

Testimony of a Witness for the Defence

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By Alfred Magowan

Revised December 9, 2022

TTT Editor's Notes: The following was written in response to Doug Parker's, 4-page tract/paper printed in newspaper format titled: **"A Spiritual Fraud Exposed,"** which was widely distributed to workers as well as friends all over the world in 1954. In the response below, **"Doug"** and **"Douglas"** refer to Doug Parker, an Australian who is also the author of the book: **The Secret Sect**

Alfred Magowan's name does not appear in *A Spiritual Fraud Exposed*; however, mention of a mistreated man was made, which may have been Mr. Magowan. Alfred Magowan's son supplied this document to TTT.

In discussing his experiences with Alfred Magowan in 1938, William Irvine described what he set out to do in an often repeated statement, "Well, it was a great experiment."

"It was A GREAT EXPERIMENT" to which Alfred replied, **"It was A GREAT EXPERIENCE."**

Alfred Magowan professed through Edward Cooney at a mission he and Joe Kerr were holding in Armagh in 1902, and went to preach shortly afterwards. On September 27, 1919, Alfred was reportedly excommunicated by George Walker.

[Click Here to read more about Alfred Magowan](#)

January 13th 1956

My Dear Friends and Strangers,

"Thank God for a Bill of Rights, Trial by jury, and the Habeas Corpus Act." **Douglas** thanks God for them, and then discards them. In his indictment of a whole people, he is judge, prosecutor, jury, and witness; and there is no defence, nor need of any!

This is what the dictionary says about Habeas Corpus: "a writ to produce a prisoner before a court, with particulars of the day and cause of his arrest and detention, in order that the justice of this may be determined." Two of the "prisoners" in this case happen to be in the custody of death; and how then are they to be produced?

And this is what it says about Trial by Jury (or rather about a jury): "A body of men selected according to law, and sworn to try and give a true verdict upon questions put before them." Where are they in this case?

Anybody can bring a charge. Anybody can pull down and destroy; but proving charges is not so easy; and not everybody can draw up plans and build. And 50 years of the lives of men and women are not to be disposed of in a **4-page news-sheet**.* And using Doug's* method, I am capable of making out such case against the first generation of professed followers of Jesus as he makes against the last. He says that **John Hardy** wanted his money. Could Ananias and Sapphira not have said that about Peter? There is scarcely a man in the Old or New Testaments that could not be judged and condemned by the use of Doug's method. I knew a man in Ohio who took two girl preachers to the railway station and told them not to return on the ground (as he told us afterwards) that they preached old King David in his house! And to preach a man who stole another man's wife, and then had her husband killed, was to him the uttermost depths of the pit of degradation!

Doug says that **Mr. Cooney** advised others to do what he had done: forget their father, their mother, and their other relatives. Jesus said: "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Doug accuses these preachers of dividing families. Jesus said: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you Nay; but rather division. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother." If Doug was older and fairer he might consider that to fall out with a servant for mildly repeating what his Master said, means falling out with the Master also — Who did not say it so mildly.

I try to put myself in this young man's place, if by so doing I might come to understand his prompting to this wholesale condemnation. What can a youth know about an old man? I do not know **John Hardy**; but I would not like to judge his motive in asking a young man to do what Jesus asked the young man in Mark 10 to do: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me." The young man did not do it, and Doug did not do it; but the young man did not go away wrathful to blaze abroad to the world the unreasonableness of the request, or to question the motive behind it.

Now I can see that Doug has been wounded in spirit (or at least I give him the benefit of surmising that he has been). "A wounded spirit who can bear?" asked Solomon in the Proverbs. But a wounded spirit, while hard to heal, ought not to be allowed to fester into bad feeling against the wounder, who might not have intended to wound; or it might spread and go deeper until the whole soul is affected. What began as resentment against one man, spread in this case until bitterness against many resulted: a result that he does not appear to be aware of, for he finishes a dreadful performance against a whole generation who did him no harm by saying that his

spirit is "as sweet and wholesome towards everyone as it ever was." When my stepmother said she liked me better than the others of our family, I wondered what her dislike would have been!

There is one fatal defect in this tract: there is too much Doug in it! It is too personal, too self-sure; too willing to see the motes in others' eyes; motes that are magnified into beams. It puts too much stress on money — as if Jesus had not said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Now if it was possible for a young man, who puts money in so prominent a place, to take his own heart to task about motives, might he not find that he was unwilling to forsake all that he had and give it to the poor? He did not need to give it to **John Hardy** if he did not think that John could be trusted to see that the poor got it. He could have done his own dispensing direct. And forsaking all that he had: would he consider that that was a very dear price to pay for the greatest privilege and the highest calling known to men on the earth?

I think it is a great mistake to take ourselves too seriously. Surely when God gave us the wonderful gift of laughter, He intended it some times to be used against ourselves — as a sort of pin to puncture our self-conceit! Doug laughed uproariously when he was here; and it made me hopeful of him that when he came to find himself in over-serious situations, it would enable him to find a light-hearted way out. Hitler was the most serious young man of our time: and see what it did for him — and for the world!

And now coming to **EXPOSURES**: they seldom do what the exposers intend them to do. Protestants have been exposing the shameful nakedness of Popery for hundreds of years; and still it is unashamed; and still it thrives. Church of England clergymen keep going over to Rome — out of gloom into light — as Newman put it: "Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom": and whatever kind of light it was, it seemed to content him for the rest of his life.

Here are some of the things Doug's unclenching of us might do: **First and worst** it might confuse the minds of simple God-fearing people, and drive them out into the desert of doubt and unbelief — where they might be without God, and without hope in the world. Hundreds of them, and maybe thousands could not with a good conscience and a restful heart retreat like Doug into some "house of God" from which years ago they had been glad to escape.

Second: Intelligent people would not accept what Doug says without carefully looking into it, and wondering what prompted him: zeal for God and truth and righteousness. or face-saving over his dispute with **John Hardy**, or revenge that could not rest until it was satisfied and until the money was spent on travel and investigation, that he would have been required to give away before he could be a preacher of the gospel. The rich young ruler, in explaining why he did not do as Jesus said, would hardly have admitted that love of possessions prevented him.

Third: Will not many, and especially the leaders and rulers, look upon it as persecution, and be more closely drawn together because of it? It is not unknown that brothers who find it hard to get on together under the home roof will fight for each other away from it.

Fourth: Will not the "mixed multitude" who for one reason and another would like to see the end of this sect: will they not be delighted to hear it was a fraud from the day it was born? Douglas may have made a subtle and what seemed to him a master move when he yoked up the Australian clergy. But as they are educated men for the most part, and some of them are sure to be intelligent as well, will they not think that the young man "protests too much" and affirms too much when he makes this people worse than any underworld they ever heard of?

And when he makes no distinction between a verdict in favour and a verdict against, will they not "see through" him, and conclude that he is a prejudiced (sic) witness in his own behalf, and against those who have so deeply wounded his feelings? And when he brings in an English judge to give a verdict against the New Testament being taken literally: will they be unanimous in accepting it?

And what would intelligent and educated and supposed to be God-fearing men think of this:

"No religious craze of modern times was so unscriptural, so unnatural, so revolting. and so unholy."?

Surely they would think the young man was being carried away by the greatness of his enmity. And surely they would know that no person and no people could be as bad as he makes these men out to be. And when they would consider his railing on men he never saw, and knew nothing about except by unfriendly hearsay: would they not think he was trying to make dupes and catspaws of them; and decide to be sparing in their support of him? Now if he would hear the testimony of those who knew **Wm. Irvine**, and sat at his feet as Saul of Tarsus sat at the feet of Gamaliel; and heard from him what was confirmed by the testimony of their own hearts: if he would give the same ear to what they have to say, as he gives to those who have no good or kind thing to say about him: might he not get the name of fairness? and the Australian church leaders, being mostly English, might even call it "cricket"?

And what is fair about challenging men to meet him on some court-of-law battlefield, if these men profess to be the disciples of Jesus? Could Jesus not have defended Himself in the ecclesiastical court of Caiaphas? or the civil or criminal court of Pilate? But, we are told, He answered them nothing. If Quakers were challenged on the ground that they were cowards because they do not go to war, would they go to war so as to demonstrate their courage? And if **John Hardy** decided to accept Doug's challenge so as to clear himself of the charges brought against him: what could dead men who are also charged with him: what could they do to clear themselves?

Here is an example of Doug's method, quoted from his "Exposure": "No doubt **Irvine** told him (**Mr. Cooney**), 'God does not want your money:' but of course that didn't mean that he didn't. It is now understood that **Cooney's** distribution of wealth reached the pocket of poor **Mr. Irvine**, who was £1,400 better off. This was a small fortune 50 years ago."

Supposing Doug had been in **Mr. Irvine's** place, and "it was understood" that he got it: what would he have done with it? And what would he have thought the other man should have done with it? Was he supposed to have invested it in stocks or bonds? or put it to his own credit in the bank? Did he buy a bishop's palace with it? or any other sort of property? And seeing that one of the two men involved in the unusual business of giving away (and receiving) a small fortune is still alive: would it not have been well to consult him as the giver, and enquire what the dead man did with it?

(Now if I might put in a money parenthesis here, it would be to say that I consider the man who lives for money and what money will buy, to be lower in the human scale than the bushman of Australia; and he is not held up as an example of superlative intelligence.)

It may be that Douglas has been raised up to do this work of exposing the nakedness of the living and the dead. There are examples in both Testaments of our scriptures of raised up men, or of men who were used for judgment purposes. And it has even been doubted in theological circles if Judas could have got out of doing the work he did. It was a poor work, and badly rewarded; but as it had to be done, and somebody had to do it: he happened to be the man.

And I could say a great deal more than Douglas about the iniquities of which he complains. But when I had anything to say, I said it TO the men themselves. This blazing abroad of a catalogue of good and evil indiscriminately, would hardly be done by men my age. We might be expected to know our own hearts too well; and to remember the proverb: "they that live in glass houses should not throw stones."

If it is wrong for a man, or a company of men, to do a thing on a small scale, does it become right automatically when done on a large scale? If it was wrong for **Wm. Irvine** to have a thousand pounds as an old man ex-preacher in Jerusalem, was it right for a Church of England vicar, to sit under an umbrella in the rain, collecting money for charity; and then dying unexpectedly: was it right for him to leave £30,000? If it was wrong for an old ex-tramp-preacher Overseer in Victoria, Australia, to spend the last years of his life under the roof of an ordinary house from which only death could evict him: is it right for Doug's bishops to live in palaces, surrounded by every comfort and luxury; and guaranteed never to have to live on raw turnips, or sleep under the stars as their only roof?

Tramp preachers did everything but sweat blood in the days of their going forth in strange lands, and without visible means of support. They knew what it was to live on raw turnips in Scotland, and on oranges in California. They also knew what it was to go for days without anything to eat; and I can speak with authority about it, seeing that I was one of them. We slept under the stars, in schools and churches and halls and empty store buildings — with neither bed nor bed covering. We tramped through snow from morning to night in more than 40 degrees of frost. And, speaking for myself, I know what it is to have my tramp-preaching companion rub the frost out of a frost-bitten ear with snow. We were tramps by tramping, but we never begged. We were preachers by calling, but we never took up a collection. We worked in the daytime, when people were responsive enough to our preaching at night, to, asked (sic) us into their houses to eat and to sleep, We looked about to see if anything needed to be done on their premises or in their fields: so as not to be burdensome to them.

I told Doug about Wm. Irvine saying to me in Jerusalem that it was A GREAT EXPERIMENT; and, as he says, he was amazed! I also told him that it was A GREAT EXPERIENCE; but he leaves that out. He said my life had been wrecked by the experiment; but he ought to have let me say so; and I never have, and never will. I would have considered that my life was wrecked if, when I was Doug's present age in Detroit in the year 1907, I had done like one of our neighbours here. He went to Detroit a year or two before I did, and putting a few hundred dollars into Henry Ford's great experiment on wheels, drew something like a million out of it. And as there is not a man on the earth I would desire to change places with: it could hardly be said that I am dissatisfied with the course my life has taken. So instead of saying that it has been wrecked, I consider that it has been redeemed.

Returning again to THE GREAT EXPERIMENT, which gave many hundreds of us opportunity to have a GREAT AND ABUNDANT EXPERIENCE OF LIFE, this was how it was: An experiment in faith that in forsaking the world and everything that was in it, and launching out on an unknown sea, we would neither founder by storms nor by losing our bearings to run on uncharted rocks.

An experiment in following Jesus, free from all encumbrances whatsoever. Having nothing that we might learn how to possess all things. Turning away from all forms of religious and ecclesiastical climbing: scared into it perhaps by the dreadful things Jesus said in the 23rd of Matthew. So, come what might, we would never be guilty of taking any kind of title or honour — considering that the world has not changed from what it was when He said it hated Him and dishonoured Him. We were determined to stand FOR all He had stood for, and AGAINST all that He was against.

And considering His terrible indictment of the religious rulers of His time, which He ended in these very dreadful words "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" we would have been afraid to be like them in any outward or inward particular. So we dressed in workmen's clothes. and thus ensured that we would never get salutations for what is called "the cloth." And having seen how one of the strongest powers ever known in this world gained that power by going directly against what our Lord said in the simple matter of the use (or abuse) of the name "Father," we steered well clear of that shocking pitfall: having noticed that it meant going down and down to ever deeper depths of spiritual degradation, while (strange as it was!) rising to ever greater heights of ecclesiastical power and glory and monopolistic rule.

(What I write now may be 40 years behind our religious times. I can only repeat after John. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.")

An experiment in Brotherhood where all would be on one level: having regard to what Jesus said against Hierarchy or one above another: "All ye are brethren" being our headline. And Pentecost being our example: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Deliverance from the greatest and most respectable lust in the world: that for money and possessions! What a setting free of the souls of men at the very

centre of Mammondom (otherwise known as Christendom). And what a stir among the “dovecotes” of clericalism in all its forms and degrees!

We were denied glimpses into the future, or we might have seen the shadow of a Communistic Bear from the east, threatening to do forcibly what had originally been a moving of delivered hearts. Mammon trembling on his paper throne; and the mammonistic jungle driven together into a menagerie of frightened wild beasts for its own protection!

And if there is any surprise at the beginning of the judgment of men and their institutions, both temporal and religious, it is not, or ought not to be that it is on its way, but that it was so long delayed. “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?” asked Jesus; and then His name began to be put on everything He had spoken against. “Call no man your father on the earth” He said in prophetic anticipation of Papacy — or religious monopolistic despotism. “How can ye believe which receive honour one of another?” And before the generation of those who heard it from His mouth were gone, foundations began to be laid for a temple in which the giving and receiving honours one of another would be the chief act of worship!

Men of old time who were given glimpses of the glory of God, had strange and unusual testimonies to give of themselves. And their I AMS were models for God-honouring men in all the ages to come: —

MOSES the great deliverer, and leader, and lawgiver, and advocate for a wayward and backsliding people; and one of the greatest men of tongue and pen that have so far appeared on the earth, said of himself — in disparagement of his abilities. “And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord. I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

ISAIAH the greatest of the writing prophets and of the poets as well, after he had seen God high and lifted up, and sitting on the throne of His judgment glory, said of himself: “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.

JEREMIAH, on hearing that God had called him to be a prophet to the nations, said: “Then said I, Ah Lord God! behold I cannot speak; for I am a child.”

DAVID the king and the writer of Psalms and “the sweet singer of Israel,” said of himself in the 2nd Psalm: “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

PETER, the chief of the apostles. after what is called the miraculous draught of fishes, had this to say of himself: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man O Lord!”

PAUL, writing to Timothy, wrote this about himself: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief.”

And then in the fullness of time, lesser men, for want of vision by which they could see themselves as they are, began to be important in their own eyes. And so in the name of the Great Dishonoured One (who was dishonoured and slain because He spoke against world wealth, and against the gradations of His followers following the vain and shameless examples of the Jerusalem hierarchy of priests and scribes and lawyers) in His name, I say, small men, and vain of their own importance, began to be somebodies in the world, and so we have such gradations as these: — “His holiness,” “His eminence,” “His grace,” “The venerable,” “The right reverend,” “The most reverend,” “The reverend.” (I am afraid I have got the order of them somewhat confused !) Perhaps a little levity would help to reduce the swellings of pride and vainglory. Therefore let us try this: —

“We have with us to-night a man who needs no introduction to this assembly . . . I take great pleasure . . . allow me . . . our distinguished visitor . . . ladies and gentlemen . . . his dignity and expansiveness the archistarchitop of Timbuckallamazoo.”

If, as of the MAN it is told
That all nature in him is contained;
And himself he has highly extolled
For being superior brained:
Should the things which he has desired
To be his soul's chief attributes,
Not in prototypes be admired:
The reptiles? the bats? and the brutes?
He speaks of himself in high terms:
“Your Lordship”; “your this and your that”;
Should life not be praised in all forms?
Including all insects and worms?
The pig? and the hen? and the rat?
The snake? and the bug? and the bat?
And the varied assortments of germs?
Let us say then “His Porkship” the hog;
“Your Wiliness” to the fox;
“Your Nosiness” to the dog;
And “Your Grease” to the possum (approx)

And "that eminent surgeon" the stoat,
 Who for bloodletting has a fine flair:
 And "Your Growingness" unto the shoat:
 And that wonderful climber the goat:
 Should we not say "His Eminence" there?

And "His Hoppiness" then of the flea :
 Or "Your Coziness" to the louse;
 "Her Industriousness" of the bee:
 And "Your Timorousness" to the mouse.
 And the drone should some title be given.
 Say "Doctor of Comfort" (D.C.)
 To whom the hive is like heaven,
 Until he evicted shall be.

* * * * *

Is there hope, do you think, that man yet
 Will to Nature's true dignity rise;
 And no longer vain struggle fret
 Where he ought to be quiet and wise?
 Yet God to His creature was good
 In the gift of the humour He gave.
 Which, if but the man understood,
 From what hells on the earth it might save!

"And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Can we depend on that? And will the Judge be fair? Here are some of His I AMS by which we might know something of His qualifications: —

"I am the Light of the world. I am the bread of life.
 I am the true vine. I am the good shepherd.
 I am the way, the truth, and the life.
 I am the resurrection and the life.
 Before Abraham was, I am.
 I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.
 I the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.
 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

When Paul was judged by some of his Corinthian friends, he answered by saying he was not qualified to judge himself: sitting on that bench might have been too much for him; as he might have had some remnants left of partiality to himself!

I have heard or read that behind the iron Curtain it is not uncommon for judges to be made out of youthful material. And on this side of that Curtain, after long experience of what is called "human nature," old gentlemen are very cautious; and in their view a few hundred years are neither here nor there in the canonization of a saint!

Doug is on our side of the Iron Curtain, and yet at 25 he seems well qualified, or well satisfied with his qualifications, to sit in judgment on a generation that was on its way out before he was on his way in. I would like to watch his growth in wisdom and stature in the next 50 years: but as I also am on my way out, that observation will be denied me.

I tried to explain to him when he was here last year how our decline and fall came about; but as he appeared to have made up his mind that we had been wrong from our beginnings, my testimony was not convincing. Adam fell; and David fell; and Peter fell; and Judas Iscariot fell. Some fall and rise again — as the aged Simeon said when he saw the child Jesus. Some fall and do not rise again. Judas did not rise from his fall, but Peter did, and afterwards became a mighty man of spiritual valor. The men of our spiritual acquaintance did not fall in Doug's view: how could they fall from what they had never been? Would it be right to blame Peter for the decline that was to reveal itself to the world as the Papacy? But such matters are greatly confused; and the Papacy would hardly admit itself to be the early church in the last stages of spiritual decline.

Doug accuses us of ignorance and unlearnedness. But we purposely set our faces steadfastly against religious education. We have also erred in doctrine, he says. and have not given the weighty emphasis to the part the blood should have in the teaching about our redemption. We had too much respect for the blood of the covenant to cheapen it after the manner of professional — commercial — evangelism, or of sectarian vain repetition. By that kind of repetition small-minded, (and very often) hard-hearted men cheapened holy blood, until it was in danger of losing its potency, and becoming (in the minds of those who heard it continually from the mouths of talkers) of no more efficacy than ditch water. And the same about the cross, until it was little more than a whin bush or a fence post to either the talkers or their hearers.

Was there anything wrong in learning to preach from the apostles? Would Peter have been thought unsound in doctrine about the blood when he accused his hearers of murdering the Son of God? Or Stephen an hour before being stoned to death making this declaration: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."

We were not called to be theologians nor church builders; nor were we sent out into the world to feed fuel to the base fires of any kind of sectarianism. We were called and sent to preach the kingdom of God as whole or universal men. The symbols of our serving were to be LIGHT, and SALT, and LEAVEN: that is to say Illumination, and Savour, and Influence. And we were warned that light might go out or be hid under a bushel; that salt might lose its savour; and that influence could go bad, and become what the apostle called "the leaven of malice and wickedness." And if this is what happened to us, ought not Douglas to mourn and lament with us that we gave up so much to get nothing but corruption and soul-ruin in return?

And even if all that he dug out of the graves of our 60 year history was true: would that justify the exhumation? We are told that in Jesus grace was the companion of truth. Was He hurtful to any of the tender human sensibilities of His hearers? In Him dwelt all the fulness of compassion and sympathetic feeling. He whispered forgiveness to a woman that the law-guardians were ready to stone. And at them He roared: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." He was pitiful to weakness of the flesh or of the will: but lightnings flashed and thunders rolled against religious conceit and all its prideful accompaniments.

When I saw Wm. Irvine in Palestine in 1938 and heard him expound a chapter of Isaiah on Mount Carmel: it was so weak compared with the mighty expositor of 30 years before, that my heart was moved for him: and I understood how David felt on hearing of the death of Saul: "Tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice." Then some years later on hearing of his death — a little prematurely reported, as he himself said on hearing it! — I wrote under the heading.

WILLIAM IRVINE

(after hearing that he was dead)

*It grieved me when I heard that he was dead:
And I recalled days of heart-movings, when
We heard his thunder: saw his regal head:
A king who towered above his fellow men.
No man of our time spoke with so great power;
And we had listened to him rapt, enthralled.
As time rolled on unnoticed by the hour:
And when he ceased, we back to earth were called!
The world of vain desire he made to seem
A shadow by the substance of his thought:
And in the months that we might dream
Of worlds to come in light of what he taught.*

*I walked beside him in Jerusalem:
An old man well beyond the allotted span:
But embers now remained of the hot flame
That had consumed him as a younger man.
We climbed the mount to get a Moab view,
On heartsome evenings in the month of May:
I still can hear his "saida" greetings to
The Arabs that we met upon the way.
His steps were still as light, and short, and quick
As when I met him forty years ago.
Anon he'd stop to point out with his stick
Historic landmarks in the vales below.
The final view was of his bared white head,
As with his hat he waved our moving train:
'Tis hard for me to think that he is dead:
And I shall not look on his face again.
The friends of former years had whispered "sin":
But I prefer to think God had him where
He could his heart and spirit discipline,
That he the crown of life at length might wear.
I like to dwell upon his days of power,
When we had lit our tapers at his torch:
And at his fire we warmed us by the hour,
Before it was extinguished by "the church."*

*He was a king who walked with common men:
And here we shall not see his like again.*

"Let no man glory in men" we are apostolically advised; but let us mourn over them, and repeat after David: "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" And which is better to follow Ham the naked-shame exposor, or Shem and Japheth, who refused to look, and walked backward in covering it up? And which of us, after getting glimpses of some aspects of our own shame, does not feel the need for charitable concealment? "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." And if all our righteousnesses (sic) are as filthy rags, do we not all stand in need of being clothed in a better and purer righteousness than our own?

Any day's newspaper will reveal the world's shame; and if there could be any gloating over it, who would the gloaters be but the hosts of the Powers of Darkness, come up from the Pit to accomplish the final ruin of mankind. And what a picture any day's news paints of the progress of that ruin!

*Some years ago I wrote a book under the title:
"IF OUR CIVILIZATION HAD BEEN CHRISTIAN."*

Here is a little from the early pages of it (I now notice that it was taken from something I wrote in 1946 under the title: "Church and State in the year 1946):

"I think we ought to consider that ISMS are nothing in themselves; and that all mankind are one species, subject to the same weaknesses, fears, hopes, and pre-known dissolutions. Mr. Morrison said in the House of Commons a few days ago something to the effect that we were now engaged in a war in which all nations were on the same side — the war against famine. Why then can they not all be on the same side in the greater war against the Forces of Evil, which threaten the whole race of men without discrimination? What a gesture of understanding of those Forces it would be if men were to call a Conference for the utter and absolute scrapping of all the ISMS which now divide them! We could imagine an anxious Conclave of Fallen Angels in Perdition, called together for the purpose of countering this mortal threat to the Dominion of Darkness: and Satan presiding, making some such speech as this: —

*Ye know, O mighty Hierarchs of Hell,
That our dominion over Christendom
Is not what it once was; and who can tell
To what diminishment it yet may come,
If men are suffered to reflect that they
Have long been subject to our sovereign will;
And nose — or mind — led by our subtlety,
The laws of our dark kingdom to fulfil?
They now begin to speak of brotherhood
Of all mankind; and ISMS in decay,
As mischief-makers now are understood;
and cast as filthy leper clouts away.
What do you say, Archangels of the Pit;
Do ye consider we have much to fear
From this new fire on earth — belated lit:
Is end of our dominion drawing near?*

To which wise old Beelzebub might reply: —

*Hell's Hierarchy need not be afraid:
Ye know I am reputed to have made
The host of flies that from world filth up-swarm;
Who views conversion of them with alarm?
Are they not as they were when first brought forth
To plague the living creatures of the earth?
Mankind is as it ever was; and we
Need not be deep disturbed: this that we see
Is but a passing phase; firm is our grip
Upon the human spirit; fellowship
Is only possible to special men,
Brought under special Rule and Power, as when
Christ's first disciples in His spirit came,
With hearts love-kindled to Jerusalem;
And there they had to tarry till endued*

*With power to weld them into brotherhood.
 And shall men now, without Fire from above,
 Join hearts and hands in fellowship of love?
 Men's hearts by nature are not pure nor wise:
 Their minds, like breeding places of my flies,
 Are full of filthiness: read what they write:
 Consider well the immature delight
 Of Readers, whose low aspirations rise
 No higher than a dunghill paradise;
 And then the Pit will have no need of fear
 That its dominion's end is drawing near.*

Then Satan might nod to Moloch to rise and give his views on the subject. And that high dignitary, with full assurance of faith in the unchangeability of the human heart, might express himself in this manner: —

*Ye all have heard of Belsen and Dachau:
 Of Auschwitz, and of Buchenwald; and how
 The paint of human goodness had been scratched.
 And I, as you might well believe, had watched
 With deep concern, lest I should soon behold
 A better nature than I knew of old.
 My fears were groundless: what I saw revealed,
 Had need of paint to keep it well concealed.
 No change was wrought within the hearts of men;
 They still found pleasure in their fellows' pain.
 And Torquemada's spirit still aspires
 To change men's minds by Inquisition Fires.
 We still our very ancient rule maintain
 Over the brutish souls of plotting men.
 Power still abides in our temptations.
 We Accomplish Falls by some Forbidden Tree.
 We had to change some of our former wiles;
 Revise the methods of our ancient guiles;
 Use new technique in drawing up our plan
 Of turning man against his fellowman:
 Using ambition in some strutting runt,
 To urge him unresisting to the front
 Of Enterprise Ridiculous; and make him see
 A worthy goal in some Futility.*

*Ye know our state is organised so well,
 That nought with it compares earthward of hell.
 By well-thought-out devices we had come
 Where we could cock a snook at Christendom.
 And all we needed was a madman, who
 By Intuition Daemon would pursue
 So strange a course, that all mankind would be
 Involved in ruin by his strategy.
 I whispered in his ear: "Go, Organize;
 That is the key to world power paradise.
 He needed but one telling, and anon
 Our primary advantage had been won;
 And monstrous cruelties were brought to birth,
 More horrid than had yet been seen on earth.
 And now, O Satan, I will close with this:
 Power still sits with us in the Great Abyss.*

Mammon now catches the Speaker's eye; and might make his contribution in this manner: —

*If mankind had the sense to scrap its ISMS,
 Which for long seasons have bedevilled it;*

*If Unity should follow on its SCHISMS,
 We might have apprehensions in the Pit.
 Yet do I give my well-thought-out opinion,
 That while Greed rules within the hearts of men,
 There is but little threat to our dominion;
 And Reformation will reform in vain.
 Beelzebub and Moloch had their innings
 By filth-flies and sadistic cruelty;
 They played their game, and gathered up their winnings;
 Now they can leave the Mansoul unto me.
 And if I fail to keep the wretch in order
 By making cash appeal to soullessness;
 We have our reserved angels of disorder:
 Waiting their cue to launch THE GREAT DISTRESS.*

*I view with slight the scene fast-changing
 In all the outer aspects of Man's life:
 Since Gracelessness is Goodwill fast estranging,
 In prospect of dark internecine strife.
 With Hitler and with Himmler dead, the tables
 May be upon Official Terrors turned;
 And now Misunderstanding has its Babels;
 So Peace's urgent conclaves stand adjourned.
 I mind it little that my rule is nodding
 In every land except America;
 And even there, with dollar-lust men prodding,
 I find I cannot keep respect for law.*

*My answer then to Satan's apprehensions
 That threatened Unity will Hell outmode,
 Is, that with multiplied mankind dissensions,
 We still sit pretty in our dark Abode."*

And in the light (or darkness) of all this, ought we who profess to believe in Jesus not find something better to do than contribute what we can to the building of a universal madhouse-prison? CommunISM and CapitalISM (yoked to ChurchISM), Cyprus-Makarios and Kenya-Mau Mau, Indio-China, Korea, Formosa, Malaya, Israel, Jordan-Egypt-Syria-Lebanon-Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Cashmere, Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco. Divisions and subdivisions world without end. White men trying to keep a toehold in dark men's lands. Dark men whales boking to vomit up white men Jonahs! America paying farmers NOT to grow crops. Little pigs slaughtered to keep them from growing into pork. East and West glowering at each other. Bulging barns and shrunken bellies. Power politics revolving round subterranean oil.

*Has Great Britain been a comet, with an Empire for a tail?
 Or a star of bright effulgence, whose light now begins to pale?
 See the moth make doomful circles round and round the candle flame;
 And the War, in spite of nations, pivots on Jerusalem!
 Men may talk of arms and armour, and draw plans of strategy:
 But MARCH of EVENTS compels them to fulfil the prophecy.
 To the forests of the derricks, hear their tramping. see them go!
 And SIGNIFICANT — THE PIPELINE IS NOT FAR FROM MEGIDDO?*

We need some mount of Vision, from whose summit we may see the mankind world as a whole. Most of our distresses of "this terrible twentieth century" (as Mr. Churchill called it) might be said to be due to the myopias of nationalISM, sectiosallISM, partyISM, sectarianISM, communISM, mammonISM — in league with ChurchISM, and an the other ISMS which follow in their train. Jesus desired to be known as the son of man: that is to say as a universal man. He might have called Himself the son of Abraham, or the son of David; but that would have limited Him; so as the son of man the range of His compassions, His charities, His sympathies, His judgments, and His mercies was as wide as the world. And His death at the hands of the religious and secular Powers of His time made a revelation of men's hearts beyond anything seen since the world began.

And if Sir Winston Churchill, looking out of 80-year-old eyes, can speak of our "enlightened" age as "this terrible 20th century," might we not speak of the New Testament as the most dreadful book ever written? A book that looks deeply into the hearts of men — and tells what it finds there; that deals with religious depravity: a decorated and honoured and self-assured righteousness, which Jesus described in these words: "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

A book that delves probingly into all the hidden things that without its light would go on passing for what they were not. That reveals the greatest grace united with truth and kindly righteousness ever bestowed on the sons of men. That in the severity of its teaching goes beyond all other teachings whatsoever; and regards the world's dying pains with equanimity — in the light of the glory of a world to come, as far above and beyond this one as a little child is superior to a gorilla. A book that narrows the door of life against the two best favoured orders of men in this world — the rich and the religious; and opens it wide to the unfavoured and the despised: the publicans and the harlots.

And so we might go on; but as this began as a letter, it ought to end somewhere; and so we end it with an inclusive anthem to take the place of the party ones now fast becoming obsolete:

TUNE: THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord all ye kindreds of earth;
Lift your voices with joy in the great congregation;
For Creation has come to its promised New Birth,
Which the prophets foresaw as its grand consummation.
The Dark Powers that held all the nations in thrall,
From their thrones of vain glory like Lucifer fall;
And the knowledge of God o'er the cleansed earth shall be
Like the waters that cover the deeps of the sea.*

*Now rejoice in the Lord, who makes base wars to cease:
And breaks evil arms of tyrannic oppressors.
So that Justice and Truth dwell with Freedom and Peace:
And the meek of the earth are become its possessors.
But the men who served Mammon, and Moloch, and Mars:
With all the provokers of unrighteous wars,
By God's wrath to the pit that they digged are downhurled.
Who for power, wealth, and glory corrupted the world.*

*Call to mind what was writ of the oneness of blood:
And that God set the bounds for mankind's habitations,
That in fulness of time they might learn brotherhood:
And no longer divide into sects, clans, and nations.
One sun rules the day: and one moon rules the night:
And united the stars shed abroad their mild light,
So that men looking up, in their oneness might see
What was in the mind of God for their own unity.*

*Let faint hearts bound with joy, that the spirit of fear,
By return of Goodwill, from the world has been driven:
And the Kingdom of God once again has drawn near,
That His will may be done on the earth as in heaven.
And base passions shall flee like dark shadows away,
When the Righteous Sun shines on the long-promised Day:
And the lamb by the side of the lion shall rest,
As the serpent, transformed, by a child is caressed.*

*To the mountain of God all the nations shall flow:
And the vain lusts of men that the former world blighted,
In the way of the out-moded jungle shall go,
When old wrongs by the spirit of judgment are righted.
Praise the Lord ! Praise the Lord ! Let all peoples rejoice,
And on earth with the throng round the Throne blend the voice.
Till the Pit has re-echoed the jubilant strains —
ALLELUIA! THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNS*

And what could be ended on a better note than that?

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