that men shall refuse to hear the truth (though this is inevitably the result of intolerance): but, more flagrantly and fundamentally indefensible, its demand is that men shall not, in the first place, discuss what is true.

Intolerance means closed minds. Our task is to bring ideas so effectively into the open that they will break down the barriers of intolerance.

Humor may be called, briefly, the knowledge of human nature.

Charlatans are fellows who make a considerable noise by drumming upon empty heads.

Faith, as the word is commonly used in holy language, means simply fervor added to ignorance.

Getting an "education" without thinking may be compared to looking over a menu without eating.

The ideal of perfection is the illusory form taken by an extraordinarily keen sense of imperfection.

A genuine bunk-shooter, born as it were to the role, is one who just doesn't like the sound of a reasonable idea.

There are fashions in ideas, but the man who thinks for himself is superior to all the whims and furies of fashion.

The man who delights in talking about "the Infinite" is always correspondingly far away from any real subject.

Christianity, the religion of death, has always been limited by the natural interest which men have given to life.

It is a pathetic attribute of human nature that we are apt to resent as egotistic the expression of more knowledge and more intelligence than we have ourselves.

In the paradoxical terminology of religion, "experience" is a state of intoxicated delusion in which the victim denies the basic, common realities of experience.

Maybe the reason "mind readers" have so much inclination for the pretense of reading the minds of others is that they have nothing in their own minds to read.

Genius is a quick mobility of thought and a ready sweep of perception: the genius' mind, eye, and all his feelings are infinitely swifter than those of the average man.

Eloquence, which makes some men orators, is a dangerous art in that it induces a gorgeous surge of feeling which is likely to be unaccompanied by any considerable, corrective thought.

It is notable that those who profess to believe in the efficacy of prayer never turn to prayer except when they can do nothing else: and prayer, after all, is just another way of doing nothing.

If we are to judge by what actually is the procedure that men follow, to do nothing in excess would be—to do nothing. For each does something in excess: or in what others regard as excess.

We cannot entirely compare first and second childhood. The second infantile period is worse than the first because, during the years of active life, a man has accumulated a large and fearfully assorted baggage of follies.

It was a brilliant sophist who said: "The cure for the evil of democracy is more democracy." On the contrary: the cure for unintelligent politics is not more democracy but the cultivation of a wider and sounder intelligence.

Taken as human beings, preachers may not be worse than other men (although the rub is that they pretend to be so much better). But taken as members of a profession, they are the one class whose complete and sole business is to express their ignorance.

Conservatism is the theory of waiting until the world of human affairs has moved a great deal and then reluctantly trying to catch up with it. The habit of conservatism, of course, makes the theory difficult of application, and so conservatives are generally far in the rear.

Laws, far from being certain and equal in their bearing, are more often seen in the character of interesting and shifty exercises in legal interpretation. Thus a law means nothing until lawyers private and lawyers public (judges and other officials) expound it: and no law can ever have a certain meaning so long as there is a single lawyer left to expound it in some other way.

It is strange that heathens, who worship material images of gods, do not perceive that their gods are impotent and, in fact, mean nothing. But this is not stranger than the attitude of Christians, who worship a god they do not see—a god entirely imagined by them—and who believe a most incongruous jumble of statements about their god, without perceiving the folly of their assumptions, speculations, and contradictions.

## Higher Education—But Not Too High

Perhaps we should not be astonished by anything that a university president, in his role of conformist to popular sentiments, may say. But it is a jolt—and, even so, a ludicrously funny jolt—when we read a statement by Dr. Stratton D. Brooks, president of Missouri University, that students after four years of a higher, scientific education should return to their homes "better Methodists." Yes, this idiotic remark was actually made by the head of a great State university in an address at the dedication of a new Methodist church in Columbia, home of the university: at least, so he is plainly and remarkably quoted in the Kansas City Times. It seems amusing to refer to Dr. Brooks as an educator when one reads such words as the following:

This magnificent cathedral is larger, was more expensive to build and will be more expensive to maintain than is necessary for the needs of the local congregation. It will care for 1,000 Methodist students year after year, and it is the business of Methodists and Methodist organizations everywhere to see that it is paid for, and that it is financed to meet the needs of those Methodist students, so that they may go home better Methodists than when they came here.

"Better Methodists"—what a result to forecast, to wish for, to aim at as the end of four years of a university education! What an educational ideal indeed! Four years of biology, chemistry, geology, anthropology, literature, history, training in thought and culture should—O! amazing incongruity—develop "better Methodists"! Is it possible that higher education is held in such low esteem at Missouri University or that a system of modern instruction, which is so utterly at odds with Methodism or any religious "ism" that it is ridiculous to mention them in the same breath, can make such a poor impression upon the minds of students?

Yet we may see here a curious admission of the conflict between education and religion. Students at a State university must have their religion specially protected. It is just because there is such obvious danger of their returning home worse Methodists or no Methodists at all that unusual efforts must be made to maintain barriers of traditional faith and belief against too high, too clear, too complete an education. The tacit significance of Dr. Brooks' remark is that the university town is a strategic position where the Methodist church must concentrate itself in extraordinary force—that it is a center of particular peril to the faith, a center of the old conflict between science and religion, where Methodist preachers must (so it is implied) labor exigently to counteract the influence of scientific educators—that, in short, higher education is not safe without religion to confuse and lower it: not safe, anyway, for religion.

And the joke is that Dr. Brooks, representing officially at least the side of education, appears with amiable words in the hostile camp of religion and expresses the hope that the latter will more than hold its own, that indeed the students of Missouri University will be so poorly educated that they will become "better Methodists."

Men hate one another because they do not understand one another—or because they understand one another too well. The heretic and Torquemada understood one another, intimately, as deadly foes. The Christian knows that the free-thinker opposes what he, the Christian, regards as sacred: and the free-thinker certainly understands the point of view of the Christian and what would be the effects of triumph for that point of view. No doubt it is sad and unintelligent that it should be a question of hating. One may indeed hate an idea, yet be just and humane to the believers in that idea. But the deepest hostility, we repeat, springs from a very sharp understanding of the opposed nature of certain principles and aims.

A story in the Plain Dealer of that city says that most high school girls in Cleveland, Ohio, smoke cigarettes. We have been told that cigarette smoking is a sign of feminine independence, although we trust that few of us have been so mixed in values, rationally speaking, as to regard it as a necessary sign of independence. But this story tells us on the authority of careful (and, it seems, premeditatedly shocked) investigation that in most instances the Cleveland girls smoke because boys have "led them into it." So there goes the myth of independence. It is just another form, subtle and indirect and exquisitely corrupting, of subjection by the male. That is to say, the girls do what they please to please the boys. "Fancy that, Hedda!"



## Around the Table

Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

By E. Haldeman-Julius

### "NOT OFFICIAL"

Several readers have sent me clippings from the newspapers, in which Christian Science Committees on Publication condemn the Dakin book (*Mrs. Eddy: The Biography of a Woman's Mind*, by Edwin Franden Dakin) that the followers—and, even so, the worshippers—of Mrs. Eddy have been trying to suppress. It is significant that in these communications the fault found with Mr. Dakin is that he did not write his book with the collaboration, as it were, or with the "authoritative" advice of the Christian Science Church. In brief, the Dakin book is said to be "not official."

Now this is exactly the poorest objection that could be made to the book. Its very character as an honest and independent study depends upon its not being "official." If Mr. Dakin had permitted the Christian Science Church to censor his manuscript, we should be very suspicious of the book before we had even opened it—and we should discover quickly enough that such an "official" story was lacking and misleading in a number of important respects. "Official" propaganda of any church or party or organization or government is quite rightly approached with doubt and reservations by all intelligent readers. For it is plain that such an "official" publication will bear the marks and follow the leading of "official" policy, which is not likely to be a policy of perfect truthfulness; and such an "official" policy must certainly be far removed from the attitude of objective, studious criticism which we expect from such works as Mr. Dakin's.

One wonders, too, if the Christian Scientists naively expect many people to believe that only from the Christian Science Church could Mr. Dakin obtain the materials for his biography. After all, the life of Mrs. Eddy, and the founding and the rise and the present nature of the Christian Science Church, and the beliefs advocated by this Church are not peculiarly "official" secrets which only Christian Scientists could tell us about. Mr. Dakin had ample source material, which was available for him, as for any one, to use.

Really, it is the weakest thing the Christian Scientists could say for their own case and the strongest thing they could say for Mr. Dakin's

book that it is "not official." What the worshippers of Mrs. Eddy should do, if they wish to discredit Mr. Dakin's book with fair-minded persons, is to prove that Mr. Dakin has erred in his statements of fact: they should show us, if they can, that Mr. Dakin's material is not correct; they should point out to us, by chapter and line, precisely in what matters, if any, Mr. Dakin is wrong.

One letter, written to the Buffalo (N. Y.) *Evening News* by Orwell Bradley Towne (Christian Science Committee on Publication) consists of general statements that Mr. Dakin's biography is false, biased, etc., etc. But this "correction" (if that, oddly enough, was what it was supposed to be) does not point definitely to a single statement of fact in the book which is wrong. The letter also quotes an unimportant compliment to Mrs. Eddy written some years ago by Arthur Brisbane—as if Brisbane's compliment has anything whatever to do with the facts cited in the Dakin biography.

And so weak is the case against the Dakin biography that this letter to the Buffalo *Evening News* mentions two chapter headings in the book ("A Woman Becomes a Deity" and "The Twilight of a God") in pretended illustration of the unfairness of the writer. In the first place, Mr. Dakin's literary style is not in question; and in the second place, every one knows that the chapter headings mentioned are quite justified by the cultistic deification and worship of Mrs. Eddy by her followers.

One is left in no doubt that Mr. Dakin's biography stings the Christian Scientists so sharply because it is so unpleasantly and so irrefutably the truth.

CHEERFULLY "LOST"—BUT HE FOUND HIMSELF

Sinful interest in profane literature (that is to say, literature which has not the blessing of Christianity) is confessed in a letter from J. D. Owens (Belleville, W. Va.) Mr. Owens is cheerfully "lost," as the evangelists say in their unrealistic gable, but one gathers that he is satisfied pretty well: he has found himself, so to speak, and is free to enjoy life and read and think without holy hesitation or hindrance: he has more freedom and therefore

more life than really submissive and deluded Christians have.

From a pulpit-wise and world-foolish point of view, Mr. Owens is on the downward path; and not only that, but he is trying to inveigle others into that descending highway which is said to be so very broad. He writes:

I always manage to get your papers into the hands of some one to whom your ideas will be new and, in most cases, startling. I have one or two friends who always get the papers first, people who appreciate what you are doing, but ultimately I always manage to get them in the hands of some one to whom your ideas will be so strange and foreign that they will be compelled, out of curiosity, to read them, even though they are consigned to the furnace immediately afterward. Some time, some one of those people is going to take the time to point out to you the evident error of your ways, and then "Good night."

Mr. Owens' effort to make life more interesting for others, by seeing that they are introduced to "ideas strange and foreign," is praiseworthy. Concerning his friends who appreciate the work which The American Freeman and the other Haldeman-Julius publications are doing, I might suggest—of course it is a selfish suggestion—but a legitimate and logical one—that they subscribe and have the fine conscientious thrill of reading each his own copy of the paper. My "errors" have been pointed out, most voluminously: sometimes in a spirit of sizzling rage, and again in a tone of touching (but, alas, not convincing) solicitude for my "soul." Dispute, a comparison or a clash of ideas, will afford one of the entertaining features in this forum. "Around the Table."

Mr. Owens adds interestingly a more personal note about himself:

Life to me has been a wonderful show and well worth the price of admission and I entertain no delusions about there being a second act. My skepticism has led to many amusing experiences and dates almost from childhood. At ten years of age I could repeat the Westminster Catechism, short and long, both ways and was the champion Bible repeater in the Sunday school, and then I lost faith in the infallibility of the pastor of the local flock, to which my parents belonged. It wasn't long after that until my morals had fallen to such a lowly state that I was actually hiding out in the hayloft, and reading biographical sketches of Old King Brady and Nick Carter and some of the neighbors knew I would come to a bad end. In the meantime, while we are awaiting that end I will continue to read the

Little Blue Books and help along the good work.

Even so. Old King Brady and Nick Carter did not lead such violent careers as Saul and David and Joshua and other biblical heroes of blood and thunder. Nor, wild as they were, did those profane yarns of crime impose such a strain upon the credulity as many of the tales which have lurid, eye-popping prominence in the Bible. In the Little Blue Books, to be sure, Mr. Owens is entertained by the greatest adventures of all: the adventures of history, science, free thought, human progress.

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S HOT TO PRINT!

Newspapers are very interesting mirrors of the world's accidents and follies and labors and troubles and everything good, bad, trivial, and sensationally unimportant that happens in the kaleidoscopic human whirl. One needs to know how to read newspapers, and what not to read in them, and what not to believe, and what are the tricks employed in juggling the news to produce false impressions: a large order, certainly, as the newspapers reflect the confused mess of things without, in the good old phrase, "light and leading" either bright or definite. A snappy summing-up of the cynical attitude of journalism—i. e., of the practicing newspaper workers, who in the actual practice of their trade are pretty indifferent to viewpoints and values—is offered in a spirit of friendly interest to this department by a newspaper reporter whose name, obviously, it would not be discreet (for his own sake) to give. This reporter writes:

I wouldn't say that the average newspaper man is unintelligent, although some of them are. He can see the whole social structure built on rather insecure foundations—insure because the foundations must be continually replaced by something new. Yet if it were not for this fact he would be out of a job. So he welcomes the new and cheers for the old so that he can get two stories instead of one. He says: "Fewer persons are entering the ministry of the Church of God than ever before. It's disgraceful." He points out that religion is a failure and that it shouldn't be and gets cussings and praises from both sides. Then he writes: "There are still some of the world's foremost thinkers in the ranks of religion. But they are leaving the church." Again he gets the same cussing and praising as before and he has liberally given both sides of the argument. A newspaper man doesn't give a damn what happens, just so something happens. For that reason he encourages both religion and atheism, freedom and slavery, capital and labor, women and men. They have no ideals [the newspaper reporters] like you have. They have no opinions, except that the world is a mess and the longer it is kept that way the better. It would probably be better for the whole world if Truth reigned but if there were no such thing as a lie Truth would have no value. News would be scarce as hell, too.

Our candid though anonymous reporter was just a bit careless when he said that the newspapers encourage atheism, and certain highly controversial aspects of freedom, and the cause of labor when there is a critical conflict with capital. But what he meant was that the newspaper boys are glad to have all this material of conflict and doubt and hard words and sordid and tragic actions and the ups and downs and side issues of life. Journalism is an amazing, in some respects a monstrous, kaleidoscope: but it is not a clear, intelligent, guiding reflection of life. It is well known, at least to those who think about the matter at all, that journalism is the supporter of vested interests; and, first and last, it supports the vested interest of a muddled, and therefore melodramatically news-producing, world.

### Have It My Own Way

BY JOHN W. GUNN

Cynical Revision: Virtue has its own regret.

Human nature is whatever any man does. The most familiar human nature is whatever most men foolishly do.

VIRTUE LOVES NOT A SHINING MARK

Virtue is insidiously relative. Should one, perhaps, establish some fairly loose and generous range of possible vice—a sort of sliding behavioristic scale—in self-defense? A friend of mine who has been for years a drunkard recently pledged himself, like the Mayor of Casterbridge, to be sober as long as he had been a drunkard. He embraced sobriety just in time to escape or to miss (emphasize it as you wish) the holiday orgy. His doctor prescribed a rather careful regimen, one item of which was the drinking of but a single cup of coffee at each meal. But on Christmas day and on New Year's day "our hero" drank an extra cup of coffee at each meal. His sister reprimanded him in a gentle but obtrusive way. Vexed at Virtue's seeming lack of appreciation, he exclaimed: "O hell! Last year it was bad that I drank an extra quart of whiskey to celebrate. This year it's bad that I drink an extra cup of coffee. Damned if it ain't a mistake to try to be good, as people always expect you to be

a little better than you are—or, which perhaps amounts to the same thing, they always make you out to be a bit worse than you are."

E. H.-J. calls my attention to this superlative line in the advertisement of a talking picture: "Eclipses the Sun in Splendor." But let us not forget, in justice to the sun, that its splendor has to come from a long way off while this pictured splendor has to achieve only the more economical distance from Hollywood. On the other hand, eulogists of the picture may point out that it represents greater work in a shorter time than was required for the sun to evolve its erstwhile glory.

THE HYPERTYPICAL DETECTIVE

The time has now come to announce, both as an encomium and as a warning, that the authors of murder stories have definitely succeeded in one of their fondest aims: in distinguishing their heroes from the image of the typical detective which (they say) reigns in the popular mind, they have supplanted that old image with a new image of, as it were, the hypertypical detective. Now our new expectations of detective character are quite as typical, only different. We are therefore prepared to accept as a matter of course the following description in *The Murder Master* (published in the magazine with the rather precipitate title of *Detective Classics*) by Walter S. Masterson:

Chief Constable Hendon and his friend and colleague Watkins were having lunch at their club when a messenger brought the news from Scotland Yard.

No one glancing casually at these two men would have guessed their identity—two quiet men sipping tea at their club.

Hendon might have been taken for a professor of theology or some learned cult. His ascetic, deeply-lined face, sunken, keen eyes and fine forehead gave him that appearance. His soft voice and gentle manner hardly suggested the man who carried his life in his hands every day, and who had run more dangerous criminals to earth than any man in Europe.

His companion formed a striking contrast, and was, in appearance, as unlike the detective of fiction as a man could be. He might have posed for Mr. Pickwick.

A genial, round, smiling face, large glasses and a cheery laugh hardly indicated the terror of the blackmailer and the lowest forms of human scum which prey on society.

It is already anachronistic to say that such a character as Chief Con-

stable Hendon or his colleague Watkins is "as unlike the detective of fiction as a man could be." Hendon, Watkins, and all their sleuthing fellows who have been presented to us within the past few years are, in their superficially contrasted though always carefully somewhat unique ways, decidedly like the detective of fiction. They are, lumping them hypertypically, the detective of fiction. The only way to surprise us with an unlikeness to the kind of detective whom we expect is by reverting to simple type and introducing a sleuth who resembles a truck driver or a hamburger "king," with, for subtly defining measure, a betraying shiftness of eye.

## A Window on Europe

A Weekly Letter from an Englishman About Europe

John Langdon-Davies

### HEROES WITHOUT PANTS

By the time this can be read Nov. 11, 1929, will be far away in the distance, but certain points about Armistice Day celebration in London will be as new as they are at the moment of writing. Millions of Englishmen, myself among them, have no idea at all when Victory Day is; that is on what day the treaty of Versailles was signed. Nobody can ever forget on what day the last shot was fired; and this, the oblivion of Versailles, the fame of the armistice is one of the rare examples of humanity judging with complete accuracy the true significance of current or recent events. The war was never won, there was no victory, so to Hell with Victory Day! but Bill will never forget the morning which meant he need no longer fear being blown up by high explosives.

This year the nation gave a dinner to men who had won the Victoria Cross, the highest British reward for heroism. One man had to be given a new suit in order to attend without holes in his elbows and trousers seat; and if any American wants to know why David Lloyd-George is not Prime Minister of England and never will be, let him ponder on that fact. Lloyd George is one of the men who secured the oblivion which surrounds Victory Day by wilfully losing the peace; and he is the man who talked of giving men "homes fit for heroes to live in," at the same time bungling demobilization so badly that

Americans should read Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That*; it is more than a war book; it is

unemployment like a flood has drenched the English countryside ever since. And that is why V.C.'s have to be given trousers in order to dine with the Prince of Wales!

Another incident of this V.C.s dinner was interesting: there was hardly a word spoken which could be called militarist, imperialist or even patriotic in the bad sense. Whoever wrote the Prince's speech for him breathed decent sentiments instead of the sort of thing one would have expected ten or even five years ago. It seems as if the true meaning of war is at last coming to the surface. One very interesting example of the way things have moved is to be found in the fight which is going on between our two biggest newspaper combines for supremacy. One combine rightly guessed that the universal craze for war novels and plays could be turned to advantage, so they published *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Journey's End* as serials in their daily papers: their circulation immediately increased; the other combine had to do something to retaliate and began publishing stories of "Cockney humor in war time" and such like "war-is-such-fun" stuff and nonsense.

Their efforts have failed to shake the circulation of their rivals and it seems clear that even the readers of the yellow press prefer realism to humor when it comes to the war. To me the great war play is not *Journey's End* but *The Silver Tassie* and only one act of that. The great modernist artist Augustus John designed the scene and it shows a ruined monastery behind the lines, shattered by enemy shells, but still used for a temporary hospital for stretcher cases. Against the wall is a soldier undergoing crucifixion field punishment, strapped hand and foot to a wheel. Next him is a crucifix and next that a huge howitzer outlined against the sky. At the beginning of the act we hear the monks chanting a service in beautiful old Gregorian tunes; then a group of soldiers come in, dead tired, cold, miserable, and flop on the ground of rest. They begin to talk, ordinary soldier talk about cigarettes, food, home, parents, letters, officers; but all of it chanted in parodies of the church music. The symbolic effect is staggering; it is too dark to see the individuals, all individuality is lost; church and state, the two great vultures, are tearing the flesh from living beings. I don't know if America has seen *The Silver Tassie* but all Americans should.

[Continued on page three.]

# The Greatest Sensation of 1930

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Broadly speaking, the nature of the Catholic Church has been understood, its bigotry and superstition have been recognized in their anti-civilized character, by many who have not been equipped to say much in a definite nor in a large and solid way about what Catholicism really is. It is not enough to have a general idea that, say, the Roman Catholic Church has been a persecuting, degrading force in the life of mankind; that the Roman Catholic Church represents today the gross superstition and arrant bigotry of the Dark Ages; that the Roman Catholic Church is false and evil at heart and in every line and feature. FACTS are important to justify, to establish clearly and beyond dispute, these general ideas. FACTS in profuse, amazing character are given by McCabe in *The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church*.

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## Marriage and Morals

By Bertrand Russell

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"The man is too civilized," writes Isaac Goldberg. "I am surprised that England has not yet stood him up against the wall to be shot at sunrise." (See the very interesting review of *Marriage and Morals* in Isaac Goldberg's department in this issue.)

What Russell does is to present a clear, complete study of contemporary ideas and practices relating to marriage and morals. He interprets the conflicts of morality in our changing age, which is reevaluating inherited conventions, and which is, moreover, forced to adjust itself to entirely new conditions. What these conditions are, what the true problems of sex are today, what marriage and morals are in their most widely social as well as their definite, personal implications, Russell tells his readers in a scientific spirit.

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## In the World of Books

Weekly Reviews and Other Literary Ruminations  
Isaac Goldberg

**HOT INSTINCTS AND COLD REASON**  
*Marriage and Morals.* By Bertrand Russell. New York. Horace Liveright. \$8.

If I were asked to recommend a single recent volume on the mooted problems of sex as it affects the individual and the group, I should undoubtedly name *Marriage and Morals*. It is not an oracular essay; it is not the last word on the subject; one does not nod assent to every opinion expressed. This is relatively unimportant. What is important is the quality of mind and the approach that Mr. Russell brings to an investigation inevitably charged with dynamite. Russell, in a field that is parched by the hot winds that blow unceasingly over it, maintains an imperturbable coolness. It is not that he is unaware of the all-too-humaneness of his material, or that his response is naturally cold. It is this: to a research that involves the most capricious of human passions he brings a calm mind that controls a warm heart. Russell is a humanist, but he is not a Utopian. He acknowledges the instinct, but he does not surrender his intelligence.

He is, of course, a radical. He goes to the roots—psychological, historical, sociological—of his subject. He is not afraid of offending the Church or the vested interests of contemporary Morality. When these get in his way he does not waste mad motions brushing them aside; he proceeds to reason them out of his path, or, better still, to let them die away by implication.

Such matters as abortion, adultery, companionate marriage, the rulership of man in the home, the results of woman's greater economic freedom, birth control, the true meaning of freedom for woman, eugenics, and what not else, are discussed with scientific simplicity. Yes; this *Marriage and Morals* is beautifully simple. Do not forget that Russell is that seeming anomaly, an emotional mathematician. His writing, in this book, is pellucid; one reads as if one were gazing into the crystalline waters of a singing brook. The chapters run on with the unadorned beauty of a geometrical theorem.

Russell's general ideas are so well known that I need not repeat them here. What I should like to do, in order to let you savor the quality of the man's thinking and of his expression, is to quote at random from the chapters. I am particularly gratified to find that Russell dares to speak openly of jealousy and its general futility. It is a question that has absorbed me for some years now, and somehow I feel that it corresponds, in the emotional realm, to capitalism in the economic. It involves, in other words, a sense of property-ownership that debases the dignity of man and woman. But let

me cull a few remarks from Russell's text:  
"The purely instinctive element in jealousy is not nearly so strong as most moderns imagine. The extreme strength of jealousy in patriarchal societies is due to the fear of falsification of descent. This may be seen in the fact that a man who is tired of his wife and passionately devoted to his mistress will nevertheless be more jealous where his wife is concerned than when he finds a rival to the affections of his mistress."  
"Emphatic and reiterated assertion, especially during childhood, produces in most people a belief so firm as to have a hold even over the unconscious, and many of us who imagine that our attitude towards orthodoxy is quite emancipated are still, in fact, subconsciously controlled by its teachings."

I have found this so true, so treacherously true in my own case, at times, that I am always on my guard against it. In the case of insincere radicals—the kind who like to talk uninhibitedly and sensationally—I take it for granted. It is not that, in certain crises, they show the white feather; they simply revert to the ingrained ideas of their impressionable childhood, where safety is found. Talk is one thing; belief is yet another; acting upon the belief is yet a third. And it is in action that most radicals fail. That this is so is hardly strange; thought is in a sense experimental action, but it is action at a stage where it may yet be recalled. True action is irrevocable; it may not be recalled. Hence the Hamlet in us rightly hesitates to become the Don Quixote.

But I am getting weary, if the truth must be told, of being asked such questions as this: "Well, if you believe in such-and-such, why don't you do it?"

The question betrays ignorance. A belief, for example, that criminality is largely due to illness, does not necessarily mean an indorsement of crime or the criminal. We do not, as I have said in the Little Blue Book on *The New Immorality*, necessarily stand for what we understand. A better question would be—that is, if by my evasion of an issue I had opened myself to such questioning—"Why do you say one thing and, when occasion arises for the testing of your beliefs, do another?"

But let us return to Russell's sterling book.

In considering censorship Russell writes: "I do not myself believe that it is possible to frame a law against obscenity. . . . I should myself be in favor of having no law whatever upon the subject." Bravo! During the recent censorship asinities in Boston, I voiced—in public meeting—the selfsame sentiment. I said that I found this to criticize in the anti-censorship meetings: the protestants tacitly accepted the standards of the Censors by trying to prove that the censored book or play did not fit into the Censor's definition. Nobody protested against the existence of a censorship in the first place, or showed how it embodied an ecclesiastical attitude which linked the Church and the State.

It is a long explanation; but the substance of Russell's stand, and my own, may best be put in his own

words: "No law can forbid the bad without forbidding the good also. Publications which are undoubtedly and frankly pornographic would do very little harm if sex education were rational."

What is rational?  
That is what Russell's book is written about, and it is, as I have said, precisely because of its calm, scientific tone that it convinces the reader. Disagree as one may upon details, one cannot withhold approval of the manner in which the issues are confronted.

A few more examples of this rationality, and I leave you to the book itself.

"Undoubtedly patriotism, so called, is the gravest danger to which civilization is at present exposed, and anything that increases its virulence is more to be dreaded than plague, pestilence and famine."

(Compare this with the statement made recently, by a man of the cloth, and an important official of the Watch and Ward Society of Boston: "Any person selling an indecent book does more harm by far than one who would spread the germs of cholera among the population." I leave it to you to make your choice of the more intelligent, the saner man.)

"It may become quite easily possible for women in the future, without any serious sacrifice of happiness, to select the fathers of their children by eugenic considerations, while allowing their private feelings free away as regards ordinary sexual companionship."

"Sexual behavior concerns the community solely insofar as children are involved."

"The use of self-control is like the use of brakes on a train. It is useful when you find yourself going in the wrong direction, but merely harmful when the direction is right. No one would maintain that a train ought always to be run with the brakes on, yet the habit of difficult self-control has a very similar injurious effect upon the energies available for useful activity. Self-control causes these energies to be largely wasted on internal friction instead of external activity; and on this account it is always regrettable, though sometimes necessary."

The man is too civilized. I am surprised that England has not yet stood him up against the wall to be shot at sunrise.

[This book may be ordered through the Haldeman-Julius Publications, at the publisher's price stated above.]

### A Window on Europe

Continued from page two

how any sensitive Englishman, educated at a public school, feels about life and the overshadowing horror of the war which has ruined life for our generation. Americans have no idea usually of what is meant by the "public school spirit" in England. To begin with they do not know that a "public school" is so-called because it is a private establishment to which only a few wealthy boys can go! The English public school—Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester—is the quintessence of the English class system; all the virtues and vices of that system come from these schools and it is to them that the average Englishman owes it that he is a perpetual puzzle to all foreigners. I think that Robert Graves gives a very good idea indeed of what this institution means to the spiritual life of his country. I myself would never send my son to a "public school," though I went to one myself. *Goodbye to All That* tells enough to explain why!

The more I think of these books and plays on the war, the more interesting I feel it to be psychologically that it should take ten whole years and more before men could relieve themselves by creating works of art of the horrible nightmare of their past. Perhaps when this period of confession is over we shall be able to live "fancy free"; perhaps then it will really be "Good-bye to all that."

### The Dilemma of Religion

From *The Strange Notes of Samuel Butler* (*Little Blue Book No. 472*).  
A religion only means something so certainly posed that nothing can ever displace it. It is an attempt to settle first principles so authoritatively that no one need so much as even think of ever reopening them for himself or feel any, even the faintest, misgiving upon the matter. It is an attempt to get an irrefragably safe investment, and this cannot be got, no matter how low the interest, which in the case of religion is about as low as it can be. Any religion that cannot be founded on half a sheet of note paper will be bottom-heavy, and this, in a matter so essentially of sentiment as religion, is as bad as being top-heavy in a material construction. It must of course catch on to reason, but the less it emphasizes the fact the better.

Life is short at best, and religion has cheated millions out of its best advantages by throwing over it the ghastly shadow of the fear of death.

Most men have the convictions of their virtues: and they have such virtues as their self-interested convictions will comfortably support.

Probably the liar would say that his particular and vexatious problem is to judge how far people may be trusted to believe the truth.

### Lifts in the Fog

BY MARCET HALDEMAN-JULIUS.

To all my old friends of *The De-bunker* (which one of our readers not inaptly says 'is in private life the H.-J. Monthly') and to those of you with whom I used to chat when I wrote in these columns—greetings!

THE FOG: A MODERN PARABLE  
Have you ever driven at night when all you could see were the clouds of fog that billowed around you? I was traveling through just such deep mists, not long ago, in the little Ford which E. H.-J. recently gave me. We were a group of four and I was at the wheel. Now and then, quite unheralded by lights or honk, a car would emerge from the opaque whiteness and glide by us.

"Of all the foolishness!" I exclaimed in amazed exasperation. "It's dangerous enough, with lights." Then, as another car passed us without warning, I added, "What are these people trying to do, anyway?"

A fourth narrow escape made us realize that this discarding of car lights was not coincidence. To experiment, I snapped off my own. Instantly, as if by magic, the fog seemed to have vanished. In the pale moonlight the pavement and all nearby objects were faintly revealed. But now not only were we unable to see what might be approaching until it was almost upon us, but we ourselves could not be seen at any distance. I blew a tentative call of warning. At once there came an answering signal. The sound was so close that I caught my breath.

"This is too risky!" declared one of our number and, a bit peremptorily, "Turn on your lights again." I obeyed gladly enough. Once more we could see only banks of earth-clouds. We might have been in an airplane six thousand feet or more above the ground for all that we could discern of our surroundings. A gentle argument arose amongst us. Two were for keeping on the lights, the other two were for traveling in the illusion of clarity. Then, even as we were debating, the fog lifted. Our tension relaxed and we all drew sighs of relief; but the relief was short-lived. Even while we exulted we were again enveloped by the mist.

We played a little with the situation. For there was something almost eerie in the suddenness with which in the shadowy moonlight the white shroud seemed to vanish and the acuteness with which, when our lights went on, we realized the fog's real density.

"They're going to stay on too," I declared firmly. "I'd rather know what I'm up against than delude myself into thinking I'm safe, driving along here with other foolish people in the half-dark. It's nonsense. They are only fooling themselves and running more chances of disaster."

Quite suddenly it came to me that we were enacting a real little parable—with the highway for the stage and the soft fog-filled landscape for a setting. The two who wanted to travel in the half-dark were portraying the many who would rather believe themselves safer when they cannot see the fog; we who preferred to admit it and try to penetrate it—but you yourselves can complete the comparison.

Even as I mused, once more the mist lifted and in the streaming light the road ahead lay clear and undebatable. It's these lifts in the fog, I thought, which, brief though they may be, are the reward. Sometimes one finds these moments of clarity, of unmasked truth, in a book; sometimes in a person (dear friend or stranger met for one swift contact); sometimes in musings with one's inmost self when unafraid "I" and "me" hold converse. Then, with the knowledge that has been revealed held close as a sustaining memory, we plunge again into the concealing and confusing mist.

### WITH NIETZSCHE ON CHRISTMAS EVENING

If you had been with E. H.-J., John Gunn (with whose column in this paper you are familiar) and myself on Christmas evening, you would have seen the fog lift in just this sudden fashion. For with Manuel and John sitting on the comfortable couch and myself curled on the floor, John read aloud to us in his pleasant voice that most brilliant of all terse indictments of Christianity: Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Antichrist*.

The swift, arrowlike thoughts and devastating arguments wing from the book in chiselled, polished sentences—sculptured carvings in which, stimulated and lifted, one soars higher and higher in a sweeping, exhilarating flight to the very peaks of truth. Both in form and in substance, this essay of Nietzsche's is a masterpiece.

Warm, alert, unfolded toward each other and to the great man we were meeting, we smiled in communion of mirth at the adroit, merciless thrusts, found ourselves moved by his daring sallies to hearty laughter and glorified in the superbly marshalled arguments, in Nietzsche's uncompromising honesty. We seemed to me to be not three in the room but four. Friedrich Nietzsche was as truly with us as if he had sat there in the flesh in Manuel's green armchair.

I forgot for the time how unfair

Nietzsche is in his attitude toward women, how scathingly he often speaks of Jews and of Germans. Yet it was in his sister, Elizabeth, that Nietzsche found perhaps his most constant and certainly one of his most understanding friends. Georg Brandes (a Jew) was one of the very first to recognize, interpret and introduce Nietzsche to a none too comprehending public. And it was a German, Schopenhauer, who was Nietzsche's first liberator. As Brandes in his essay on him explains:

In entering life young people meet with various collective opinions, more or less narrow-minded. The more the individual has it in him to become a real personality the more he will resent following a herd. But even if an inner voice says to him: "Become thyself! Be thyself!" he hears its appeal with despondence. Has he a self? He does not know; he is not yet aware of it.

He therefore looks about for a teacher, an educator, one who will teach him not something foreign, but how to become his own individual self. It was a liberating educator of the kind that Nietzsche as a young man looked for and found in Schopenhauer.

It was a service that Nietzsche himself has rendered for countless others. And one of the finest things ever said of him is: "Among many good qualities he has that of imparting his mood to others and setting their thoughts in motion."

It was a beautiful edition—that one of E. H.-J.'s—from which John read, an edition that filled the eye. The very pages were a delight to contemplate, a pleasure to touch, but when we read the translator's comment that this was an essay for the few, E. H.-J. exclaimed in impatience: "It is not. It is for the many."

### THE LANDSCAPE OF MOODS

The difference in the way the countryside appears through the window of a car and from the saddle often sets me to pondering. On the horses Alice and I (for we are the riders in the family, E. H.-J.'s interest having dwindled quite away and Henry's being purely perfunctory) search out all the little-traveled roads, those which even in winter are lined with high, bird-frequented hedges; and we exult in any little streams that must be

crossed and, unexpected woodsey windings.  
In Little O'Kay (as the children and I call our Ford), we cling to the highways. Lower hedges, especially at corners, are the ones which please us. Safety and convenience are the first two considerations. Beauty takes a third place. We want to hurry, not to loiter.

On horseback we seem to become one with the trees, to feel in our own throats the birds' songs and in our blood the ripple of the streams. But the most precious emotion a car can give us is the very opposite of this feeling of identity with all around us—a sense of sweet indifference to life's ever importunate problems, of remoteness from all that we are passing.

A swift ride in a car is as intoxicating as a draft of heady wine; on horseback one becomes absorbed in the particular, lost in sober, deep reflections. In a car one is often swept into abstract thinking, into majestic generalizations. From the saddle all the countryside becomes a cherished friend with whom to exchange and share dear secrets; through the car window it seems a kingdom, and oneself the monarch.

### It Works! It's Wrong!

By faith, not by science, shall we be saved: this is the typically Christian message of one Samuel W. Stagg, Rev., who left a pulpit in the Philippine Islands and traveled all the way to Iola, Kans., for the purpose of restating this old doctrine of futurity before a Methodist missionary pow-wow. It is a doctrine of futurity and, more than that, it is a doctrine of stupid and wilful obscurely reasoned resistance to the realistic methods of modern progress; indeed, it is too much of an assumption to say that the doctrine is reasoned at all. No one could be more completely innocent of any indebtedness to reason than Rev. Stagg when he uttered the following words of wind:

Scientific humanism is another great antagonist of our Christian development. It either ignores religion or scoffs at it. Humanism substitutes psychoanalysis for the confession of sin. It has captured the universities everywhere; it is the underlying philosophy of Russian Sovietism and the League of Nations.

What should be our attitude toward it as Christians? There is no objection to the scientific approach to the human problem. After all, the humanist has not discovered a remedy for human selfishness. Nothing but the spirit of Christ can sublimate selfishness. Our aim is the spirit of Jesus

scientifically expressed in a new social order.

Materialism, another of the great enemies of Christian faith, has subtly invaded the whole of modern life. The church has lost practically every modern battle with materialism.

Rev. Stagg expresses himself very poorly, but one gathers that scientific humanism is seriously anti-Christian because it is a way of applying knowledge to the improvement of life, while Christianity places the emphasis upon faith; and because it deals positively, actively, progressively with the study and adjustment of human relations, while Christianity still preaches in empty terms of man's relations with God, with Jesus, with the soul.

Christianity preaches; scientific humanism does.

Christianity assumes; scientific humanism seeks to know.

Christianity offers to the world, futilely, what it calls the spirit of Jesus—a spirit that it cannot really explain and cannot agree about; scientific humanism offers to the world genuine understanding of human problems, genuine recognition of the realities and the possibilities of the world we live in, genuine promise and performance of a progress that is based on material welfare and not on spiritual fancy.

Of course scientific humanism is materialistic—that is to say, it deals with facts and builds solidly and cultivates the true, rich, beautiful and strong supports of life; and, equally of course, materialism is opposed to the "spirit" (i. e., the emptiness) of Christianity.

The good Christian, typified by Rev. Stagg, says that the aim of Christianity and "Christ's own test" is "transformed lives." Yet this good Christian is hostile toward the scientific humanism which is so brilliantly transforming lives and all life in the modern age.

Does this good Christian dislike scientific humanism because it *works* and thus exposes the futurity of the Christian faith that has so long been preached to no purpose?

Governments run by tyrants have wanted little to do with wise men; because, forsooth, the wise men knew too well that tyranny was foolish. Governments run by politicians have no use for wise men; because, of course, the wise men know that the politicians are foolish, or are, by the nature of their position, servants of foolishness.

A sense of honor is founded upon an appreciation of the rights of others; thus a bigot cannot have a sense of honor.

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## The Antichrist

By Friedrich Nietzsche

Introduction by E. Haldeman-Julius

There have been many great attacks upon Christianity, strong and effective in their different ways, and one hesitates to distinguish any one of them by the superlative "greatest": but if I were to use this superlative—especially with respect to sheer blasting force of inspired denunciation—I should apply it to *The Antichrist* of Friedrich Nietzsche. In this great essay—in this great pamphlet—in this great battlecry, Nietzsche is uncompromisingly the fighter. He delivers smashing blows, stinging slaps, piercing thrusts, prodigious kicks, world-resounding hoots and cries of cultured scorn. One is not only impressed intellectually, but one is thrilled and moved to the depths by the splendid, sweeping fervor of this attack. Nietzsche, who is indeed a very Hercules of intellectual combat, communicates to the reader the very spirit of his own Herculean antagonism, reinforced by a profound, four-square conviction of the just necessity of the cause. Like Nietzsche, one is sure that one is standing on the highest ground of culture and humanity, that one is fighting in the strongest position intellectually, and that one is assailing not simply an idea, not simply a religion, not simply an unattractive or untrue way of looking at life, but (inclusive of all these aspects) a serious enemy of civilization.

One is aware that it is not merely a theory, viewed in cool and remote detachment, which engages Nietzsche's combative ardor. It is not an argument in the abstract about supernaturalism. It is not an argument of pure reason about dogmas which do not impinge upon life. It is because Christianity is deadly-hostile to all true and fine human values that Nietzsche sends forth his trumpet blast against it—against its ideas and sentiments—against its history and ethics—against all its works and influences. Christianity—Nietzsche repeats the charge again and again and it is the central theme of his magnificent super-pamphlet—is at heart and utterly the foe of civilization.

It is a joy to read such invigorating, such frankly destructive criticism: criticism, moreover, which is destructive of a *destroying* influence. It takes no great thought, after all, to understand that in this great attack Nietzsche is himself the constructive mind arguing for civilization against an institution and an ideal that degrades and would defeat life. Fundamentally, in his philosophic attitude, Nietzsche hates Christianity because it says "No" to life; and the whole of Nietzsche's conviction is that we should say "Yes" to life. One need not agree uncritically with every idea and every line of this sublime, forceful thinker—indeed, a valuable lesson which he enforces is that of courage and independence in thinking—to realize that the sum of his thought, of his culture, and of his powerful pronouncements in the present instance is civilized and constructive. He loved "noble values" and his mind comprehended the loftiest interests and aims of life. He was infinitely superior to Christianity (and of course no individual Christian could intellectually or culturally compare with him) in his allegiance to the spirit of truth, of freedom, and of progress.

It was his belief in the worthiness and the fair possibilities of life that engendered hatred of Christianity in the mind of Nietzsche. (For he *hated* Christianity, with the hatred of high-minded conviction, and the reasons for his hatred justify what was in truth a noble emotion of affirmation in behalf of all that is best in life, at once a noble hatred and a noble scorn and superiority. He had indeed a profound contempt for Christianity; but it was not contempt alone that dictated those devastating phrases, those thundering words, those scorching images and comparisons. He was inspired by an active hatred, and naturally so, inasmuch as he had to deal with an active force, a force too that was visibly and insolently more powerful in his day than it is in our day: although it is clear enough that the tremendous blows of Nietzsche are still useful, are still needed, against this historic and, in our day, still blustering and scheming and thwarting enemy of the civilized among mankind.)

Nietzsche hated Christianity, then, because he was very close to it—it confronted him directly as an enemy—and, as he himself confesses, he had personally felt its acrid, cramping influence. And the justification of his hatred, aside from the personal feeling that any intelligent man would have in the presence of anything so ignoble, was that the Christian religion was poisonous to philosophy, poisonous to ethics, poisonous to all culture. In a word, a genuine and free and strong culture could not be developed save as Christianity should be destroyed to make way for it.

Science? Religion was, as its very nature necessitated, the sworn foe of science: for science came with the instruments and point of view and mighty factual structure of knowledge which must shatter the shams of religion. Literature? The really great in literature was feared and denounced by the priests of this religion of narrow-mindedness, this religion, too, which essentially was inspired by a hatred of the hearty, fine realities of life: a free literature is inevitably pagan, curious, joyous, and blasphemous: literary culture must be the very opposite of Christian "culture."

And indeed Nietzsche says that the science and art of reading, the knowing of words and their meaning and their true use in the expression of ideas, is the most effective means of showing up the false pretensions of religion. The very terms upon which religion depends—its words such as God, Devil, spirit, soul, immortality, sin, salvation, and the like—reveal its essential character of bunk. (Bunk, by the way, is a word that Nietzsche would have delighted to use; short and vigorous words, more truthful than polite, abound in *The Antichrist*: he could be blunt, as he could be sharp and subtle, according to the impression which it was important to convey.) Religion uses throughout an unreal language, a set of words that do not correspond to any images or purposes of reality: and it is a good test of intelligence whether one detects the nature of this illusory word pattern, which is of no use whatever save to deceive the victims of priestly craft and ambition, to deceive these victims about the character of life.

There are tremendous implications in the simple remark of Nietzsche that the ancient Romans had developed to the stage of civilization where they *knew how to read*. Words, in their minds, created pictures that were realistic: they were skeptical and did not read incuriously and credulously: they brought an attitude of familiar thoughtfulness to their reading: they had a culture which was carefully and clearly expressed. Of course, the perspicacious reader understands that this knowing how to read did not with the pagans, and does not with civilized persons today, apply solely to books: it is in the broadest sense *knowing how to read life*, how to observe things as they are, how to interpret rationally the real forces of nature and the relations, the impulses, and the aspirations of man. All men of ripe and reflective culture appreciate this importance of knowing how to read, which most men confuse with the simple training of literacy.

There is nothing more common than the habit of reading without understanding. And when a man does not, in the first place, have a clear realistic attitude toward life, how can he possibly find an intelligent, true, living picture of things in what he reads? He misunderstands the simplest words; phrases elude him; the thought which animates the page is beyond his detection; the very allusions, the very images and illustrations, the very basic implications of thought which are necessarily found in intelligent writing are foreign and meaningless to the man who, being literate and able to spell out words, nevertheless does not know how to read.

But the Romans, says Nietzsche, had learned how to read. They had evolved a wonderful organization of powerful, realistic, cultured

life. And Christianity was an evil, corrupting agent in the downfall of this splendid ancient civilization. Is it any wonder that Nietzsche—in the degree that he admired that ancient civilization and truly loved the very spirit, the very words, the very outlook of civilization—hated Christianity! Who that appreciates the pagan civilization, which had achieved so much and promised in its sound development so much more, could—facing the record of Christian "civilization" for centuries after the downfall of pagan Rome—intelligibly be a Christian?

We of today, who have reached the stage of scientific, complete rationalism, say that Nietzsche was right in every syllable of his indictment of Christianity. He is supported by the facts of history, by the facts of science, by the facts and the implications and the essential, underlying spirit of all culture. Civilization and culture have had to gain their triumphs in opposition to the degrading, confusing, altogether evil influence of Christianity; and as culture and civilization have claimed the allegiance of men, Christianity has receded in their regard and certainly, as a theory of life or as a way of life, it is no longer believed by intelligent people. (Sadly must this statement be accompanied by the confession that there are still many people who are not intelligent, although the wisdom of the ages and especially the scientific learning of the past few centuries is at their command if they but learn, as the pagans had learned, *how to read*.)

Neither Christianity as an organized religion, with its churchly dogmas and its claim to control and guide life according to a "spiritual" theory of life which is discredited by the very fundamentals of modern knowledge, nor Christianity in the very academic sense of the supposed personality and "message" of Jesus is reconcilable with a realistic scheme of life. Dogmatically, Christianity has asserted what is false; it has arrogated to itself, without the slightest basis of real knowledge, the position of explaining life (and, more important in the Christian view, the "beyond life" to which it would have life be miserably, falsely subservient): it has been at once the most vicious engine of tyrannical worldly power and the most corrupting source of anti-worldly, anti-human "spiritual" bunk. There has been no consistency in Christianity: but in both of its main characteristics it has been antagonistic to the best interests of mankind.

Jesus, of course, is but a name and a myth employed spectacularly, though not logically, in the service of this inconsistent religion. One understands what Nietzsche means when he says that the last Christian died on the cross—the only Christian: for obviously the complete ascetic ideal of Jesus, the strange and morbid psychology which (in the most coherent picture we can make of this little known or one may say unknown figure) dominated him could not long and actively serve as the official teaching of a religion. Even granting that some men have attempted to follow in the way of Jesus and that they have considerably succeeded in this attempt (a kind of success which must in its very nature be a failure or a denial of life), it is apparent that a really Jesus-inspired Christianity would be impossible.

But Paul had the asceticism of Jesus, only in Paul it was less a renunciation of life than a hatred of life. And Christianity, while its politics have certainly been far removed from the mild, renunciatory, "kingdom-of-heaven-within" gospel ascribed to Jesus, nevertheless has been poisoned with the pretenses of "spirituality" and with the futile, puritanical "nay-saying" of the Jesus legend. It must be said in all candor that the chief blame for mankind's self-torturing and fear and shame with regard to sex, for example, rests upon the despicably distorting influence of Christianity. It seems clear enough that without the confusions and the cruel denials of what is natural and sane which have been maintained by the Christian doctrines of purity and "spirituality" and godliness—or, in short, by the Christian emphasis upon a "life to come" which discouraged a true consideration of the hopes and needs and problems of this life—mankind would today have a more intelligent, happy attitude toward sex, as they would be far more sensibly adjusted to all the realities of life.

The dual roles, as it were, that Christianity has played in history—its politics of power and its philosophy of "spiritual" negation of life (negation of reality and culture)—explain what at first glance may appear a contradiction in Nietzsche's criticism. He speaks of the Christian attitude of envy and suspicion and hatred toward superior, powerful, great men and ideas and events: Christianity, he says, is the religion of weakness in contrast with the gospel of greatness and power which Nietzsche would wish mankind to honor. But the contradiction is only apparent: power such as that wielded by barbaric Popes and Kings, power without culture or vision, power utterly indifferent to the future of humanity on this earth—that was not the sort of power that Nietzsche, in a spirit of poetry and prophecy that looked a long way ahead, conceived as admirable or desirable.

The power of Christianity was a power meanly obtained and meanly used; it was, moreover, a power which was exercised to beat down and cruelly discourage the appearance of all the fine values which Nietzsche loved; Nietzsche at times speaks recklessly of the will-to-power as something worthy in itself, yet it is after all the sum of his philosophy that power should be something of large human vision and thoughtfulness and culture. The mere power of exploitation and tyranny and conquest was, after all, opposed to the values which Nietzsche envisaged in his poetic, prophetic way as brilliantly justifying his rather fanciful (yet, if one brings it down to a realistic scale, inspiring) ideal of "the Superman."

And thus Christianity, whether in its manifestations of bigoted power, fighting all the aims of culture and civilization, or in its influence of a life-denying, truth-denying, nature-and-man-hating "spiritual" philosophy is truthfully indicted by Nietzsche. It is true, as he asserts, that Christianity has tramped upon all that is good and natural and sane in life. It is true that noble and superior things, which Nietzsche elevates in his regard, have been ever suspected and persecuted by Christianity; and that Christian power has been employed principally to keep humanity, to keep the culture and the progress of human society, from becoming powerful. It is true that Christianity, as a philosophy of life or as a religion or as an engine of power, has been foolish and mean and base. It is true that with the burden of Christianity fully upon them mankind could never have progressed to the point from which Nietzsche surveyed the world, nor beyond that to the scientific modernism which we, more fortunately placed in time, see about us. Consistently, and as by the force of a natural law of progress, the upbuilding of culture and civilization has necessitated a tearing down of Christianity. As Nietzsche says with his rude, right realism, Christianity (like other religions) has in its practical character been a scheme of priestly power; duping and doping the masses of mankind with a "spiritual" philosophy of submission, futility, anti-humanity: a philosophy from which proceeds also a poor, mean hatred of what is good and what is noble and what is earthily forward-looking in life.

One may add, too, that the so-called "gentler virtues"—pity, meekness, non-resistance and the like—which Nietzsche wrongly identified as Christian in practice have, in Christian preaching, appeared as poor, mean "virtues": at the best, when sincerely preached as Christianity, they have been futile in their remoteness from life and have, as Nietzsche truly says, been the reflection of weak natures: at the worst, it must be said that Christianity has been pitiless, arrogant, and violent (with a ghastly, barbaric will-to-power indeed!) in enforcing itself upon mankind. There has been much unreal, sickly sentimentalism in Christian preaching though not in Christian practice: but Christianity has been far removed from even the understanding of true humanitarianism—the kind of humanitarianism which Nietzsche, after all, featured in the noble sum and symmetry of his thought.

[To be continued next week.]

## There Is Only One Answer To Bigotry!

### A Free Press Uses the Weapons of Truth Against Falshood and Intolerance

In the Christian Scientists' conspiracy to boycott a book on Mrs. Eddy and in the publication of a new edition of the Catholic *Index Expurgatorius*, we have sharp and timely reminders that the ugly impulse of intolerance is not dead but very much alive. There are individuals and organizations that are active to smother the truth, to sidetrack the truth, to create new (or rebuild the old) barriers of hate and fear which stand in the way of general recognition of the truth. Strong influences strike at the freedom of the press.

Legal freedom of the press does not necessarily mean actual, effective, complete freedom of the press. The Christian Scientists, for example, cannot legally prevent the circulation of the biography of Mrs. Eddy; but they can and do try to "smother" this book by threats, misrepresentations, and prejudiced efforts. The Roman Catholic Church cannot legally suppress the books which it "damns" in its *Index Expurgatorius*; but it can and does maintain a wall of intolerance, which is as effective as the full force of the State would be with countless dupes of Catholic bigotry. There is more than one way to kill a book; to stifle or smother a book; to prevent a book from being read; to get a book somehow out of the way so that it will not interfere with the bigots who thrive upon error.

*The legal right of free speech simply means, after all, that truth must be eternally vigilant and persistent in combating error. Free speech, in the legal sense, means that we have the right to use the weapons of enlightenment. It is our responsibility to use these weapons. And we have to fight agencies of falsehood and intolerance that are bold, treacherous, and sleeplessly active.*

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