

For the INDIVIDUAL.
For the MINORITY.
For COUNTRY.
UNDER GOD.

VOICE

INTEGRITY
FREEDOM
RESPONSIBILITY

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WITH ONE VOICE

WHICH IS TO GUIDE SOCIETY?

CHRISTIAN TRUTH OR A GODLESS MATERIALISM?

Preliminary enquiries have so far elicited from the Bishops of Chichester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield, Buckingham and Lewes and other Diocesan Bishops their agreement with the words of the Bishop of Oxford (which we quote below) expressing the Christian doctrine in regard to work and leisure. No bishop has yet denied the truth of these words.

There are three alternatives:

1. The Church can completely ignore and abandon any responsibility towards social, political and economic policies, and leave society at the mercy of selfish power-mongering materialistic forces. If they do this an increasing pressure of technology will more and more dominate education, thought and people's habits of life.
2. The Church can continue as at present, a Body with many differing and uncertain voices—another Tower of Babel—at the best a very inefficient brake on catastrophic trends.
3. The Church can be one in the Truth, crying it "from the roof-tops"—an Authoritative guide to the public, not on technical matters, but on what are Christian social policies.

If the bishops and clergy will now speak with *one* voice in agreement with the Bishop of Oxford, they will give a new and true direction to men's thoughts on the proper place of work, how leisure may be constructively and creatively used, what steps are necessary to prepare people for it; and at the same time provide society with a central guiding Truth which all can recognise as something to which economic and financial policies should be subordinated.

As a first step to this end we invite the bishops and clergy to tell us that they agree with what the Bishop of Oxford has said, as quoted below, and to sign their agreement.

What the Bishop of Oxford said

" . . . The introduction of shorter working hours has given a larger amount of free time to a whole section of our population, though at the same time social changes and the shortage of domestic help have deprived others of some of the leisure they would normally have expected forty or fifty years ago. . . . Provided that enough work is done to sustain the common life of the nation, I do not see any reason to regret these changes, in so far as they have brought more leisure to more people. Work for work's sake is not a Christian maxim. We work in order to live. To reverse this principle would be to suggest that man is a mere producing or organising machine, which must indeed have a rest sometimes, but merely as a biological necessity, in order once again to go to work efficiently. Man's life, on any Christian view is something far greater and more profound than his capacity to produce goods or organise their production. Freedom from unnecessary work is something to be welcomed and even extended as far as possible. But this, like all forms of freedoms, brings its responsibilities. If leisure may be defined as the time we have free from prescribed duties, we have to give some thought to how this time is to be used. Our time is given us on trust; there is a limited amount of it; this is one of the conditions of our life here as God has given it.

"Perhaps the danger to-day is that so many people are thinking of life solely in terms of work and amusement. . . ."

I AGREE WITH, AND WISH TO SUPPORT THE BISHOP OF OXFORD IN WHAT HE IS QUOTED ABOVE AS SAYING IN REGARD TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

SIGNED.....

PARISH.....

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PARISH.....

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VOICE

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Cicero on Duties

Most Latin students rather gladly include Cicero, his speeches and his letters, among the lumber of the past, much as Dante confined him to Limbo in a couple of words. Yet Cicero made an unsurpassed contribution to religion and ethics, and Trollope wrote two volumes in his honour. If Cicero had lived a hundred years later, said Trollope, "I should have suspected him of some hidden knowledge of Christ's teachings. M. Renan has reminded us of Cicero's dislike to the Jews. He could not learn from the Jew—though the Jew indeed had much that he could teach him. The religion which he required was far from the selfishness of either Jew or Roman. He believed in eternity, in the immortality of the soul, in virtue for the sake of its reward hereafter, in the omnipotence of God, the performance of his duty to his neighbours, in conscience and in honesty."

A few months before his violent death, Cicero wrote *On Duties* for his son, which Trollope considered the most perfect of his works. The first of the three parts deals with Honesty. Among the ingredients of honesty, which are practically the cardinal virtues, Justice is described as violated either by injustice or by indifference to the injustices of others. Cicero indites force and fraud as utterly alien to a human being, fraud being even more odious, because it is foxlike while force is leonine. Possibly Cicero originated the comparison of the lion and the fox which Machiavelli commends, and it may have guided Dante in describing the regions of Hell devoted to Violence and Deceit.

"Blood kinship binds men together by benevolence and love (caritate)," Cicero writes. "Every virtue attracts us to itself, but justice and generosity most of all. Pythagoras considered friendship the absolute, for the one is constituted from the many."

He accepts the Stoic definition of courage as virtue that champions equity, and exalts peace above war. "War should be so waged that peace alone is its object. . . . Rash war making is monstrous and bestial (I.23). In overthrowing and destroying, lay to heart to do nothing rashly, nothing cruelly (I.24)." Such counsel approaches much nearer in spirit as well as in time to the Gospel precepts than, we might say, the philosophy of war that politicians and bishops usually express.

The statesman (I.25) should consider the interests of the citizens and look after the whole. "Nothing deserves higher praise than moderation and mercy. Always avoid anger.

And (I.25) we must take great care to avoid pride. (I.28). The business of justice is not to wrong men, of modesty not to offend them. Reason in control, appetite in obedience. Which results in constancy and moderation. We must not fight against nature that is universal, but if we respect it may follow our own nature (I.31). The foreigner or resident does his duty if he keeps to his own business. does not meddle with others' concerns, and is as little curious as possible about another's commonwealth."

He considers (I.42) that trades which incur hatred—"like the petty tax collector or the usurer"—degrade a gentleman. "Agriculture is more worthy of a free man than any other calling." Wisdom, being the knowledge of human and divine matters, excels all virtues; Prudence merely knows what to seek and what to avoid. (I.43) And the subject matter of wisdom "includes the community of gods and men and their intercourse." He ends the first book, saying: "In the community there is a scale of duties; the first we owe to the immortal gods, the second to our country, the third to relatives, the rest to others." (I.45).

He deals in the second book with Utility or Expediency. (II.6). "The most suitable way of keeping your wealth is being loved; the most unsuitable, being feared. . . . Expel fear and retain love (*caritatem*). The first essential is the trusty intimacy of friends who love us and respect what is ours. (II.8). "Two ingredients constitute faith, and they appear in the belief that we unite prudence with justice." (II.9).

He discusses liberality, and (II.15) prefers "those who are beneficent and generous with their efforts, that is with virtue and industry," to those who are liberal merely with money.

Themistocles was asked whether he would prefer to marry his daughter to a rich man without virtue or to a poor man without wealth. He replied (II.20), "I prefer a man without money to money without a man." Cicero comments, "The basis of enduring fame and praise is justice, without which nothing deserves praise."

He explains (II.21) the very reason for a community's existence: "The administrators will first take care that each keeps what is his own, and that no public lessening of private peoples' goods occurs." We might in this day and age ask what administrators think of inflation, which diminishes everyone's purchasing power. Cicero continues: "No vice is filthier than avarice, especially among the principal officers of a commonwealth." Apollo Pythius pronounced that 'Avarice alone would ruin Sparta.' Public robbery perverts the meaning of a community to which people have entrusted themselves to avoid being pillaged.

(II.24) "Take care that debt does not damage the commonwealth," advises Cicero. We may recall the horror which the national debt, comparatively mild in those days, aroused in Blackstone and Disraeli. Further, he says, "Those entrusted with office must avoid the kind of bribery which consists in plundering one party to pay another." Party politics would call this fair shares, or redistribution, or social revolution, or just part of the fun. When Cato was asked what he thought of usury, he rejoined: "What do you think of murder?" (II.25).

The third book examines possible conflicts between Honesty and Expediency. Cicero was writing to instruct his son, and he drew on his life's experience of public affairs. We might have expected a dash of Machiavelli in his advice. But, while he grieves for his beloved Republic and deprecates tyranny and the lust for power, he never suggests the possibility of doing evil that good may come. He gives no shabby advice. On the contrary. (III.5) "Natural reason itself is divine and human law. . . . Man cannot harm man if he obeys nature. Natural law (III.6) forbids us to hurt another. Those who say that citizens must be considered, others not, destroy the common society of human kind." There cannot be a double standard of ethics.

He examines many cases of alleged conflict between honesty and expediency, but concludes (III.8), "Whatever is honest is useful. . . . We need to avoid anything avaricious, unjust, lustful or uncontrolled." As for the story of Gyes's ring, and the possibility of doing what is wrong if not found out, he comments: "Good men pursue what is honest, not what is secret." (III.9).

He quotes Chrysippus: "There is nothing wrong in each following his own interests; but as for robbing another, there is no right (*jus*) there." (III.10). We may, says Cicero, all consult our advantage "provided no one else suffers. . . . But nothing cruel is useful: man's nature which we should follow is most hostile to cruelty." (III.11). Not only the deadly sins but the details of thought anticipate Dante, whose Lucy was 'enemy of everything cruel.'

In business the same standard applies. Those who hold that Christianity is unworkable and is the creed of failures should note Cicero's emphasis. "The good man will pretend or disguise nothing in order to buy or sell better. (III.15) As nature is the source of right (*jus*), it accords with nature that no man should so act as to profit from another's ignorance." (III.17).

And as for proclaiming from the housetops, the good man "will never dare even to think much less to do, anything he would not dare to proclaim (*praedicare*)." (III.19). Philosophers doubt whether some matters are disgraceful, but the rustic does not hesitate. He says a man is respectable 'if you can play counting fingers with him (*mices*) in the dark.'

He notes the days of Marius, when the currency was in such confusion that no one could know what he had. (III.20).

And he concludes with a profession of faith. (III.30) "There is nothing useful which is not honest; nor is it honest because it is useful; it is useful because it is honest." Honesty is what works.

Such exalted ethics, we might say, were knocking at the door of the Gospel precepts, and had kept the narrow way. Little wonder that Romans of Cicero's type of thought were readier to sympathise with early Christians than Jews, for instance. We find in Cicero the psychological preparation for Christian ethics, even as Zielinski found psychological preparation for receiving Christian dogma in the religion of ancient Greece.

H. S. SWABEY.

An Allegory

Once upon a time there existed a small community composed of a hundred workers and one "reckoner." The workers, by sheer unaided effort produced one hundred units of necessities a year, by which they just managed to live after contributing a proportion of the units to the reckoner. The function of the reckoner was to distribute to each worker a token representing a claim to the worker's share of the necessities, and for this purpose sea-shells were used, the place where they were found being known only to the reckoner, who had little trouble in picking them up. All tokens had to be returned to the reckoner as the claims were made, and for his services the reckoner was given his share which enabled him to live more comfortably than any of the workers.

In the course of time, the workers began to find their toil very wearisome and necessities inadequate, and they commenced to devise simple means for lightening their labours and making more for their needs. One thought out one little idea and another improved on it so that, as time passed, numberless ideas and improvements were put into use which resulted in the making of a wonderful machine. By this time the community numbered one thousand workers, and their work, combined with what the machine made, produced two thousand units of necessities, which certainly looked good to the little community.

There were now two thousand units of necessities awaiting distribution among one thousand workers, and it appeared to be ordinary commonsense to distribute the extra thousand units equally among the whole community, since no one could possibly say whose particular forefathers had contributed most towards the ideas which had gone into the making of the machine.

In the meantime the title of "reckoner" had become changed to that of "bookster," because it had been found that mysterious symbols written in books and elaborately enscribbled bits of paper seemed to be more impressive to the minds of the workers than sea shells.

The workers now went to the bookster and asked him to let them have tokens for the extra thousand units in addition to the first one thousand, but, as they had only done the same amount of work as before and had always received tokens according to the amount of work done, the bookster refused to let them have more than one thousand, as the extra work had been done by their machine and not by themselves. There were therefore one thousand units to which no one could lay claim and which could not be distributed.

The bookster then had an inspiration and offered to *lend* the extra thousand tokens, provided the workers made another machine and so kept on working all day long, and provided also they made contributions from the total units as before. "Toil," said the easy-living bookster, "is a God-like thing."

The workers whose brains were always tired because of over-much toiling and who therefore were unable to think very clearly, agreed to this and also agreed that, until the bookster's tokens were all returned, both the machines should

be regarded as his property. The bookster, who had had more practise in the use of his wits than the workers, knew quite well that as soon as one lot of tokens was returned another would be wanted, so that he would never have to give back the machines.

The second machine was a great improvement on the first, and this, together with the first machine and the labour of the workers, produced four thousand units. But, as the workers were still only given tokens according to work done, they could only claim one thousand units as before. Consequently, if all the necessities were to be claimed, there must be found some way to get still more tokens, and the only way was to get the bookster to lend more, which he could only do if more machines were made.

This led to another trouble, because the machines made it unnecessary for all the workers to work and, as the un-required workers had no tokens, those who were working were forced to give a few of their own to those not working in order to keep them from dying. This meant that those without work grew very hungry and those still working had also to go short while, at the same time, three thousand units of necessities lay unclaimed.

In this way the workers had to keep on borrowing more and more tokens and making more and more machines just to keep themselves alive, while the bookster gradually became the owner of all the machines and so complete master of the workers who by now were called the people.

Nevertheless, some of the people were getting a little suspicious of the bookster and were always asking who gave the original reckoner the right to the shells and why should the present bookster be allowed the sole privilege of making tokens: these ought to be made by themselves because of their own labour and the invention of their own machines.

This made the bookster a little nervous because he knew that the original reckoner had had no particular right to the shells and that he himself only held his present position because so many people knew nothing at all about the matter. In view of this, he thought it wise to take precautions and so he gave tokens freely to anybody who could deceive the people by a great deal of high-sounding talk on the matter and, because these talkers had the funny idea that the only way to distribute the unclaimed necessities was to practise rigid economy and use fewer of them, they were called e-comic-ists.

By this time the bookster was master of the people more than ever but, because of the talk of the e-comic-ists, they still had some trust in him and asked his advice as to what should be done about the increasing surpluses. "Burn them," he said, "or if they are liquid like milk, throw them down the drains—it is really a very simple problem."

"But we are already doing this and there are still a lot left."

"In that case," said the bookster, "You must exchange them for the surpluses of other tribes."

"But," said one of the people who was a little wiser than the rest, "how can this be done since, as we have no tokens for our surpluses, we shall still have none for theirs taken in exchange."

"You can make spears," replied the bookster, "and while you are making them I will lend you more tokens."

"But suppose the tribesmen don't want our surpluses?"

"Then," said the bookster, "they must be forced to take them and perhaps your spears will come in very handy."

At this, the wisest and most courageous man among them strode out and faced the bookster and the people.

"Listen to me," he said. "I have somewhat to say on the matter, for I have given it some thought."

The people became attentive but the bookster looked supercilious.

"We must make our own tokens," said the wisest man. "One thousand will be divided as at present because of our work, and three thousand will be divided equally among us because we and our forefathers have made the machines, and what is made by the machines is ours by right. Thus shall we have tokens for the four thousand units which will no longer lay a-rotting, and no man among us shall go hungry. We must re-claim our right to do this from the bookster who has usurped it from us."

The people acclaimed this with joy, but there was a sinister scowl on the bookster's face.

"You will not dare to do this thing," he snarled.

"Why should we not?" answered the wisest man.

"Because," said the bookster with a sardonic smile, "the tribesmen's bookster is a friend of mine and will see to it that they too have spears."

With great dignity the wisest man turned his back to the bookster and his face towards the people.

"We must dare this great thing," said he. "We and the tribesmen have no hatred for each other and we must not fight with them or they with us. For our common enemies are the booksters."

But alas! by that time the bookster was too strong for the people and before they had time to regain their heritage, the bookster's friend had aroused the tribesmen to attack and **THERE WAS WAR!**

The people, having to defend themselves, were forced to make great numbers of spears and thus borrow an immense number of tokens. Nevertheless, the quantity of tokens being so great and the debt to the bookster so enormous, the number of wise people increased so that they were convinced that after the war the bookster's power must be broken.

• • •

But the Bookster's power has not been broken, it has merely been transformed into a universal, godless and hypnotising creed which demands that, in spite of a vast potential wealth and freedom, the people—we—must be chained to a life of materialistic absorption; a creed which is the very antithesis of the ideal implicit in the words "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."—*Libera*.