

apart from other issues. With this general understanding, a vote was taken on the King Amendment, and it was defeated 45 to 36.

It was apparent that this vote in no way reflected the real strength of the forces now working to free the islands. As soon as the result was announced, Senator Robinson, who had voted for the King Amendment, and Senator Borah, who had voted against it (although he is known to favor Philippine independence), said that the outcome could not be taken as an expression of the Senate's real feeling. It merely meant, they said, that the Senate refused to entangle the Philippine question with the tariff issue; and they predicted that the vote would be different when the bill to grant the islands their freedom comes up for consideration alone.

It begins to look, therefore, as if the Fili-

pino's thirty-year fight for independence may at last be crowned with success. The old sentimental appeal, fostered by Bryan and encouraged by Wilson, is still far from dead. This is proved by the *Atlanta Constitution's* reference in a recent editorial to "the stigma of refusing freedom to a conquered people whom we do not want as citizens, but whose wealth we covet for American commercial exploiters." To this sentimental appeal is now added a selfish interest of which there was not a trace when Tammany's bolt killed the Clarke Amendment in 1916. "The next regular session" in which Senator Bingham promised to introduce his test resolution meets in December, 1929, and it remains to be seen whether our national greed will at last accomplish what our national honor has so long demanded in vain.

What I Believe

Living Philosophies - V

by **WILLIAM RALPH INGE**

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WHETHER an old beetle of an Englishman, now in his seventieth year, is at all a suitable person to interpret the youth of America to itself, may be very seriously doubted. I do not know much about even our own young people, who seldom speak frankly to their elders. It is difficult to guess what is at the bottom of their minds. They have every reason to be anxious about their future, but they do not seem to be anxious.

Many of them appear to be reckless, as if they had decided to live only in and for the present. Others are striking out new lines for themselves, rejecting impatiently the experience of the past. They feel themselves cut off from pre-war England by those four horrible years. During that ghastly nightmare, which hardly touched you in America, a million of our young men — the flower of the nation — lost their lives. The old wealth was consumed; the

whole future of our country was more than once in dire jeopardy; the links with the old conventions, values, and traditions were snapped. "It will be a new world after the war," people were everywhere saying. It is not really a new world; but some great changes were speeded up, others were retarded. The old order seemed to have ended in a delirium of coöperative suicide.

There has been no such breach of continuity in the United States. You were never in danger either of foreign conquest or of internal revolution. Your losses were, by comparison, very small. Your country is enjoying unparalleled prosperity. The moral climate in the two nations is quite different.

A caricaturist has drawn poor John Bull, much shrunk from his former corpulence, contemplating a gigantic note of interrogation. That is my own attitude; I am no cocksure



Etchings by Rembrandt

Christ Healing the Sick: the "Hundred Guilder" Piece

Courtesy the Weyhe Gallery

prophet. In politics, a Puritan and a Tory contend for the mastery in my mind; in philosophy and religion, a Neo-Platonist and a student of modern science are not always peaceable bedfellows. A cross-bench mind? Or is my proper place not on the cross-benches, but on the floor between two stools? Young America, I fancy, likes something much more positive, more self-confident, than I can give it.

I have already written about the great crisis in Christian theology. Our religion, which was at first fluid, like molten metal, stiffened and almost petrified at a time when the dominant belief about the course of the world was supernaturalistic dualism — on the one side a natural order which in itself had no significance, and on the other, miraculous, catastrophic interventions. The creation, the fall, the redemption of mankind, and the approaching end of the world were single acts, sudden breaches of natural sequence. But now we all believe in an evolutionary world, and the scale of it has been prodigiously magnified. Can a historical revelation be fitted into this new scheme? What becomes of the old belief in miracle and prophecy, in a privileged corpora-

tion declaring the will of God with authority and dispensing His favors as a monopoly, and in the traditional Christian eschatology — heaven and hell, with or without purgatory?

I tried to indicate my own conviction: that we can and must still be Christians, but only if we recognize that Christianity is a living, growing, changing organism, which has by no means as yet reached its final form. I will not repeat or recapitulate these arguments. The problem belongs to the philosophy of religion, in which only a small minority are interested. But it seems to me that we have to face another movement which affects a much wider circle; I mean a revolt against Christian ethics.

The scientists of the nineteenth century objected to being called materialists, though they did all their scientific thinking in terms of quantitative categories. Most of them were high-minded and even religious men, who in moral questions were timid and conventional. They had very little quarrel with Christian ethics, and most of them would have agreed with John Stuart Mill that a man cannot do better than order his conduct so that Christ would have approved of his life.

This respect for moral tradition has now gone by the board. The morality of the church, if not of the Gospel, is openly repudiated. I am about to state the case against Christian ethics, as I believe many of our thoughtful young people might state it. Most of the attacks against Christianity are foolish and easily answered; but I have no wish to put up men of straw in order to knock them down. I wish to face real and serious difficulties. I will use quotation marks to prevent any careless reader from citing my opponents' objections as my own opinions.

"The Gospel was a prophetic, antisacerdotal mission within Judaism. The piety and personal morality which it enjoins reach the very highest level. But it leaves us in a world without a future. The first disciples were Messianists, who believed in an apocalyptic end of the age, or day of the Lord, which some of them would live to see. The Gospel gives us no guidance as to the organization of society, no principles about the distribution of the profits of industry, no indication as to whether we should prefer monarchy or democracy. We can find in it no inspiring ideal of human progress; no sympathy with science, literature, or art — very little, in short, of what fills our minds

when we dream of a better world for our descendants.

"Furthermore, although there is no unwholesome asceticism in the teaching of Christ Himself, the world-renouncing tendency of the age enveloped Christianity from the moment when it became a Hellenistic religion, completely captured it, and gave it a peculiar character which it has retained ever since. The whole of Christian sexual morality depends on the ascetic notion that certain natural functions are essentially sinful and degrading. This teaching has caused incalculable misery, and is now finally antiquated by modern psychology and its kindred sciences.

"Lastly, from the fourth century onward, the great Church has been an imperialistic theocracy, a political organization with a singularly bad record of cruelty, oppression, and fraud."

I am not concerned to rebut the last item in the indictment, since I am writing for American Protestants, whose withers are unwrung by it. The first and second objections are very serious, and must be considered quite candidly.

It is true that there is a wide gap in the teaching of the New Testament. It tells us next to nothing about the conditions of a higher civilization. There are some well-meaning people who try to make out that Christ was an advanced social reformer; they talk about Christian politics and economics. They are mistaken. The Gospel is a message of spiritual redemption, not of social reform. Christ was indifferent to all forms of government, ecclesiastical and civil; He disdained any concern with questions of distribution; and He despised all the paraphernalia of civilization beyond the simplest necessities and comforts.

On the other hand, His method of proceeding outward from the individual to society is the true method of all moral reform. By refusing to legislate for Palestine in the first century, He avoided making any laws which would be a hindrance to America in the twentieth. His religion has not, in fact, impeded secular civilization. And lastly, though He has little to say about distribution, He has a good deal to say about consumption — about the vulgarity and selfishness of luxury, and the sin of waste. In prosperous America to-day — but I refrain. You can read the New Testament for yourselves.



Christ before Pilate

I turn to the question of asceticism. I am terribly cramped for space and I will come to grips with the psychoanalysts and their friends at once. If there are no instincts in our nature which need to be repressed — buffeted, mortified, crucified, as St. Paul says; if all of them are to be gratified, in a more or less “sublimated” form: then all the great moralists, pagan as well as Christian, Plato as well as St. Paul, are fundamentally wrong. But they are not wrong. The only possible harmony of our nature is a harmony of unified purpose, not of gratified instincts. These instincts are a turbulent mob, which can never be reduced to order except by what the Stoics called the ruling faculty.

If we were mere animals, we might live as innocently as “the pretty little rabbits with their interesting habits.” But when Judge Ben Lindsey’s young students imitate these engaging quadrupeds, the result is revolting and horrible. In becoming moral agents we have forfeited immunity from moral struggle. We can only rise to higher things on stepping-stones of our *dead* selves; and a great part of our warfare, though certainly not the whole of it, is concerned with the conquest of what St. Paul calls the flesh. The Christian doctrine of purity is quite clear. The obligation does not rest primarily on the injury which licentiousness does to other people, but on the fact that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and that misuse of the sacraments of love defiles this inner shrine. If anyone thinks that this is mere monkish morality, let him read what Plato says about the continence of Greek athletes. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, he says, almost in the words of St. Paul; and shall not we, whose minds are better trained than theirs, and our bodies less lusty, do as much to win the incorruptible crown of self-conquest and converse with the Divine?

Puritanism has hitherto been the backbone of the American character, and the main secret of American greatness. We have heard lately, from Troeltsch and others, that John Calvin is the spiritual father of that not wholly admirable person, the American business man, with his “inner-worldly asceticism” and his unthinking devotion to productive industry for its own sake. But the ideal was originally a fine one. It denounced luxury, waste, chicanery, and exploitation. All the worst evils of “big business” have cropped up in direct defiance of it.

Do not let us talk glibly about “the mistake of asceticism.” It *is* a mistake, very often; but it is a mistake which it is much easier to fall below than to rise above.

America is a land of violent contrasts; and the reaction against Puritanism seems to have gone to dangerous lengths. It is a simple expedient to dub all authoritative and traditional moral principles “taboos,” and forthwith to disregard them. That is the tendency of post-war civilization all over Europe. We should be wiser to take the authority of Jesus Christ as absolute and beyond question. Our mastery of applied science does not make us wiser or better than our fathers. I am no advocate of unprogressive morality. A new moral orientation has been made necessary by the recognition of our duties to posterity, to the lower animals, and to all the beautiful and gracious things which our vulgar greed is defacing and destroying. But we may be sure that no society can be healthy or happy in which the duty of self-denial and self-discipline is set at naught, and in which chastity and the sanctity of the marriage bond are treated as outworn superstitions.

Next month this series of living philosophies will be continued by Irving Babbitt, America’s leading exponent of Humanism.



Descent from the Cross

Where Are the Diabolos?



Drawings by C. C. Beaver

by **E. B. WHITE**

THE CLOAK of mystery which my father wore was never more brilliant in my sight than on that evening, twenty years ago, when he came home from his office bearing a long, thin, cardboard box and placed it, unopened, on the hatrack in the hall. (Unannounced boxes were never opened, in our household, till after dinner.) When the time came, the children being assembled, my father carefully removed the wrapper, then the lid, drew forth two wands connected by a piece of string, and tried, with no preliminary explanation and no particular skill, to twirl a small celluloid object on the string by beating rapidly with the wands. The object was conical in shape — or rather it was like a spool with a pinched waist — and imponderable in purpose. My father remarked, in a slightly abashed voice, that it was “a new game.” He called it diabolo.

Even through the ensuing days, when I had learned to spin the object on the string by jerking the right wand harder than the left, my awe and misgivings never left me. There was something a little bit sinister, something vaguely unearthly, about diabolo. The name was suspicious; the shape of the spool was unprecedented; the inability of my father to achieve anything in the way of success with it by following directions, unsettled me.

The air in our suburb soon became full of the whirling toys. Legendary figures sprang up: the girl two blocks away who was reputed to be a diabolo prodigy, able to spin faster, throw higher, and catch more cannily than mortal girl should spin, throw, and catch; the boy named Ralph Palmer who was said to have in his possession a diabolo set made of ivory and

edged with rubber. Through it all I never reconciled diabolo to the natural world of birds, flowers, tennis balls, and schoolbooks. The twirling spool, glinting in the sun, was like the soul of Little Eva — not long for this world; and somehow I knew it.

I was not unprepared for the transitoriness of diabolo. Had not my brother once owned a mandolin? Nothing had ever come of that. Had not my sister once owned a wood-burning set? Nothing had come of that either, save a few mutilated book ends and a rather memorable smell through the house. Such days were destined to pass.

Lately I've begun to wonder about the meaning of such ephemeral excitements, for there seems to be no appreciable abatement. The nation at the moment is drinking cocktails made of tomato juice, or of sauerkraut juice. It is the same nation that not so long ago hung Japanese lanterns on its front porch and stuck swastika hatpins in its hat. I never understood the significance of the swastika sign, although I was so bemused by its provocative outlines that for months I did little else but sketch it on notes, margins, letterheads, homework paper, in varying sizes and to the utter exclusion of all other work in life.

It was of very little interest to me that this talismanic symbol had appeared early in the Bronze Age, or that it had been variously regarded by ancient peoples as a phallic emblem, a sign of wind, a solar symbol, and a mark of productivity. I merely desired to draw it, while sitting still, thinking. In some manner I sensed that it bore the same mysterious relation to life that the mandolin had.