

"Back to the Dark Ages" Is Meaning of Pope's Letter to the World Attacking Public Schools

The Pope has spoken again. When the Pope speaks, millions of Catholics throughout the world listen reverently. There are about 15,000,000 Catholics in the United States. When the Pope speaks, the world hears the howling echo of the Dark Ages. 1930 is the date which deceptively appears over the news of this latest statement (encyclical, as it is impressively called) by the Pope. Yet the opinions now delivered with medieval pomp from Vatican City might with greater consistency and candor be dated 1390. During six hundred years civilization has advanced immensely. But the Roman Catholic Church has not advanced, it has resisted the spread of the ideas and methods of civilization, and it heaps anathemas today—in the brazen tone of barbaric centuries when elemental stupidity and brutality marked the sway of Papal Rome—upon the decent rights and sanities and aspirations of our civilization. In 1390 "Rome" howled with triumph, and humanity struggled in its savage grasp. In 1930 "Rome" howls with its old barbarism, and the hand of "Rome" is tense and terribly eager for its ancient throttling hold of power. The Roman Catholic Church can never have enough power to satisfy its lust for tyranny. It wants—and it demands in 1930 as it more than demanded in 1390—all power. Meanwhile it proclaims a portentous authority over millions of Catholics who, in the modern world, offer a curious, an astonishing, an indefensible, and most seriously a sinister allegiance to a medieval institution.

Absurd and Powerful

And the Roman Catholic Church is not a small institution. It is not a little, localized, unimportant institution at which we may safely laugh. It is ridiculous—but it is not more ridiculous than when it commanded not simply in words but in bloody deeds, not more ridiculous than when it tortured and burned heretics, not more ridiculous than when it pressed triumphantly with a grip of iron upon the helpless life and thought of priest-ridden Europe. The beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church are absurd to the last degree, and these beliefs are cruel, and these beliefs are obscene, and these beliefs are flagrantly anti-human—but these are the beliefs of 200,000,000 Catholics in the year 1930. There is nothing absurd about the power of the Roman Catholic Church. No other organization, having its common strength and common aims, no other organization held together by such a deliberate policy, no other organization which numbers its followers to the extent of an army of 200,000,000 presents a similar grave challenge to the modern world. Two hundred million Catholics in the world! Fifteen million Catholics in the United States! To ignore this power is to play foolishly into the hands of this power. It is suicide of the intelligence. We know the power of Catholicism. We know the beliefs of Catholicism. We know the aims of Catholicism. Faced with this knowledge, the only sensible course—if we care about civilization—is to attack the Roman Catholic Church with the most powerful and serious weapons of condemnation and exposure and warning to all the friends of freedom.

We did not require this latest encyclical of Pope Pius, this growling of the old wolf from his medieval den of Vatican City, to inform us what are the views of Catholicism. There has never been any doubt that Catholicism and Medievalism were and unchangingly are synonymous terms. We have known all along that Catholicism is the foe of every principle which distinguishes, with respect to culture or to common welfare, the civilization of our modern age. The Pope who now speaks from that hatefully historic throne of superstition and intolerance does but remind us of the relentless nature of that superstition and that intolerance. In opening the Catholic campaign for the new year with an encyclical that encircles the world with its pontifical arrogance ("Christian Education of the Young," December 31, 1929) this Pope is emphasizing that the Roman Catholic Church is the same this year as it was last year, the same this year as it was a hundred years ago, the same this year as it was two hundred years ago, three hundred years ago, four hundred years ago, five hundred years ago, six hundred years ago! 1930, 1390—1390, 1930—"Rome" is at heart now what it was then. The only difference is that in 1390 its motto was *Stay in the Dark Ages* and now its motto is *Back to the Dark Ages!* It is Rome's boast that it has not changed. What! Shall we be indifferent to this boast and not recognize it as a constant threat?

The Pope, with the insight of a thorough hatred and antagonism, knows the significant features of modern civilization which his Church mediocrally is vowed to fight. He knows that the fight of his Church is against the sane expressions of an enlightened human nature—that it is against frankness and joy and social harmony in the pursuits of a well-organized realistic life. He knows that the fight of his Church is against the highest feelings and the highest thoughts and the highest aspirations of mankind. He knows that the fight of his Church is, in a word, against education.

Education is what the Roman Catholic Church hates above all. Education, knowledge, free thought was what the Roman Catholic Church fought most viciously to exclude from the life of mankind, dealing its most barbaric blows at the beginnings of real education. Never has the Roman Catholic Church yielded to the modern view—the only decent and tolerable view—of education. And the Pope now reminds us that "Rome" will not yield, so long as it has power over millions of subjects, to the modern view of education; and that, insofar as it may extend its power, "Rome" is vowed with a monstrous medieval vow to stifle education and hold it weakly and corruptly under the tyranny of Papal superstition. "No Education" are the words which really are inscribed on the banner of the Pope, the banner which 200,000,000 Catholics regard as sacred: for everything that we in the modern world and particularly in America know as education is condemned—in a blast of intolerance which reverberates with the harsh omens of medieval centuries—by this encyclical which Pope Pius sends around the world from Vatican City.

What the Pope Says

In the Encyclical Written in Vatican City (Rome) on December 31, 1929, and Published in America on January 11, 1930.

The social institution of the school was born first from the family and the church, and then of the state. We renew and affirm expressions of previous Popes and the laws of the church to the effect that the frequenting of non-Catholic, neutral or mixed schools, which are openly indifferent to Catholic and non-Catholic without distinction, is prohibited to Catholics and only tolerated in specified circumstances of time and place and under special provisions.

Also, it is not permitted for Catholics to attend any mixed school (worst of all if it is a single school obligatory to all) in which, although Catholic students are given special instruction, they receive the rest of the instruction from non-Catholic professors in common with non-Catholic students.

A school does not conform to the rights of the church and the Christian family and become worthy of attendance by Catholic pupils just because religious instruction—generally too parsimoniously—is given.

In this respect, necessary to all teaching and organization of a school, teachers, program, books and discipline must be governed by a Christian spirit under the direction and maternal vigilance of the church so that religion will be the real foundation and the crowning of instruction in all grades.

Every method of education founded wholly or in part on a denial or forgetfulness of original sin and of grace and therefore on the sole forces of human nature, is false. Such are generally those systems of today, under various names, which appeal to the pretended freedom and unconfined liberty of the child and diminish and also suppress the authority and work of the educator, attributing to the child exclusive privacy of initiative and activity independent of all superior natural and divine laws in working out its own education.

Greatly dangerous is that naturalism which invades the field of education and widely diffused is the error of those who, with dangerous pretension and ugly words, promote so-called sexual education, falsely pretending to be able to fortify the young against the dangers of the senses with means purely natural, frightful projects and preventive instruction for all indiscriminately.

Similarly erroneous and pernicious to Christian education is the so-called method of co-education. The Creator has ordained the perfect co-existence of the sexes only in the unity of matrimony and by distinct degrees in the family and in society.

[These are important quotations from the encyclical of Pope Pius. The Pope's arrogance is shown further in his assertion that it is the duty of every country having any Catholic population to provide special subsidies for the maintenance of Catholic schools. "If the State is not willing to do this," he says, "it is the duty of the Catholics to contribute enough so that 'Catholic education for Catholic youth in Catholic schools' may become a reality."]

There is no disguising the character of the Pope's statement nor, when we reflect upon the millions who look to Vatican City as the central authority of their faith, are we justified in treating casually this challenging document. For the Pope's statement is a challenge to all who believe in education. Put in the simplest language, it is an attack upon the free public school system. It is also a warning of the most profound and sweeping import that Catholicism is and must always be an irreconcilable, incorrigible, unadaptable foreign element in the civilization of modern times. To speak nicely or indifferently of Catholicism is to repeat the fable of the man who nursed the viper in his bosom. Given the warmth of power, and Catholicism will strike with as deadly virulence as ever. The poison is still there. And in true labeling of this poison—as a realistic designation over the name of Roman Catholicism—we must mark the skull and crossbones.

It is surprising that it could be thought proper to dispose lightly of this poison by saying that it is not a new poison. "We shall make a mistake," says the New York World, "if we assume either that the Catholic Church has suddenly enunciated a new doctrine concerning public school education or suddenly launched an attack upon the public school system of the United States." Certainly we can read, and the language of Pope Pius is plain enough: "We renew and affirm expressions of previous Popes and the laws of the church." This is indeed the charge that we have repeatedly made and the justification of our serious attack upon the Roman Catholic Church—namely, that it is the unchanged enemy of civilization. It is not good reasoning to suggest that the doctrines and the plans of Catholicism are less evil because they have always been evilly the same.

On the contrary, this is the peculiar viciousness and the peculiar menace of Catholicism: that it has a long history of intolerance and a long tradition of special dogmatism and power which stand as an insufferable challenge of medievalism to modernism. It is a tremendous organization, with broad and deep foundations in the carefully trained faith and subservience of millions, with an uncompromising and unscrupulous creed of superstition and tyranny, with a well-learned and deceitful and withal arrogant policy rooted in the centuries of its amazing success and prestige. Oh, no—the Roman Catholic Church is not a new and untried foe, tentatively and suddenly experimenting in the tactics of fighting civilization. This Church knows from old custom and intimate use the management of every weapon of brutality, duplicity, superstition, emotionalism, political intrigue, and the inculcated habit of obedience. And the hostility of this Church to our civilization is measured in malignancy by the historic duration and bitterness of the warfare. It is an old enemy and by the same token a relentless enemy. Medievalism (i. e., Roman Catholicism) has never been reconciled to modernism and it never will be reconciled. One or the other must perish and must pass from the life of mankind. Which shall it be? There is no halfway answer to this question. Whoever believes in the principles of modern civilization must, con-

sistently and seriously, stand in opposition, at every point and with every force of fully applied emphasis, to the Roman Catholic Church.

In the face of this latest reaffirmation of Catholic policy by Pope Pius, it would seem that we need little argument to show the sharp and sweeping character of the Catholic issue—the issue of Catholicism against civilization. For this encyclical does not treat merely of Catholic dogma in matters of theology. It affirms the social policy, the political policy, the policy at once corrupting and dominating in its nature which distinguishes the Roman Catholic Church as the preeminent bearer of the standard of medievalism against the standard of modernism. Free, secular education is not consistent with Catholic principles—so Pope Pius tells his 200,000,000 Catholics and so he tells the world. Follow that statement a plain step farther in thought, and what do we perceive? Plainly we perceive that the system of public education, upon which our modern liberty and culture are based, would not be consistent with Catholic power. Today the Pope damns the free, secular school system: tomorrow, given the power, he would destroy this school system.

Our system of education has no right to exist, according to the political-social dogma of Catholicism. Brazenly, the Pope says that all governments should build and maintain special Catholic schools for Catholics: that is to say, non-Catholics should be taxed to pay for the teaching of Catholic superstition: and the ideal of free education, separated from the propaganda and control of religion, should be corrupted (which would mean that eventually it would be destroyed) by submission to the special demands of this Church.

Challenging the World

We must never forget that statements of Catholic policy are not limited in their application to Catholics only. That is, of course, their immediate application. Only Catholics now acknowledge the authority of the Pope. But all the rest of us are criminal heretics in the view of Vatican City. According to this view, the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church (having not only the monopoly of "divine truth" in all things, not merely in theology but also in social affairs, but also having the inherent right of supreme power)—and a Roman Catholic government is the only rightful government—and Roman Catholic schools are the only proper and permissible schools—and, in all, the Roman Catholic Church is the one "natural and divine" institution to which mankind should fully submit.

Thus the encyclical of Pope Pius should be read in a wider sense than as a mere reminder to Catholics of the discipline which they should obey as members of this Church. What the Pope says about education is meant to have the fullest application to the modern world. It is not as if the Pope were saying that the slavish "education" he recommends should be the only kind of "education" for Catholics: but he means more than that—he means that this is the only kind of "education" that should exist at all, the only kind of "education" that has a right to exist, the only kind of "education" which supreme Catholic power would permit to exist. The ideal of Catholicism is a complete Catholic world. True culture and criticism would, obviously, be impossible in such a world—they were impossible in any save furtive and sporadic manifestations when "Rome" was strong in arm and that arm reached widely with cruel effectiveness. There could be—there was—no dignity and security and prosperity of freedom in a Catholic world. And in every day of its life and in every breath of its utterance and in every form and feature of its medieval construction the Roman Catholic Church appears as a corrupting and a challenging foe to the free ideals and the free institutions of our modern world.

We may sum up the Pope's encyclical (his challenge to 1930) by saying that it proclaims an educational standard nearer to 1390. No doubt the Pope, if he had full legal and militant authority over the schools of the world, would attempt the expunging of all learning which bears a later date than 1390. Judging by the history of the Roman Catholic Church and by the dogmas social and theological which it has not changed in the centuries of its history, we should say that the "ideal" school system from the Catholic point of view would be no school system. For the Pope lies grossly when he says, "The social institution of the school was born first from the family and the church."

In the ancient Roman (not the Roman Catholic) world there was a thriving system of common, secular schools. When the ancient Roman civilization fell, the schools disappeared and were forgotten—and Roman Catholic barbarism ruled for centuries in its kind of an "ideal" world without schools. The beginnings of education were denounced and hampered by the Roman Catholic barbarians—and no system of free education was ever slightly possible so long as Catholicism ruled. The world went into its nineteenth century of so-called "Christian civilization" with the vast majority of its population not merely uneducated but illiterate. Education was not born from the church: it was born from struggle with the church.

And today—in 1930, even as in 1390—we see the Roman Catholic Church still fighting the fundamental, free principles of popular education. It condemns every feature of liberalism and sanity and naturalness in secular education—even the natural and wholesome association of the sexes in the schools. It would keep the sexes unnaturally apart in the social, educational, cultural concerns of life—just as it would keep truth apart from life, just as it would keep human nature apart from life, just as it would subordinate and degrade and falsely dictate the thoughts and interests of mankind at every point where it could powerfully extend its dogmas.

BACK TO THE DARK AGES, says the Pope. And we reply: BACK TO THE DARKEST LIMBO OF THE DARK AGES WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. THERE IT WAS BORN. THERE IT BRUTALLY FLOURISHED. THERE IT LINGERS IN BARBARIC BELIEFS AND AIMS. THERE LET IT BE BURIED.

Around the Table

Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

By E. Haldeman-Julius

FROM A CATHOLIC PRIEST

Anonymously a Catholic priest in Washington, D. C., has written me a letter denying the truth ("in practice") of The American Freeman's recent full-page declaration about the danger of Catholicism. My readers will observe that no suggestion is made by this priest that the statements of fact in The American Freeman were incorrect; he does not deny that the official Catholic attitude was accurately stated in The American Freeman. What then? This priest, confronted with facts which he cannot question, falls back very shakily upon sophistry. He attempts to reassure us about a very real menace, not by saying that the menace doesn't exist, but by pleading that it isn't, after all, a menace. I don't think this priest is trying to be clever or guileful. No—the letter is really pathetic in its weakness. But read it for yourself:

The writer of these lines is a Catholic priest, who for reasons of prudence wishes to remain incognito. I have been reading many of your articles and nearly all of McCabe. I admire the keenness of intellect and the learning of both of you, although naturally I do not agree with your fundamental principles (no God, no soul, no immortality, etc.).

But I must object to your article of January 4 in The American Freeman. Between theory and practice, at least in our own times, there is happily an immense gulf; and all priests I know would fear more than anything else a return of the power of Rome, as it was in the Middle Ages. No subordinate wants the power of his superior increased. Remember that priests, bishops and even cardinals have suffered from the inquisition as well as others.

We must let Rome make laws, if it thinks they are for the best of the majority of its members; but above Rome stands our individual conscience, enlightened by the facts of history.

There are millions of people yet who find strength and consolation in the teachings of the Catholic Church, and to say that it is the enemy of mankind is going too far.

Granting that this priest is sincere, the weakness of his letter is transparent. He asks us to regard a distinction between theory and practice; but the real distinction, which was emphasized in The American Freeman, is between theory and power, between a theory meant to be practiced and the actual power to enforce such practice. There is no denial—no possible denial—of the position taken by the Roman Catholic Church. That Church declares itself against freedom; against toleration; against the only kind of culture that is conceivable as genuine culture, namely, the culture which arises from wide inquiry, the full use of reason, and the unobstructed discovery and dissemination of knowledge. Taking the tyrannical stand that it does on literature, education, belief, government—con-

demning in medieval terms all that is valuable in our civilization and all the painfully won rights of mankind—how can the Roman Catholic Church be described exactly, how can it be described at all reasonably, in any other way than as "the enemy of mankind"?

To be sure, this Church is not powerful enough at the present time to accomplish all the dogmatic designs which it claims officially as the sum of its right and even its duty. That does not alter its character as a dangerous institution, dangerously advocating and as far as possible promoting principles which are at war with every feature of the modern, civilized program of life. We who attack Catholicism, on the very highest ground of civilized intelligence and vision, declare simply—and with the Roman Catholic Church's own declarations to bear us out—that this enemy of mankind lacks only the power (the power for which it persistently schemes) to be the crushing tyrant over mankind.

Obviously, if the Roman Catholic Church had the power to translate its theory into practice, the smashing and absolutely true attack in The American Freeman could not have been published. The American Freeman could not be published, openly and as a secure, established organ of free thought, as it now is. Heretics would have to smuggle their writings secretly about and step lively to escape the rack and stake. The Church of Rome all-powerful would be the Church of Rome doing what now it can only threaten. This threat, however, is plain and unmistakable. It is foolish to regard this threat idly.

We who believe in freedom and who are inspired by the hopes of a high civilization—so long deferred by Catholicism very crushingly in practice—are determined that there shall be no misunderstanding about the nature of the Roman Catholic Church. We shall make clear the danger of the Roman Catholic Church in power, and in doing so we shall not turn to our imagination for the aims of Catholicism but shall repeatedly point to the official statements of the Church itself.

Our purpose is to expose the Roman Catholic theory and to denounce this theory and to warn men against this theory so that it may not be realized in practice. We fight the aims of the Roman Catholic Church, its ideals, its organization, its whole attitude toward life, its unreduced pretensions to power. We wish every one to comprehend in full what the rule of the Roman Catholic Church would mean. In reminding us that "Rome" does not now rule, this Catholic priest only reminds us how important it is that "Rome" shall not rule in the future. The theory of "Rome" is what "Rome" would like to do. The practice of "Rome" is whatever "Rome" has the power to do. We condemn the theory, and we emphasize what would be the consequences of its practice, which is measured by the power of the Roman Catholic

Church. The theory of tyranny means its practice whenever and wherever a tyrant sits on a strong, commanding throne.

Concerning the other suggestions made by this priest, I need only point to the obvious fact that more power to the Roman Catholic Church means in the nature of things more power to every Roman Catholic priest. Priests who speak or act as rebels will of course receive the heaviest punishment of the Church. But are priests now free and do they now distinguish themselves by open rebellion? My present correspondent, you have duly noted, is careful to withhold his name. He is evidently well disciplined by the power of his Church.

Finally, I am somewhat amused at the necessity of explaining that we who fight Catholicism do not argue that this Church is peculiarly beneficent to Catholics. Its theory is the mental enslavement of Catholics; and that is its present very powerful practice. It is not better to be a slave when one is willingly a slave. One is perhaps the more to be pitied or one's condition of slavery is the more hopeless. When we say that Catholicism is the enemy of mankind, we mean that it is the enemy of Catholics too: at present more the effective enemy of Catholics than of those who stand freely aside from the "authority of Rome." We wish to free the minds of Catholics. And we wish to keep ourselves free from the physical tyranny which the mental attitude, the official policy, the undiminished medieval claims of the Roman Catholic Church would impose upon us if this Church were to have the power which it never gracefully relinquished and still ambitiously, threateningly seeks.

Whether the beliefs of Catholicism are true is yet another question. Just now I am insisting that it would be the gravest injury to civilization for the Roman Catholic Church to have the power of imposing its beliefs upon mankind. And we know that "Rome" does not believe in free discussion of what is true. Its position is that it proclaims the truth and that disagreement is heresy—a capital crime. Apparently it is not so important, even so, whether Catholicism be true: not from the viewpoint suggested by this priest, who pleads that there are "millions of people yet who find strength and consolation in the teachings of the Catholic Church." Strong teachings, yes—terribly, tyrannically strong. Consolatory teachings? Maybe—to whom? ever is consoled by superstition, to whom ever is consoled by the narrowness of mental slavery, to whom ever is consoled by the atmosphere of the Middle Ages. However, it may not be amiss to add that the Roman Catholic Church offers the "consolation" of damnation to the majority of the human race.

This priest will have to write a great deal more persuasively before he deludes us into the belief that this enemy of mankind is in any respect the friend of mankind—before he deludes us into seeing "Rome" black as "Rome" white. And I am sure it has not escaped the notice of my readers that the priest contradicts himself rather awkwardly when he remarks: "We must let Rome make laws, if it thinks they are for the best of the majority of its members; but above Rome stands . . ." But read the sentence again for yourself. Above "Rome" stands what, if "Rome" is to make the laws?

ALL THE WAY TO FREEDOM
Truth or half truths? Why stop anywhere along the debunking road that leads to enlightenment? Bunk discarded means life enlarged. The wish to linger in any atmosphere of religion, however mild and sparsely doctrinal, is the last gesture of the bunk-trained mind (or emotions)—this truth seems very sharp and undebatable in its emphasis to John D. McInerney, for reasons that appear in the following letter:

The idea that men need a substitute for religion in order to emotionally support them when the old religion has been "taken" from them is a bit too bunkistic a statement to be found coming from so delightfully skeptical a thinker as Harry Elmer Barnes, or even John H. Dietrich. However, your concluding criticism throws the bright light of a fully debunked and sharply yet whole-some, critical intelligence on the question.

I feel that I am qualified to endorse your position, having only four years ago thrown away at the shrine of your uniquely penetrating and compelling logic the most indispensable (apparently) of superstition's crutches—Roman Catholicism. So I know how it "feels" to have the old illusion taken away, and I know that it is utterly impossible in any rational sense to throw away any idea sincerely held until one has first established in the mind a superior, and thus an intellectually satisfying, attitude to supplant it. And to the healthily rational mind there is as additional compensation a softly, sweetly haunting emotionalism in feeling the grand, all-satisfying thrill of intellectual conquest over superstitions that, even in our brightly realistic century, still hold millions of numbers in deaf and dumb obedience.

I am convinced that in my case only pure atheism could have cured the disease of Catholicism. While yet a Catholic, paradoxically enough, I knew that truth and falsehood are antipodal, so

when the light of rationalism first began to dawn on me as I read the first Little Blue Book I ever ordered, *Rome or Reason* (debate of Robert G. Ingersoll with Cardinal Manning, Little Blue Book No. 129), I realized that if the gods be false, truth must lie at the other pole—atheism; half truths there might indeed be anywhere along the confused way between the gods and atheism, but I wanted no half truths, so I chose atheism.

This attitude is so rational that I marvel at any one's unwillingness to share it—that is, any one claiming to be rational about religion, yet clinging to a phase of religious nominalism. The name "religion" signifies nothing unless it is employed in a confusing way. It is far more than a dispute about a word: for when men talk about religion, even though with an appearance and even with a considerable substance of rationalism, they leave room for much characteristic bunk. If one is free from religion, one is through with it all, with the name and all that it implies.

In the remainder of his letter (which I have quoted only in part), Mr. McInerney comments on the obscurities and contradictions which arise from the apparent yielding (or the half-yielding) of religion to modern realism. Using frequently the language of humanism and materialism, those who preach a "new religion" or a "religion" that is supposed to have all the bunk extracted manage to muddle minds at many points "along the confused way between the gods and atheism."

I think those who may still be hesitating as to how far they should be debunked ought to take courage and common sense from the example of Mr. McInerney. He had to struggle with the most involved and burdensome baggage of superstition—the appalling old medieval load of Catholicism—yet he went on to the ideal of complete emancipation. And he is happier, too, for he sees life clearly and he has not the consciousness of weakness and fear and servile inferiority which belongs to the psychology of religion.

News of Joseph McCabe's Lectures in Kansas City

We are glad to inform readers of The American Freeman that the dates and subjects of Joseph McCabe's lectures at The Liberal Center (All Souls Unitarian Church) in Kansas City, Mo., are as follows:

- 1 Sunday night, February 2, 8 o'clock: "Is There a New World Reaction?" (An Englishman Looks at America's Intellectual Tendencies.)
- 2 Friday night, February 7, 8 o'clock: "The Triumph of Science."
- 3 Tuesday night, February 11, 8 o'clock: "Science and Sex."
- 4 Friday night, February 14, 8 o'clock: "Science versus Religion."
- 5 Sunday night, February 16, 8 o'clock: "The Rise of the Roman Catholic Church."
- 6 Friday night, February 21, at 8 o'clock: "Crises in the History of the Papacy."
- 7 Sunday night, February 23, 8 o'clock: "My Experience as Priest and Monk."
- 8 Tuesday night, February 25, 8 o'clock: "Christian Distortions of History."
- 9 Friday night, February 28, 8 o'clock: "The Coming of the Kingdom of Man."

As Mr. McCabe is journeying specially from London, England, to give these lectures, a small admission will be charged: \$2 for all the nine lectures or 50 cents admission to single lectures. Tickets may be obtained from Mrs. L. M. Birkhead, 17 East 66th Street, Kansas City, Mo. (telephone, Jackson 3404) or at Sunday morning meetings of The Liberal Center, 3425 Baltimore Ave.

The Rule of Imitation

Arthur Schopenhauer in *Essays in Ethics* (Little Blue Book No. 575).

The whole influence of example—and it is very strong—rests on the fact that a man has, as a rule, too little judgment of his own, and often too little knowledge, to explore his own way for himself, and that he is glad, therefore, to tread in the footsteps of someone else. Accordingly, the more deficient he is in either of these qualities, the more he is open to the influence of example; and we find, in fact, that most men's guiding star is the example of others; that their whole course of life in great things and in small, comes in the end to mere imitation; and that not even in the pettiest matters do they act according to their own judgment. Imitation and custom are the spring of almost all human action. The cause of it is that men fight shy of all and any sort of reflection; and very properly mistrust their own discernment. At the same time this remarkably strong imitative instinct in man is a proof of his kinship with the apes.

We suspect much that is said about the truth of tradition—more, we reject it at salient points because we are familiar with the tradition (or with the history and progress) of truth.

Hypocrisy is doubly contemptible. Not the hypocrite alone, but also that which is of a nature to make him a hypocrite is contemptible.

Have It My Own Way

BY JOHN W. GUNN.

ON HAVING AN EAR FROZEN.

At the age of thirty-six, I have just made my debut in the delicate role of a man with a frozen ear. It was the left ear. Why not the right? Why not—one wonders, though who should complain!—why not both? Like a child (for in this matter I am but a child confronting the unfamiliar), I am full of curious questions.

Why should Improvidence (that should be the name for Providence in this case, shouldn't it?) have overlooked me all these years, when I have been abroad in as cold and even colder weather and exposed for longer periods, finally to hit me when, as it were, I wasn't looking? and after a walk of only seven blocks, in a respectable nine o'clock Kansas town, where I pass by the First Methodist Church on my way to work?

How could I have prevented the freezing of my ear, short of doing something I had never, for reasons partly esthetic and with an undertone of overconfidence, done before and therefore had not the originality to do in this instance—namely, wear a fur cap with prodigiously thick and warm flaps? How could I have been sure right away that my ear was being or had been frozen, when my whole face had been so chilled that I was indifferently numb and, once inside the warm office, I experienced only the familiar sensation of getting painfully warm after having been cold to the degree of painlessness?

The mischief was all done, and it was irreparable, by the time that I paused, late in a busy morning, to regard the persistent and perturbing sensitiveness of my left ear.

It was too late, and then, of course, I had the belated and brazen benefit of a long list of advisers. I spoke to Nick, the linotypist who sets my copy, and he said: "Rub your ear with snow." On my way home in the evening I stopped at the barber's for a haircut and Galt, an old friend and therefore solicitous, counselled me: "Rub your ear with snow." At home my mother spoke in exactly the same words: "Rub your ear with snow." After dinner I had my friend the taxi man drive me out to the Haldeman-Julius Joseph McCabe (who will be in itics. They disagree about morals. They disagree about literature and good old Thompson, a man with a heart who has lived sixty-some years and thus knows all about frozen ears, are necessary, and the kind of clothes that should be worn, and with what by now seemed the old, old saying: "Rub your ear with

snow." I mentioned the mishap to Marcell, and she brightly assured me, in a tone of ready and forceful conviction: "Rub your ear with snow." E. H.-J. came into the room and, when informed about The Ear, remarked with quick decision: "Rub your ear with snow." Anderson Craig, a house guest and a portrait painter (who therefore ought to know about ears), no sooner heard the case stated than he repeated the proverb: "Rub your ear with snow." I stayed the night on the sunroom couch, and the dying flames and the dull-red embers in the fireplace seemed to convey the cumulatively post-momentous message: "Rub your ear with snow." My watch, ticking on the little table by the side of the couch, seemed to repeat in its "still, small voice": "Rub your ear with snow." Next morning at the breakfast table Cora and Mary spoke as two minds with but a single, unquestionable, absolutely certain thought: "Rub your ear with snow."

On each and all of these friendly-advisory occasions, mind you, I felt it only kind and right to explain, with a proper air of gratefulness too, that the ear was long past the help of emergency treatment. Furthermore, I felt called upon, in defense of my own sanity, to inquire each time: "How could I have known that my ear would be frozen after it had got warm? Why should I assume such a thing, having never before, poor child, met with it? Should one begin very early in life to follow the unvarying, meticulous policy of rubbing one's ears (and, I suppose, one's eyelids and nose and chin and face entire) with snow before stepping out of the cold into a warm building? Why? How? What?"

I was not only perplexed, as all children are, by the surprises of life; but I was—also with the clear, direct, impatiently curious mind of a child—impressed by the illogical (or at any rate the ridiculous) nature of things.

One thing I did learn, by virtue of my frozen ear: There is such a mental state as absolute certainty and, on this single point at least, there is a common voice of mankind which speaks with the almighty authority which one may try to imagine in a divine voice. The members of the human race disagree about religion. They disagree about politics. They disagree about morals. They disagree about literature and art. They disagree about what to eat, and how many hours of sleep are necessary, and the kind of clothes that should be worn, and the like. They disagree, of course, old saying: "Rub your ear with

and human observation, as they are commonly met with, are far from being infallible. But temperamental whimsicality, prejudiced rancor, and philosophical dubiety all fade before the phenomenon of a frozen ear. With one cosmic throat-rumble of sublime certitude and eloquence, which is unchallenged and uncontested by even the feeblest quaver of skepticism, the human race agrees to declare: "RUB YOUR EAR WITH SNOW!"

Progress has come from the study of life and mankind. And that study has only been hampered by the ideas and images of religion, which have been in the main composed of a monstrous contrariness to life, which have encouraged delusions about a "beyond-life," and which have touched reality only to corrupt it by making it appear to be something unreal or unimportant. To advance in the understanding and management of life, mankind have had to deny the dogmas of death which are religion's stock in trade.

What sort of error is that in Genesis, where it is reported that God said, "Let there be light"? Judging by the obscurities and confusions of religion (which claims especially to represent the purposes of God), God must have said, "Let there be darkness."

As is their habit, preachers reverse the truth—they turn the truth upside down—when they say that religion is "superior" to reason. It is clear enough that religion is inferior to reason, far below the level of a civilized and reasoning mind.

To say that a man regrets the surrender of religious ideas which his reason has not been able to hold—what a statement! What kind of a man can he be who regrets that he has grown in the perception of truth!

The "logic" of religion is in no manner more significantly displayed than in offering Christianity as at once a religion of love and a religion of damnation.

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POSTAL COURTESY

I am happy to see that Chief Haldeman-Julius has returned to his personal policies, and that in *The American Freeman* he is once again chatting to his thousands of readers around a metaphorical round table. There was a period in the history of this organ when letters came thick and fast from every part of the country; I see signs that we are entering upon another such period. I welcome it. There are, to be frank, plenty of "nut" letters that clutter one's desk; that is, however, inevitable, especially when the number of readers mounts to the proportions of a good-sized army. But there are sensible and stimulating notes, too, and they vary the routine with a stray phrase, a pertinent comment, a verbal bludgeon or bouquet.

May I remind our correspondents of a courtesy that often, in the excitement of writing, they fail to observe? A desire for information should always be accompanied by return postage. Preferably, indeed, by a stamped and self-addressed envelope. When you consider the number of letters received during the course of a year, and the fact that at least half of them include no stamps or envelopes for reply, you will realize the necessity for this notice.

There are certain types of communication, too, which are on the face of things unreasonable.

One gentleman asks, for example, that I take time off to read a certain book about which he once heard, and that I sent him my personal opinion about it. This would involve, provided I discovered the book, about five hours of time.

A lady writes in that she has a recalcitrant son. Can't I be so kind as to give him a long lecture, and make him see the error of his ways? A youngster asks that I explain to him, in full detail, how he may embark upon the career of a dramatist. The answer would require at least a letter the length of a *Little Blue Book*.

Very gratifying is the number of letters that arrive with the salutation, "Dear Friend"—letters from persons whom one has never met and, in the natural course of things, never can meet. We make no pre-

tense here about highbrow aloofness from readers; we are happy to be of assistance to them, within reason. So, don't hesitate to write. But please remember that stamped and addressed envelope!

NEW COMER

The New World Monthly made its bow on New Year's Day. It aims to specialize, not too self-consciously, in the culture of the Western hemisphere. The editors are Carl A. Tacke and H. Gilford; it is issued from 82 West 37th Street, New York City. Single copies are 40 cents, and a year's subscription is \$4.

An editorial by Mr. Tacke expounds, in carefree fashion, this policy of the new venture. It is as one belligerent and optimistic; at the same time, it is not too hopeful.

The New World Monthly makes its initial appearance without apology. The first issue of necessity is not as representative as we should like it to be, but enough so to give the reader fair warning of what is to follow. Unlike the lamented *Dial*, we do not set up as a criterion of literary excellence and therefore, we hope, shall have less trouble with contributors, at least with those who have not yet arrived. The market price for those who have, we fear, is beyond our modest reach (barring a few laudable exceptions). Nor do we pretend to be able to get along without subscribers, though we should like to be able to get along without advertisers and the whole damned racket of magazine distributing.

As I have hinted, we are not so presumptuous as to anticipate the verdict of posterity by our selection of material; I do not even admit it as the proper function of a cultural journal, which is first and foremost to assemble in a microcosm for presentation and critical examination the various elements that make up the macrocosm of the times. As all matter revolves about a central positive nucleus (all except the current so-called literary magazines which seem to revolve about a central vacuum), so these cultural elements must revolve about the personality of the editor which must be both subjective and objective to be valid. Values become experience only if personally recreated, and the success of a magazine depends upon the degree in which its editors are able to turn out true coinage; true not according to an abstract, universal and unvarying absolute (Wynndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot and the rest of the neo-Thomists), but true of what is best in the editors and that is not measured by the yardstick but has become instinctive knowledge and spontaneous utterance carefully avoiding any *cathedra* air of finality without,

however, becoming a mere weather-vane.

The magazine is not subsidized; it will live or die by the nature of the public response. Certainly there should be, in our cultural life, a secure if modest place for this aspiration.

OPINIONS

Sincere reactions to art—in contradistinction to attitudes toward science, or, at least, toward tests of scientific claims—are so personal and depend so greatly upon one's mysterious makeup, that we should be ready for all sorts of surprises. Take, for example, Witter Bynner, who, together with Dr. Kiang Hsiang Hu has just completed an anthology of Chinese poetry, entitled *The Jade Mountain*. (A. A. Knopf, New York.)

"Milton," declares Bynner, "in spite of his blind eyes, is little more to me than a swollen old bore." Well, that goes for much of his verse as far as I'm concerned. But I can always pick up his play, *Samson Agonistes*, and read it with pleasure. And the man who wrote the *Areopagitica*, whatever his real motive, can always renew his claim upon those to whom free speech is dear.

"Shelley," goes on Bynner, "in spite of his life, is little more than a stretcher of thin and unmusical platitude." There we call a halt. There is much platitude in Shelley. But "little more than a—" No. Not so. And unmusical? Where is Mr. Bynner's ear? Part of it, no doubt, is lost—in admiration for the war ballads of Robert W. Service.

Verily, there is no disputing about tastes.

SPINGARN REDIVIVUS

One of my constant regrets is that Mr. J. E. Spingarn, author of that germinal book, *Creative Criticism*, has been content in recent years to watch the waters flow by, as he sits on the bank and meditates. The peculiar qualities that Spingarn brought to the criticism of letters in America were precisely those that were most needed, and that are most needed still. It was easy to mistake him for an impressionist, for an unqualified esthete, a dilettante. Yet his influence has been as great upon our native criticism as it has been subtle and unspectacular.

Now comes Mr. Alain T. Peters with *A Spingarn Enchiridion*. (That Greek word means a manual, a handbook. In this case it is a pamphlet.) Mr. Peters undertakes, with quotations from Spingarn's writings, to refute the statement by Paul Elmer More (in his *Demon of the*

Absolute, Princeton, 1928, page 7) that Spingarn is merely an impressionist. Spingarn, according to More, teaches "a ready public that art is only expression and criticism only impression. . . . Twenty years before, More had reviewed Spingarn's *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* and had found it "a highly valuable piece of work, showing in a single page more real grasp of the subject than Saintsbury's *History of Criticism* displays in a chapter."

Well, we are entitled to a change of mind in twenty years. Unfortunately for More, however (who, with the recession of the years, becomes Less in American critical thought), Mr. Peters cites book and verse from Spingarn's works to show the error of the professor's ways.

Those who are interested in the controversy may inquire of The Minaret Press, New York, as to procuring copies of the interesting little document. A few more pamphlets of this sort would help considerably to clear the atmosphere of our current criticism.

Let me quote a single passage from Spingarn's essay on "Criticism in the United States" which appeared, 1924, in the collection called *Criticism in America: Its Status and Function*:

The first need of American criticism today is education in esthetic thinking. . . . Only the drenching discipline that comes from mastery of the problems of esthetic thought can train us for the duty of interpreting the American literature of the future. The anarchy of impressionism is a natural reaction against the mechanical theories and jejune textbooks of the professors, but it is a temporary haven and not a home. . . . In a country where philosophers urge men to cease thinking, it may be the task of the critic to revivify thought.

We need, and need badly, a critical biography of Spingarn. It would clarify issues, elucidate problems, strengthen our critical thinking. Will Peters tackle the job? I wish I could manage to do it myself.

"Spiritual" Slump

"This is a Christian country"—so loyal Christians insist and are angry when we deny their assertion both historically and contemporaneously and when we remark upon the signs that religion is slipping, slipping, slipping from the too-long-burdened minds of men. But now and again, in moments of melancholy or aggravated confession, spokesmen of Christianity say the same thing. In a well-meaning though not very interesting little paper called *Portland (Ore.) Young Men* there is quoted a remark by Very Rev. G. P. T. Sargent, dean of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral, Garden City, L. I., who says:

If the majority rules, we in America are no longer a Christian nation, because less than 28 percent of our people are church members. In a religious way we are only functioning 28 percent of what we should. Thirty-seven million American youths under the age of 25 years are getting no spiritual life, and only one-third of our children are in Sunday schools today.

Probably this preacher's figure is closer to the situation than the figure which is emphasized in the official propaganda of the churches—and, even so, the "official" figure places church members (many of which are not active though their names are meaninglessly carried on the church rolls) in the minority.

It is, at any rate, worthy of record that this preacher agrees with *The American Freeman* that religion is today on the downgrade. This is true not only in America but in all highly civilized countries; more true in the cities; most true in the universities of learning—wherever men and women are most familiarly in contact with the currents of modernism in behavior, in thought, in knowledge of life, and in the new realism and worldly interest displayed toward life.

"Idle curiosity" may at times be a justifiable phrase. But it is evidently not so idle when it makes the bunk-shooters step lively in defense of their absurdities, which cannot bear the gaze of genuine, thoughtful curiosity. Curiosity, we believe, is never really an idle attitude of mind. It may direct itself toward trivial things; it may tire itself and stop short of learning very much; it may be misled or deceived; but in essence curiosity is a healthful and active (whether it be more or less active) propensity toward being debunked.

One little instance of wisdom is the recognition, when one stubs one's toe on a rock, that no God placed the rock for the purpose of impeding the toe nor made the toe for the purpose of impinging upon the rock. In short, more generally speaking, it is wisdom to recognize things for no more than what they are. It is not wisdom to let speculation and analogies and assumptions take one meaninglessly beyond the facts.

One touch of authentic experience—one touch of life as it really is—should be enough to prick the skins of all the windbags of bunk.

Sophistry is the trick of obscuring, by a whimsical arrangement of language, the natural and true relations of things.

Lifts In the Fog

BY MARCET HALDEMAN-JULIUS.

SNOW MAGIC

Drifting downward into the fields, towns and mining camps, the great flakes of our first snowstorm of the winter have filled with beauty the Kansas landscape. Bare trees and dull evergreens have burst into blossoms softer and more dazzling than those which, in the spring, make pale torches of pear and plum trees. Frost-ferns grow against the wire fences, turning them to lace. Strawstacks and shale piles are white-capped hills, and the ugliest little house takes on a graceful harmony with its drift-filled hollows. Loveliest of all are the still unbroken glittering masses.

Drifting downward into people's lives, these same snowflakes have filled them with a welcome and enchanting consciousness of change. Minds gray with worries have flowered into merry thoughts that turn sulky faces pleasant and grim ones happy. Stirred by the splendor of the beauty all around them men and women have been compelled to action and have wrestled good-naturedly with the snow that had to be conquered before garage and coal-house or even the front walk could be reached. Everywhere men and women have shoveled! Everywhere people have pushed and pulled at their own cars and at each others'. The vigorous exercise has sent color flying into cheeks unaccustomed to it and has made eyes sparkle.

Traffic on our little square would have stopped without cooperation. Friendly contacts have poured into lonely lives, variety has been dashed into humdrum routine. Adventure has fluttered down with the snowflakes.

Without moving a step we have been transported from a familiar spot to one strange and beautiful. The slippery, drifted highway has become a challenge and all the lesser traveled roads touchstones to our characters. One and all they try our mettle. To drive successfully just to the nearby town of Pittsburg has now become an achievement. Too strong a pressure on the brakes and one spins around or lands in the ditch to be shoveled out unhurt but after much patience. Only yesterday Alice, Zon (her dog) and I waiting, with two other similarly delayed carloads, for a truck to be righted, at last took our shivering selves into a filling station.

As if everything were touched into "snow," we saw through the door of the office—an attractive, cozy home opening out into room after room. Somehow it made me think of the "Three Bears House." Soon we were by the stove and I was

sitting in "the middle-sized chair," while Zon looked wolf-like at the pussy cat on the kitchen hearth. The unexpected stop, the new and pleasant acquaintances—hosts and fellow travelers—all seemed part of the snow-mood.

A ride in the evening with the many familiar landmarks erased by the blue whiteness that seems to stretch away and away, so smooth and mysterious, in the clear moonlight makes one realize as never before the courage of those early Arctic explorers who trekked across the frozen wastes. I, myself, have felt more than once this past week as if I were in the half-light of the pole-circles. Through the minds of many persons there drift thoughts of different winter sports and the countries where the people revel in them. In imagination we too ski, snowshoe and iceboat. To the children there is the cherished sensation of the sleds; the risky excitement of hitching them to wagons and automobiles; for many unusually self-absorbed drivers the new sensation of going cautiously because of these same children. People have come out of their insularity. We have a new sense of kinship as good temper begets good temper. We realize that—when it snows!—we of a community are all one big family.

Mingled, too, with the present pleasure and making us feel a gentle nostalgia is that tenderness one has for the memories of one's own past. To step out into the snowy landscape is to step swiftly back into the decades of early youth. While the children make real snow men and frolic, the minds of us elders are full of snowballs long since melted and of sleigh bells that have ceased to jingle. It invites to wistful thoughts as well as jolly ones, this first snowstorm of the winter.

It is on snow-bound nights, too, that darkness presses in on the window pane, making rooms warm and cozy and giving us evenings to be long remembered. One in particular, this snow has given me: Henry lies with a broken leg in the lovely polished walnut bedstead in which four generations before him have slept and dreamed. His eager face with its dark, dark eyes blooms against the pillow as, relaxed and happy, he listens to another boy read *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne. His eyes also darken as he reads. I watch with content his and Henry's pleasure in each other.

They go far from me, the boys, as they sail with Captain Nemo in the Nautilus, the submarine that, when Verne wrote of it, seemed to the world so fantastic. Presently I join them. Gay adventurers, we

travel in perilous seas and under strange lands. But we journey safely and return at last to our warm cozy room which night pressing in at the window pane enfolds, while outside the snow swirls, filling the landscape with beauty and washing away from people's lives, the long gray mists of monotony.

"Truth"? But Not Life

Centuries ago monarchs and their courtiers told the human race what they should accept as "the truth" about government. Charlatans (or philosophers, so called, who thought too far along the wrong track away from life) told mankind what should be accepted as "the truth" about human nature and about morals and about the meaning of life, etc. Theologians told men what they should believe, once and for aye, as "the truth" about nearly everything.

But centuries of "the truth" thus authoritatively offered didn't appear to satisfy mankind—or the most interesting part of mankind, the thinkers. Thinkers persisted in looking into all these matters a bit more carefully, and the habit of thought spread, and the old certainties were recognized as superstitions. It is only by studying life, watching it, measuring it, seeing how things behave (not by assuming notions about them or "thinking" about them in an aimlessly speculative fashion) that men can get knowledge that works.

Truth, as it used to be regarded, was an illusion. Nowadays we regard life as a spectacle and a process of facts clearly to be looked upon and tested and classified and, first and last, to be intelligently understood.

Curiosity is the wish to know things. It is true that many people are curious about matters which are of slight importance. But many people are curious about intellectual, social, ethical, and political matters of importance—and it is this curiosity, which grows with the growth of general culture, that makes the propagandists of bunk uncomfortable.

"Mind is spiritual," says Bill Bonehead, echoing his Baptist preacher. His echo of an echo is convincing to this extent: "things spiritual" are things for which there is no evidence, and similarly Bill Bonehead's mind.

The man who "repents" on his deathbed—we say it with sympathy—only sorry that he can't live a while longer and lay up more pleasures for repentance.

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When Voltaire began his remarkable career, his country of France and all of Europe were under the terrible spell of rank superstition and intolerance. Church and State conspired to deny all the rights of man. When Voltaire died—when his stupendous life's work was completed—France and Europe were illumined with the signal lights of the greatest intellectual revolution ever known.

The Age of Voltaire

So important was this one great man that the time in which he lived is known definitively as The Age of Voltaire. Voltaire gave a name and he gave a point of view to his century. No one can understand clearly the significance of liberalism in thought—no one can have a true appreciation of our modern age—without reading what Voltaire wrote and what Voltaire did. Liberties which we enjoy today can be traced back to the militant literary crusade inspired by Voltaire and in which he was the magnificently leading figure. Issues of free thought and toleration which are still debated today are seen in a complete, clear light of truth and common sense and fine humane culture in the works of Voltaire. This man was a pioneer of modernism—and had it not been for him we could not call ourselves moderns.

The eighteenth century, in which

Books by Voltaire
Fourteen Little Essays.
Toleration (The Classic on Freedom of Thought).
Pocket Theology (A Dictionary of Skeptical Definitions).
The Wit and Wisdom of Voltaire.
Ten Dialogues on Religion and Philosophy.
Candide (A Satire on the Notion That This Is the Best of All Possible Worlds).
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Books About Voltaire
Voltaire: A Lecture. Clarence Darrow.
Voltaire's Weapon—The Smile! J. V. Nash.
Essays on Montaigne, Pascal, Voltaire. John Cowper Powys.
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Life of Voltaire (As Seen by Gorg Brantes). Julius Moritzen.
Oration on Voltaire. Victor Hugo.

Voltaire lived and wrote and fought a splendid intellectual warfare against tyranny—a warfare during which Voltaire was frequently in extreme personal danger—was at once the century in which human rights were denied with full intolerance by Church and State and the century in which human rights were most boldly asserted. Voltaire and other great figures whom you study closely in this Voltaire Library (Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, D'Holbach, Montesquieu, Helvetius, and others) proclaimed the splendid, free ideals of civilization—and they carried on this amazing work when civilization was on a very low, wretched, fearful plane.

Life and government and the con-

dition of general culture in the eighteenth century were a scandal and a shame to mankind. Voltaire dared to tell the truth about his century. He dared to condemn the stupidities and the tyrannies which afflicted his century, which outraged his century, which made his century uncivilized. He dared to point the way—to break the way—to fight the way to the civilization of the future.

More than eight decades of the eighteenth century were spanned by the life of Voltaire. During those eight decades were struck the mightiest blows for the liberation of the human mind. By sheer intellectual power, Voltaire dominated Europe. Reading his life and works, one reads a most significant, a broadly defining, a startling and prophetic chapter—a grand and immense chapter—in the history of the race.

A Grand Intellectual Warrior

Voltaire—that grand intellectual warrior—knew the use of every weapon. Against the barbarism that surrounded him he hurled the weapons of history, ridicule, logic, philosophy, science, humanitarianism. He smiled, but that smile had many features! Pope and king, priests and courtiers, had terrific physical power over mankind—but Voltaire was a fighter whom no power on earth could stop. The world listened. The world thought. The world moved. Voltaire was triumphant in the most desperate and gallant fight of history.

The record of this tremendous fight is contained in the Voltaire Library—in these books by Voltaire and about Voltaire, which should be read together in forming a true, vivid picture. In this Voltaire Library you have the mammoth sum of 250,000 words—all by and about the great Voltaire. This is a wonderful library, telling all about a wonderful man and his wonderful age. Only \$1 brings you this library containing the wit, culture, drama, and struggle of Voltaire and his

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The Antichrist

By Friedrich Nietzsche

(Continued from last week.)

XII

Apart from a few skeptics, the decent types in the history of philosophy, the rest are strangers to the first principles of intellectual honesty. They act just like women, these great gushing prodigies—they mistake "beautiful feelings" for arguments, they look upon the "heaving bosom" as a bellows of divinity, and conviction as the test of truth. In the end, Kant, with typical German ingeniousness, even tried to give a scientific dress to this particular kind of corruption and lack of intellectual scruple. With the aid of his concept of "practical reason," he produced a special kind of reason, for use on occasions when reason cannot function: namely, when the sublime command, "Thou shalt," resounds. And when it is recalled that the philosopher is merely a development from the priest, such a self-deception, such a heritage from priestliness, is not so amazing. When a man has a holy task before him, for example to uplift, save or deliver his fellows; when he carries divinity in his bosom and is the mouthpiece of commands from on high, naturally with such a mission he is above the mere imperatives of ordinary reason. He feels that he is a man apart, sanctified by his task, a celestial being almost! What does a priest care for science? He is superior to it! And hitherto it is the priest who has held sway! It is the priest who has defined the concepts "true" and "not true!"

XIII

There is one fact we should not under-estimate: we ourselves—we free spirits—are already a "reversal of all values," a living declaration of war against all the old concepts of "true" and "untrue," and a triumph over them. The most valuable intuitions are those which come late; and the most valuable of all is that of method. All the methods, all the elementary procedure of our modern scientific knowledge, were held in contempt for centuries: anybody who dabbled in them was excluded from "respectable" company, was looked upon as an "enemy of God," as a mocker of truth and as "possessed by the devil." A man with a scientific character was classed with Chandalas outcasts. We have had the whole pathetic opinion of mankind against us—their notion of what should be true and what should take the place of truth was thrust upon us; and their every "thou shalt" was brought into action against us. Our motives and our procedure, and our calm, cautious, untrusting way of looking at things, were all vilified and condemned. Perhaps it may be urged with some justification that it was an esthetic impulse which kept men in blindness so long. They wanted truth to seem picturesque. From the learned they demanded an appeal to their senses. It was our moderation which repelled men so long. But oh, how well the turkey-cocks of God understood all this!

XIV

We have restated our knowledge. In advancing facts we have become more moderate. No longer do we derive man from the "spirit" or from "God." We have placed him back amongst the beasts. We classify him as the strongest of the animals, because he is the craftiest (hence his spirituality!) But even here we are careful to avoid a delusion which might seem attractive, namely that man is the driving purpose behind evolution in the animal kingdom. He is anything but the crown of creation. Every living creature is comparatively as well developed—even this statement needs a reservation, for man is actually the most ill-adapted of animals, the sickliest, the one which has strayed farthest from its instincts: though withal he is easily the most interesting! Concerning animals, Descartes was the first to postulate, with admirable insight, the mechanism of beasts; and now all our physiology is directed toward proving his theory. Moreover, we do not put man in a class by himself, as Descartes did. We regard him also as mechanistic, nowadays. Once upon a time he was endowed with a "free will," the gift of powers from above: nowadays we call in question even the existence of the will itself, in the sense that there is no longer any need to postulate such a faculty. The word "will" in its old use has come to mean merely the effect of an individual reaction which must necessarily follow upon a series of partly unrelated and partly harmonized stimuli—the "will" is no longer a cause, no longer a "motive." Formerly it was held that the man's mind, his "spirit," was a proof of his divine origin. To achieve perfection he was recommended to numb his senses like the tortoise, to have no truck with earthly things, or to cast off his mortal frame, so that the best part of him, his "pure spirit," would remain. We have thought of a better explanation than this: we regard soulfulness, or the "spirit," as a mark of relative imperfection in an organism, as a piece of fumbling guesswork, as a laborious error, as an unnecessary using-up of nervous energy. We deny that anything can be done perfectly by taking thought. The "pure spirit" is a pure humbug. Take away the nervous system and the senses, take away the "mortal frame"—and if anything remains over, it is a miscalculation: that is all!

XV

Neither as an ethical code nor as a religion has Christianity any point of contact with things as they actually are. It is concerned with purely fantastic causes ("God," "the soul," "the self," "the spirit," "freewill"—even "unfree" will); and it is concerned with purely fantastic effects ("sin," "salvation," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sin"). It communes with fantastic creatures ("God," "ghosts," and "souls"); it professes a fantastic science (anthropocentric, with no conception of natural causes); a fantastic psychology (a pure self-deception, which misinterprets feelings, pleasant and unpleasant of, for example, the nervus sympatheticus, in terms of religious and moral symbolism—such as "repentance," "conscience," "possession by the devil," "the voice of God," "the last judgment," and "everlasting life")—this world of pure fantasy is to be differentiated, to its disadvantage, from the world of dreams; for the dream-world at least reflects actuality, whereas the other falsifies, slanders, and denies actuality. Once the concept "nature" is regarded as opposed to the contrary concept "God," the word "natural" has necessarily to take on a meaning of "abominable." The whole Christian fantasy-world is based in an aversion from what is natural (from actuality!)—it is a vote of no-confidence in life as it actually exists. Ah, but this explains everything. Who would have a reason for escaping from actuality?—the man who suffers from it! And if he suffers from actuality a man must be a misfit in the world as it actually is. A predominance of pain over joy is the explanation of this religion and ethic of escape: just as in the same way a predominance of pain over joy is the formula of decadence.

XVI

We are led to a similar conclusion by examining the Christian concept of God. Any nation that believes in itself will hold fast to its own God. In him it honors its own virtues and the qualities which enable it to develop. Such a people projects its own desire, its feeling or power, into a being that consequently has some claim to be honored. To this God the rich will give of their wealth: a dignified nation needs a God, for sacrifices. Thus viewed, religion is a kind of gratitude. A man owes gratitude to himself; therefore he requires a God. Such a God must be able to confer benefits, and also to inflict injuries, must be both a friend and a foe. He is marvelous in both good and evil—but the unnatural castration of a God, making him merely good, passes all comprehension. An evil God is quite as necessary as a good God. Surely existence does not derive merely from divine toleration and humanitarianism; what is the use of a God who knows nothing of passion, revenge, envy, scorn, cunning and violence?—who had perhaps never known the rapturous ardors of victory and of destruction? Such a God would not be comprehensible; why should he be needed? Admittedly, when a people is on the downward path, when they feel that their belief in the

future, their hope of freedom, is disappearing; when capitulation seems necessary and submission is advisable in the interests of self-protection; then they have to modify their God! He then becomes a timid and obsequious crawler. He counsels "peace-at-any-price," "hate-no-more," "compromise," and even "love" towards friend and foe alike. He is always moralizing. He creeps into the core of every private virtue. He becomes a God for everybody, he retires from active service, he goes abroad for a trip and becomes a cosmopolitan. . . . Formerly he stood for a nation, for all that was ascendant and powerful in the heart of a people; but now he is merely the good God above. For there is only one alternative for Gods: they are either the will to power, in which case they are national-Gods; or they are impotent, and then they must be good.

XVII

When the will to power breaks down at some point, the result is invariably a physiological enfeebling, a state of decadence; and this decadence defied (divinity shorn of all manly virtues and passions), naturally takes the form of a God of physical debilitation, a God of the feeble. . . . But they don't call themselves the feeble, they call themselves "the good." . . . A wink is as good as a nod to indicate just at what point in history the dualistic fiction of a good and an evil God first became possible. It is the instinct of a people cowed into subjection which compels them to degrade their God into "pure goodness"; and the same instinct prompts them to depreciate the qualities of strength in their conquerors' God. (The good God and the Devil as well; both are abortions conceived by decadence.) Christian theologians claim that the evolution of the idea of God from the "God of Israel," a tribal God, to the Christian God, a concept of universal goodness, is an advance. Why do we make such a concession to simple-mindedness as to grant them this? Yet Renan does—as if Renan had any right to be simple-minded! The contrary is obvious. When all that is strong, and brave, and masterful, and haughty is eliminated from the idea of God; and step by step he has become a staff for the weary, a straw for the drowning; when he has become a poor-box God, a sinner's God, and a God of Gods for invalids; when his highest mark of divinity is that he "redeems" and "saves": then what does the change mean? What is implied in such a lowering of Godly status? Admittedly, the "kingdom of God" by these means extends its boundaries. Once upon a time he ruled only his own people, his "chosen" people; but since then he has gone wandering into foreign lands, just like his chosen people, and he has lost his settled place of abode. Finally he came to feel at home anywhere and everywhere, he became the great cosmopolitan and he got "the greatest number" on his side, half the earth in fact. But the God of the great majority, the democrat amongst Gods, did not hereupon become proud like a heathen God: he remained a Jew, a God of back streets, God of dark holes and corners, God of all the world's slums! His earthly kingdom is still in the underworld, still an "Alsatia," still a tenement area, a ghetto still. . . . And he himself has become so pallid and so rickety, and so decadent. . . . Even the palest of the pale can now master him; even the Albinos of intellect—our metaphysicians! They spun their webs about him so long that in the end he was hypnotized, he became a spinner himself, God became a metaphysician. Then he began again spinning the world out of his own innards—Spinoza fashion—he became thinner and paler etc., he became "ideal," "the pure spirit," "the absolute," he actually became the "thing-in-itself." . . . Oh, what a collapse of God—he became a "thing-in-itself!"

XVIII

The Christian idea of God—God as a deity of the sick—God as a spinner of cobwebs, God as a Ghost—is one of the most corrupt ideas that has ever been generated on earth: it is probably low-water-mark in the ebbing evolution of the God-type—God degraded into the negation of life instead of being its glorification and eternal affirmation! This God declares war upon life, upon natural existence, and upon the will to live! This God is the formula for slandering "this world," and for lying about the "next"! In this God annihilation is deified and the desire to be annihilated is made holy!

XIX

The fact that the virile races of northern Europe have not rejected the Christian God, does little credit to their religious ability; not to mention their good taste. They should have been able to deal with such a sickly and decrepit offshoot of decadence. But because they did not, a curse lies upon them: they have added sickness, decrepitude and a self-division to their instincts—and they have not been able to create any more new Gods! Two thousand years have gone by without even one new God! Instead we still have with us—apparently established by right as the ultimate possible achievement of the God-building trade, the "creator spiritus" in man—this pitiable God of Christian monotono-theism! We still have with us a hybrid dilapidated creature, built from no thinking and subject to no changes of thought; and in him every impulse of decadence, cowardice and weariness of soul finds its sanction!

XX

In my attack upon Christianity I must avoid an injustice to a somewhat similar religion—which has an even greater following—Buddhism. Both are nihilistic religions, religions of decadence, but there is an extraordinary difference between them; and it is owing to the work of Indian scholars that a critic of Christianity can make the study in comparison.

Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity. It has the ingrained habit of facing problems objectively and coolly, for it has sprung from hundreds of years of deep philosophical reflection: the idea of God it has disposed of long ago. Buddhism is the only really positive religion known to history; even in its epistemology (which is a strict phenomenalism) it avoids speaking of the "struggle against sin," and refers, more realistically, to the "struggle against pain." In sharp contradistinction to Christianity, it avoids the self-deception of ideas of morality—it stands, as I phrase it, "beyond good and evil." The two philosophical facts upon which it is based and upon which it focuses attention are: firstly, a keen sensibility, which takes the form of a refined intuition of pain; and secondly, an excessive spirituality, an undue preoccupation with problems of thought and logical procedure, which causes the personal instincts to be subordinate to the "impersonal." (Both of these states of mind will be familiar to certain of my readers, the "objective" ones, who, like myself, know them in experience.) The genesis of these mental states is in physical depression; which Buddha sought to counteract by rules of hygiene. To cure it, he prescribed life in the open air, a life of travel; moderation and care in the choice of foods; a caution against spirituous liquors; and likewise against all passions which create bile and heat the blood; and no worry, either about oneself or for others. He encourages all ideas which bring peace of mind or cheerfulness, and seeks ways of overcoming other kinds of thoughts. He defines goodness, or being good, as the promotion of health. Prayer is eschewed, and so is asceticism; there is no categorical imperative, no discipline of any kind, not even within the walls of a monastery—it is always possible to leave—for such things would intensify the excessive sensibility already mentioned. For the same reason his advice is against any conflict with infidels; nothing is more repellent to his doctrine than feelings of revenge, aversion and resentment ("hatred does not put an end to hatred," is the pathetic refrain of all Buddhism). And to this extent he was right: that these passions are indeed most antagonistic to his main dietetic purpose. The spiritual lassitude that he finds in excessive "objectivity" (that is, an individual's loss of interest, loss of balance, and of "egotism" he combats by making a strong attempt to reestablish intellectual interest in personality. In Buddha's teaching egotism is a duty: the "one thing needful," that is, "how canst thou overcome pain?" regulates and determines the whole spiritual diet. (Here we should recall that the Athenian who also attacked pure "scientificity," Socrates, raised personal egotism into one of the problems of morality.)

[To be continued next week.]

A Window on Europe

A Weekly Letter from an Englishman About Europe
John Langdon-Davies

THE MENACE OF NATIONALISM

I have recently received the following letter from an unknown Spanish correspondent: "Sir: I have read your article 'The Spanish Woman: a Romantic Myth Exploded' in *Harper's Magazine* for November. It certainly explodes beautifully a most romantic myth—that of Englishmen never hitting below the belt. But maybe I am not being quite fair in saying this because though I have met some fine English specimens of blackguards, I must say never before have I had the misfortune to encounter one who was also the kind of bastard you are. I am, Sir, your obedient servant Gabriel Dafonte."

I can think of no argument with which to combat S. Dafonte's cogent letter and so have had to leave it unanswered. It has, however, set me thinking along lines which would probably surprise its author. It has made me realize once again what a handicap to civilization nationalism is.

In my article I described honestly, I think, the disgusting attitude towards sex which is found in the average Spanish town. With my facts and my deductions from them no decent person could disagree. The vegetable life of married women, the callousness of seduction, the sordidness of prostitution, these were my themes, together with some comments upon high birth rates, infant mortality and female ill-education. Insofar as these things are to be found in London I detect them there and I wrote of them in Spain simply because I have studied conditions there and found evidence that our younger generation in England and America, for all the talk about cocktails, jazz, necking and the rest, are leading healthier and cleaner lives both physically and mentally than is possible in the more medieval countries.

But because of nationalism I am not a man criticizing evil, but an Englishman criticizing Spaniards and whether I am right or wrong does not matter: Spaniards will be apt to unite against the common foe. It is the same in America: if I say that I dislike the high temperature of my Pullman car, I am not simply stating that my body prefers the surrounding air to be less full of

molecular motion: I am an English superior person criticizing and insulting American habits. Of course the boot is as often on the other leg: I am almost willing to defend the average English hotel against American criticism, although I loathe it myself. Nationalism enters into everything. I am a Socialist, a little Englishman who would like his country to be as small and as powerless as Denmark or Sweden. I would like to blow up every British cruiser. I hate English cooking, the English Sunday and I dress for preference like a hobo; but I am not going to have my American friends say that American men's suits are better than English: they are not, I know they are not, and there's an end of it; unless my American friend refuses to keep quiet.

Here is another letter which was inspired by another *Harper's* article: "Dear Sir: I have just read your article in the April issue of *Harper's* entitled 'An Apology for Visiting Lecturers,' in which you state that a brother lecturer while lecturing through the South on 'The Scientific Attitude to Race Prejudice' and after delivering such lecture in a town in which was located a woman's college, the wife of the president of such woman's college stated as follows:

"Race prejudice is a dreadful thing, except in case of Negroes, where it is all right, for in the Bible it says, 'God cursed the children of Ham, and the children of Ham are the Negroes.'"

"It happens that I was reared in the South, that I attended college and the university in the South, that I associated with students in girls' and boys' schools and colleges, that I have intimate acquaintance with professors and their families, and I challenge the truth of the statement which is attributed to the wife of a college president in the South. I shall appreciate very greatly the name of the gentleman who made this statement to you, and I should also like to have the name of the wife of the president of said woman's college, and I shall assume that upon your failure to furnish me this information that you either confess error or admit that your statement is not sufficiently verified to justify its publication. There is not a section of the country in the United States today, or in the world, where greater charity, greater respect, and greater love, if you please, are entertained toward the colored race than in the South, and it is indeed regrettable that statements of this character are published in magazines of the circulation which *Harper's Magazine* enjoys, because of

the irreparable injury which it does in its tendency to create a breach between the white people of the South and their colored brother." This came from a judge of the Superior Court of the State of Arizona and, well! there you are. If my anecdote, which by the way was true, can do all that harm what will be done by Walter White's *Rope and Faggot*? The difference is that Walter White is American, albeit an American who insists on stressing his one-sixteenth of colored blood far more than his fifteen-sixteenths of white blood—and I am English. Actually all I intended to do in one case was to appeal for more decent sex standards and in the other to laugh at race prejudice, but thanks to nationalism I have in many minds insulted Spain in one case and America in the other. No decent man advocates what I exposed but nationalism makes even decent folk take offense. That is one of the many reasons why I like the outlook of a poverty-stricken, ragged, dirty, starving little slum boy who shouted out in my railway carriage last week: "I'm not a German, nor a Russian, nor a Frenchman; I'm just one thing and that is a Boy."

The "soul of man" has appeared countless times as a phrase and ostensibly as a subject in writings on religion and ethics and human nature, etc., yet nothing really has ever been said about it: nothing, to be sure, has been known about it: if—if we may be so definite as to call it *it*—has not been known; and with such a free field of ignorance, anybody can write anything and there is always room for more (though seldom original) bunk about "the soul of man."

Now that United States Senator Thomas J. Heflin has been officially read out of the Democratic party in Alabama, his admirers will probably say that Alabama has been made safe for Catholicism. Independently, however, and paradoxically, Heflin will continue to resist the introduction into Alabama of those irreconcilable extremes, Catholicism and Civilization.

Prophets are men who guess about the future, and who are inordinately admired by some men when their guesses turn out to have been correct: their incorrect guesses are left to polite oblivion. Of course, the super-prophet is the man who so powerfully impresses his fellows that they set to work making his prophecies come true.

The odor of sanctity arises from corruption of mind.

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