Your Eyesight

AN OUTLINE OF THE BATES METHOD OF TREATMENT WITHOUT GLASSES

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Are you one of those bespectacled millions whose lives have been made miserable by the wearing of glasses? If you are, you may be delighted to know that there are 99 chances to one that you can throw your glasses away, and see perfectly well without them. Your eyes can be made normal and your eyesight perfect.

This may seem almost too good to be true. But it is a fact, nevertheless. It has been demonstrated in hundreds and thousands of cases, and today this method is becoming more and more widely known and recognized. It is a simple treatment, moreover, which cannot possibly do any harm and which in nearly all cases produces much good—curing errors of vision and many other eye troubles.

This method was devised many years ago by William H. Bates, M.D., of New York—an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. . . . I knew Doctor Bates well personally, and believe that I was the first to call attention to his system, in an article which I published more than 30 years ago, in the old Physical Culture magazine.

As a baby, I had been allowed to fall on my face on the cement floor of the scullery, with the result that, when I grew up, bits of bone projected into my nose, eventually causing trouble. Doctor Bates operated on my nose for me, removing these bits of jagged bone. The operations were about two weeks apart; he worked for 2½ hours on one side, and about two hours on the other. There was no pain and no blood. Throughout the operation I was talking with Doctor Bates on various topics. He had invented the mixture of adrenalin and cocaine—now widely used—which not only prevented bleeding and inhibited pain, but also enlarged the passages, so that more "room" was provided and a clearer vision could be obtained of the inner cavities. These operations were marvelously successful, and I have had no trouble of any sort since.

Dr. Bates will be remembered by posterity, however, because of his theory of specialized eye treatment, which was entirely original and revolutionary. For years he accepted the orthodox teachings, and prescribed glasses for his patients, like any other physician. Gradually, however, he began to doubt the validity of these ideas; awkward facts kept cropping up which seemed to be in direct opposition to them, and which called for some other explanation. Was it possible that the whole Helmholtz theory was wrong? It seemed incredible, and yet facts are stubborn things. As a skilled surgeon, he knew the anatomy of the human eye well; but what about its physiology—its functioning? Had this been interpreted aright? Was the lens in the eye the sole factor in accommodation? Was it a factor at all? Were some other causal influences at work, and if so what were they? To understand all this we must begin, as he did, with a survey of—

THE ANATOMY OF THE HUMAN EYE

Our eyes, "the windows of the soul," are perhaps our most priceless possessions. Our entire mental life is to a large extent built up from
visual stimuli, and even our dreams are approximately 90 percent visual. Through our eyes, we seem to contact the outer world direct, and perceive the characteristics and even the emotions of others. Fragile and delicate, they are nevertheless well protected and remarkably tough and resilient. Perfect sight depends primarily upon the perfect functioning of our eyes.

The eyeball is normally spherical in shape, and has three membranes, or coats, and three humors. The external coat is a thin, tough membrane, which maintains the form of the ball; the sclerotic, as it is called, forms what is known as “the white of the eye,” and includes the anterior four-fifths of the outer coat. The other one-fifth is the cornea, a transparent disc jointed to the sclerotic much as a watch-glass is set in its case. It can be plainly seen by looking at the eye sideways.

The next coat is called the choroid, lying against the inner surface of the sclerotic. It is composed of a network of blood vessels, and is lined with a layer of pigment cells. The iris, forming a thin curtain behind the cornea, gives the eye its special color. (Practically all babies are born with blue eyes, the color changing afterwards.)

The pupil is in the center of the iris, and appears black. In reality it is perfectly clear and transparent. Through it the rays of light coming from any object must pass. The pupil contracts or expands under the influence of light—and also under the influence of certain drugs. At the juncture of the iris and choroid is the ciliary muscle, which influences the shape of the lens—causing it to become more concave or convex, as the case may be, according to the degree of “pull” this muscle exercises. It is this change in the shape of the lens which is generally held to be the cause of the accommodation of the eye, enabling it to see near-by or distant objects. This is the so-called Helmholtz theory, and is the basis of the science of ophthalmology today. It is this fundamental theory (and the treatment based upon it) that Dr. Bates combats and refutes.

The retina, at the rear of the eyeball, is enormously complicated, being composed of millions upon millions of cells. Upon it the light-rays are focused. Although less than one-hundredth of an inch thick, at least 10 different layers have been found within it. Issuing from the rear of the eyeball is the optic nerve, which passes to the sight centers at the rear of the brain. It is in these centers that we have the sensation of “seeing.”

The three humors in the eye are the aqueous, the crystalline and the vitreous. The latter fills the bulk of the eyeball, and is colorless and transparent. It somewhat resembles an attenuated jelly, being sufficiently solid to maintain the shape of the eye, while at the same time yielding readily under pressure. The crystalline humor, or lens, is firmer, and shaped somewhat like an ordinary magnifying glass. The aqueous humor is almost like water, and is contained in the space between the cornea and lens. The orbit is the dense bony cavity in which the eye is set.

Normally, the eye is kept moistened and lubricated by constant blinking. The “tear glands” are situated just above the outer angle of the eye, and a number of small ducts carry the tears, when secreted, to the eye itself.

Light rays striking any object are either reflected or refracted. In an ordinary mirror they are reflected. But when these light rays pass through a medium of unequal density they are refracted—that is, bent. An every-day illustration of this is obtained by throwing a coin into a tumbler of water. The eye then sees the coin in one place while it is really in another, due to the fact that the density of the water is different from that of the air, and hence “bends” the light rays. Or a pencil may be thrust into a glass of water, and the pencil will appear to be
bent, for the same reason. In all these cases the light rays have been refracted.

A plain, flat sheet of glass will bend all light rays which pass through it at the same angle. They are neither diverged (scattered) nor brought to a point (converged). With a double concave glass, the rays are scattered or diverged. When, however, a double convex glass is used, they are brought together to a focus. This is the principle of the ordinary magnifying glass; and the lens of the eye is shaped in the same way. By this means the incoming light rays are focussed upon a "screen." This screen is the retina at the back of the eyeball.

If the eyeball were absolutely rigid, this would always occur. The light rays would invariably be focussed upon the retina, and sight would be perfect. But such is not the case. The eyeball is squeezed out of its normal, spherical condition by the action of certain muscles along the sides and at the rear of the eyeball. When this occurs, the eye becomes slightly egg-shaped, instead of round. What happens then? The light rays are focussed, not upon the retina, but slightly behind or in front of it. If the egg-shaped eye is standing on end, so to say, the rays are focussed behind the retina. If the egg-shaped eye is lying on its side, the rays are focussed in front of the retina. In neither case is normal vision possible. The light rays must be focussed directly upon the retina in order for us to "see" properly.

Inasmuch as these changes in the shape of the eyeball are constantly going on, how is it that we are enabled to see clearly and consistently at all—particularly since the focus of the eyes is constantly shifting also, as we look at near-by and distant objects? The answer is that the eye adjusts or accommodates itself to these changes, as they occur; this change of focus is known as "accommodation."

How is this brought about? The answer given in all text-books on the subject, based on the Helmholtz theory, is that the shape of the lens is altered, so as to bend the light rays and cause them to focus upon the retina. If the lens is forced into a slightly thinner and more elongated shape, we have a far-sighted eye, while if it is forced into a shorter and fatter one, we have a near-sighted eye. This change in the shape of the lens is brought about by the ciliary muscle, which exerts pressure upon the lens to force these changes, and hence insure accommodation.

But this was not always enough. When the functioning of the eye became distinctly abnormal, for any reason, then the light rays were not sufficiently bent or focussed upon the retina. To help the eyes in doing this, glasses were prescribed. The lenses of the glasses refract the light rays to some extent before reaching the eyes, thereby lessening the strain imposed upon the lens in the eye, which would, in consequence, not have to "work so hard" to focus the rays upon the retina—thereby insuring normal vision. Glasses are supposed to relieve the strain upon the eyes, and thereby upon the whole seeing mechanism, thus insuring perfect vision and relieving headaches, etc., which frequently result in consequence of eye strain. This is the theory—seemingly conclusive and clear-cut—upon which present-day treatment of the eyes is based, and it is upon the validity of this theory that "glasses" are prescribed by all ophthalmologists and opticians.

According to the Bates system, however, this doctrine is fundamentally erroneous. Dr. Bates first began to doubt its accuracy when he found that the eyes of patients he examined were constantly changing, and that, while they were myopic (near-sighted) one moment, they might be relatively normal, or even hypermetropic (far-sighted) the next. Glasses which might be suitable for this particular patient at 4:10 o'clock might be unsuitable at 4:11. Something was wrong somewhere. He then found that these fluctuations in the eye were brought about by strain; if the patient was looking with relaxed eyes, they were normal, while if he was straining to see (unconsciously, of course) errors of re-
fraction were noted—they were no longer normal. He then reasoned that this was due to the fact that the screen on which the image was focussed (the retina) was constantly moving, backwards and forwards, and was never stationary. Glasses would only be suitable if it were stationary. The shape of the eyeball must be changing. How changing, and what causes this?

If the human eye be examined, it will be found that it is moved or operated by six muscles, one on either side, one at the top, one at the bottom, and two passing partly round the eyeball, one at the top and one at the bottom. The first four of these are called the recti muscles, and the last two the oblique muscles.

When the eye focusses for distant objects, the pull or tension of the four recti muscles is increased, and the eyeball is flattened out, making it shorter from front to back, longer from side to side. When, on the other hand, it is looking at near-by objects, the oblique muscles increase their tension, squeezing the eyeball so that it becomes deeper from front to back and shorter from side to side. In more technical terms, “myopic refraction is produced by excessive contraction of the oblique muscles; hypermetropic refraction is produced by the excessive contraction of the recti muscles. This abnormal action of the muscles is the result, in every case, of a strain or effort to see.”

Near-sightedness and far-sightedness, therefore, are produced by the action of these muscles. They squeeze the ball out of shape, causing it to be egg-shaped, in consequence of which the image is focussed not upon the retina, but either in front of or behind it. Strain causes these muscles to contract, producing this condition. As soon as the strain is relaxed, the tension ceases and the eyeball immediately becomes spherical again, resulting in normal vision. The whole secret of perfect vision consists in looking without strain—that is, with relaxed muscles. Just how this may be done will be explained presently.

Glasses focus the incoming light rays upon the retina, it is true, but upon the retina when the eyeball is in an abnormal position. That is, they tend to keep the ball in this condition all the time, instead of allowing it to relax. They are, therefore, detrimental to the eyes in nearly all cases, making them weaker and more and more dependent upon glasses. That this is so is shown by the fact that, as we grow older, stronger and stronger glases have to be used. Instead of relieving strain, they maintain the eye in a state of constant strain. The obvious thing to do is to discard the glasses and train the eyes so that they can see perfectly when relaxed. That is precisely what the Bates system does.

**THE BASIS OF THE THEORY**

The theory upon which this system is based is therefore quite contrary to that generally accepted, but is based upon a series of undisputed anatomical facts. It is generally held that the accommodation of the eye is due to changes in the shape of the lens, acted upon by the ciliary muscle, which controls it. Dr. Bates showed that this was entirely untrue. He completely removed the lenses from the eyes of various specimens—fishes, rabbits, etc., and showed that accommodation took place just the same. It must be due to another cause entirely. What is that cause?

The normal eyeball is perfectly round. As long as this condition prevails, normal sight is assured. But if we strain to see—either some distant object, or one close by—the eyeball is pulled out of its normal spherical shape, and becomes egg-shaped instead. This change in the shape of the ball, due to tension, produces eye strain. Vision then be-
comes imperfect. We strive to see and can't. (This can be observed in near-sighted people, who screw up the face, in an effort to perceive the object clearly.) We strain the eyes still more. But the more we strain the less we see, and the less we see the more we strain. We are in a vicious circle, which must somehow be broken.

Now, we can't control these involuntary muscles consciously. That is what the subject who strains tries to do, and, of course, unsuccessfully. They must be controlled unconsciously. And the way to do this is to look at the object without straining, and as soon as this is done the eyeball assumes its normal (round) shape, and the vision at once becomes perfect.

How can we look without straining? By looking with relaxed eyes. How can we do that? First, by looking without staring (letting the eyes see, as it were), and second by the practice of central fixation—which will be explained immediately. These are the primary essentials.

It will be seen that the fundamental difference between the Bates system and that generally accepted lies in this factor: that, whereas the ordinary treatment consists in mechanical helps, the Bates method relies upon physiological adjustment. What glasses do is to converge the light rays upon the retina of the abnormally shaped eyeball—thus keeping it in that abnormal condition. They act, in short, as "crutches." But they are even worse than crutches, for these are discarded when the leg heals again, whereas glasses only make matters worse by keeping the eye in a continually strained condition—with the result that stronger and stronger glasses are needed, as we grow older. The ability of the eye to accommodate itself properly has gradually been lost.

Glasses thus constitute one of the greatest curses of our civilization, and to see children wearing glasses is more than pathetic; it is criminal. Children's eyes can easily be trained to have perfect vision—whereas the wearing of glasses will ruin their eyes for life.

Glasses are prescribed because of the generally-held view that the lens is responsible for accommodation, and glasses are supposed to rectify that condition. But inasmuch as the lens is not responsible—but the shape of the eyeball—the fallacy of glasses at once becomes obvious.

Far-sightedness (hyperopia) and near-sightedness (myopia) are thus functional in character, rather than organic. These conditions are not due to any anatomical defect in the eye—as generally supposed—but are brought about at the moment of looking, because of strain. Relieve the strain and the eyeball at once becomes spherical in shape and vision is perfect. We can, for the time being, see clearly, without glasses. These views of Dr. Bates have been proved correct in thousands upon thousands of cases—which have been treated by these means—by the many practitioners who are following the "Bates system."

I well remember the first time I called upon Dr. Bates in his office. I was at the time near-sighted. He examined my eyes, while I was looking at the Snellen test card. "You're not short-sighted," he remarked. "But I am," I replied; "I can't read the lower letters on the card!" "Well," he said, "we'll see!" He then told me how to look at the card, how to use my eyes—how to relax them. Within 15 minutes I was reading the small letters on the test card perfectly. Bear in mind that nothing had been done except talk to me—give me instructions as to how to look at the card. Yet for the time being my vision was perfect.

As we have seen, imperfect vision is produced by eye-strain. Suppose you are looking at an object held in your hand. You see it perfectly. Now suppose you move that object to the other side of the room. When looking at it, you now (unconsciously) make an effort to see it as clearly as you did when it was close at hand. This effort produces eye-strain. The muscles at the rear of the eyeball pull the eye out of shape, and the object becomes blurred. You strain your eyes still more, in an effort to see the object. More strain results. The harder you try the less you see. Only by relaxation will you be enabled to see the object clearly.
So now we come to methods: how to see with relaxed muscles and unstrained eyes.

Suppose you are looking at a Rembrandt painting; one highlight on the picture catches your attention and you look at it—letting the rest of the painting partially fade from your vision. You see one spot in the picture better than the rest. This is known as "central fixation," and is one of the fundamental principles of the Bates system. If you are looking at the printed page of a book, you see the whole page, more or less, but some words more clearly than others. You must train yourself to see only one word, allowing the words on either side of it to fade into relatively dim obscurity. Then see one letter of that word—better than the letters on either side. Then look at a period, and see only that. In other words, you must focus your attention on a small area. When you do this, "central fixation" has been attained, and your eyes are for the moment relaxed and normal.

The principle of central fixation is of fundamental importance. Other factors are, however, important also. One of these is "blinking"—i.e., the frequent lowering of the upper eyelid, keeping the eye moist and well lubricated. When we stare we don't blink. See to it that you blink constantly, when reading or using the eyes in any capacity.

Another important factor is "shifting," looking from one object to another frequently; from a near-by object to a more distant one, and vice versa. This relieves tension and strain in the eye, thereby insuring more normal vision.

One good "shifting" exercise is to look at one word on the printed page, then at the next word, then back again—making sure that this shift is voluntary. Don't just let your eyes wander over the printed page. Practice "central fixation" on each word, but shift from one word to another. This will be found to rest and strengthen the eyes, and prevent strain.

One common delusion is that strong light is bad for the eyes, and we see people going about wearing sun-glasses, to protect their eyes from the sun. As a matter of fact, the stronger the light the better. The eyes are made to stand strong light, and it is a well known fact that birds—who live in sunlight all day long—have exceptionally keen vision, whereas deep-sea fish—and donkeys that work in coal mines all their lives—gradually become blind. Give your eyes all the light possible—both sunlight and artificial. This will serve to strengthen your eyes—not weaken them. Accustom your eyes to all the light they can get. Try this: Close the eyelids and look up at the sun. Then look away; open the eyes and look at some spot in the heavens. Close the eyes for a moment, then open them and look at a point a little nearer the sun. Do this several times. Never look at the sun, but look a little nearer to it every time you open your eyes. They should be opened only for a flash; then closed again. This will serve to strengthen the eyes and improve the vision.

"Swaying" is another valuable exercise. Procure, if possible, a Snellen test card—one of those on which are printed letters of different sizes. Attach this to the wall. Stand facing the card at a distance of about 15 feet. See if you can read the top lines (without glasses). Blink frequently while doing so. Pass to the next lower line. Now, while looking at this, sway the whole body slightly, first to the right, then to the left. Do not move the head or neck, but sway from the ankles. Resume the mid-position, between each shift. Keep this up for about five minutes.

What Dr. Bates called "the long sway" is useful. . . . Stand upright. Now rotate the whole body to the right, until it is approximately at right angles to your original position. The heel of the left foot should be lifted from the floor while doing so, keeping only the toes in contact with it. Then return to your original position. Next, swing to the left, raising the right heel. . . . These swings should be made slowly. While doing so, do not turn the head, but keep it facing the front of the body. Do not focus
the eyes on anything in particular during these swings; allow the gaze to sweep the room naturally. Keep this up for several minutes, morning and evening. This is useful in practically all forms of eye trouble. Simple eye-strain may be greatly relieved by these measures.

In near-sightedness the eyes should be trained on near objects; then rested by looking off at a greater distance. In far-sightedness, the reverse should be practiced. . . . One good exercise for near-sighted people is to read a printed page upside down. This makes the eyes focus on a small point or area, thus assuring “central fixation.” Train the eyes to read at a distance of about 14 inches. Be sure to blink frequently while doing so.

Nearly everyone tends to become more far-sighted as he grows older. Because of this, glasses are often changed, as the years pass. But this can be prevented if this system is followed—since glasses are done away with altogether, in practically all cases. With the restoration of normal vision, they are not required.

*Astigmatism* is a condition in which the two eyes do not focus or function alike; one is different from the other. Here, more than for any other eye defect, glasses are prescribed, in order to “correct” the vision, and make both eyes “see” alike . . . You will doubtless be assured by your oculist that the wearing of glasses is absolutely essential, in this condition, and that it cannot be helped or remedied without them. Yet it can be remedied with comparative ease by the Bates method—and both eyes made to focus and “see” absolutely alike.

Astigmatism is not due to some anatomical defect—as generally contended—but is purely functional in character; that is, it is due to unequal strain of the eyes. It is brought about in the act of looking. Many of those who fit glasses have doubtless been puzzled by the fact that examinations of the eyes, on different days, produced conflicting results; that, even after a few moments’ rest, the eyes showed different “errors.” This is because the strain on the eyes varies from moment to moment, and is obviously functional for that reason.

Astigmatism may be either far-sighted or near-sighted—the former usually being the more troublesome. Like all other refractive troubles, it is due to strain; the muscles pull the eyeball into different elongated shapes—as before explained.*

To relieve the strain involved, two further practices will be found helpful. The first of these is known as “palming.” The palms of the hands should be “cupped” over the eyes, with the fingers resting on the forehead, and crossing one another. The eyes should be lightly closed, and the hands held so that they do not touch or press on the eyes. This shuts off all light and rests the eyes.

Coupled with this exercise is that of visualizing black. If the eyes are in a state of strain, it will be found that the field of vision is grayish or light-golden in color, as a rule—instead of dead black. An effort should be made to “see black” as completely as possible. One good exercise for this is to imagine a black curtain stretching in all directions; there are folds in the curtain, casting shadows; these shadows are blacker than the rest of the curtain. Try to get this background as black as possible—without straining to do so. If you can visualize a dead black, your nervous system is relaxed and, for the time being, your eyes are normal. (Of course, as soon as you open them, you may begin to strain again; this can only be prevented by training the eyes constantly in this method until normal sight is restored.)

*Strabismus* is the technical name for what is generally referred to as ‘cross-eyes.” In such cases, as we all know, the two eyes do not func-

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*In this condition, as in practically all others in which the eyes are involved, care must be taken of the general health; plenty of rest and sleep are essential; while emotional shocks and worries must be avoided as far as possible. Care should be taken of the diet—while alcohol, coffee and tobacco must be cut down to a minimum. Proper use of the eyes is necessary.*
tion together; they are not directed at the same point at the same time. One eye may be straight, while the other is turned either inwards or outwards. The two eyes really produce two visions of the object, but these are normally welded together into one, in the mind, by a process known as "fusion." How this is accomplished is still largely a mystery.

In babies or young children cross-eyes need cause no particular concern, since they are learning to use the muscles of the eyes, and to coordinate them properly. But if this condition is noted in later life, it calls for treatment, since it not only impairs the vision, but is an ugly disfigurement as well.

The usual treatment calls for an operation, or for the wearing of glasses, or putting "drops" in the eyes—or all these combined. According to the Bates method, cross-eyes may be treated by training the muscles of the eyes properly, so as to force them to work in unison; and when this has been accomplished, the eyes become normal and perfect sight is restored.

Strabismus, like nearly all defects of vision, is produced by unequal strain of the muscles surrounding the eyeball, which pull it out of shape—or, in this case, to one side or the other. In curing this trouble, our object should be to equalize the strain, so that the "pulls" are equalized in both sets of muscles. As soon as this is accomplished, the eye becomes straightened out and the sight again normal.

In treating this condition, by the Bates method, the "fixing" (normal) eye is covered with an eye-patch, while the other eye is trained to exercise its muscles and "see" properly. The exercises given for the relief of far-sightedness should be practiced, together with the other devices, such as Blinking, palming, the long swing, central fixation, etc. In addition, a special instrument known as the "eyescope" has been devised, by means of which two images are fused into one, much as they are in the old stereoscope. Glasses should be discarded, and these exercises carefully followed. Cross-eyes may be benefited, and in most cases cured, by following these methods. (It should be emphasized, however, that in these more serious eye disorders, an expert in this method of treatment should be consulted and his advice carefully followed. This, and the eye troubles about to be mentioned, need the attention of a specialist in this field. All that I can hope to do here is to give a resume of the general principles underlying this method of treatment—which may be safely followed in all minor eye defects, such as near-sightedness, far-sightedness, etc.)

Cataract is much dreaded, and the all-but-universal method of treatment is to operate—this being thought to be the only method of cure. Contrary to general belief, however, cataract is not a "growth" on the eye—that can be removed like some foreign body—but is a condition of the crystalline lens, which becomes opaque, preventing the light rays from passing through to the retina. This lens is made up of a series of plates or layers, like the layers of an onion. Normally these layers are separated from one another by lymph-fluid, which keeps them moist and flexible. When the eye is strained for long periods of time, the lens is compressed, and this pressure forces out the fluid, causing the lens to become dry and hard. As this hardening process continues, the layers tend to separate, causing irregularities, which in turn render the lens opaque. The patient can no longer see clearly, and suffers from cataract. But this condition has been brought about, as we have seen, by long-continued eye-strain. This is the real cause of this serious condition.

Inasmuch as this is the case, the method of treatment—according to the Bates system herein outlined—is to reduce the strain and tension on the eyes. This lessens the pressure on the crystalline lens, so that the lymph-fluid can once more flow between the layers, lubricating and softening them. The process of separation is thus arrested, and the progress of the cataract prevented.
It should be emphasized, however, that while the progress of the cataract may be prevented in this way, the damage which has already been done is not thereby corrected. Once these layers have become dried and separated, it is difficult for them to repair themselves, and perfect vision can no longer be expected. However, the progress of the disease can be prevented and ultimate blindness averted. This surely should greatly encourage all sufferers from this affliction.

The treatment, then, according to the Bates system, consists in restoring the eyes, coupled with other subsidiary measures. Inasmuch as cataract results from strain, the need of rest should be apparent. This may be obtained most effectually by means of "palming," that is, cupping the palms of the hands over the eyes, and visualizing black. (Or pleasant scenes of earlier life may be recalled.) This should be practiced several times daily.

Frequent blinking, central fixation, the long swing, exercising the eyes by means of the Snellen test card, shifting, etc., should all be practiced. Glasses should be discarded and operations avoided until this system has been given a fair trial. The expert advice of one familiar with this method should be sought. This is a serious condition and requires months of treatment in order to derive any benefit. However, that is a small matter to any sufferer from cataract.

Glaucoma is a much-dreaded condition, in which the pressure of the fluids in the eyes increases to such an extent that normal accommodation and vision become impossible. Tension on the eyeball is apparent, and intense pain is experienced—causing it to be greatly feared. Glasses are useless in this condition, and an operation is usually undertaken, to relieve the internal fluidic pressure. This it does—but often at great cost. If the pressure within the eyeball is allowed to continue, the retina at the back of the eyeball degenerates, and permanent blindness results.

The fluid within the eye is constantly being secreted and drained away. If these minute openings are blocked, the fluid cannot escape and glaucoma results. The object, therefore, is to restore this fluidic balance. It is now known that eye-strain will induce this tension and unbalance, while proper relaxation of the eyes will rectify it.

The treatment of glaucoma, therefore—according to the Bates method—is essentially the same as that for cataract. Inasmuch as this is a severe and painful condition, however, the expert advice of a physician familiar with this method should be sought without delay... A folded towel, dipped in hot water, may be placed over the eyes, to relieve the immediate pain and assist the lymphatic drainage. The eyes should not be strained or used for long periods of time.

The exercises given above, for the relief of cataract, should be followed—especially the "long swing," which is most important. This should be followed for half an hour or longer, just before retiring. Sufferers from glaucoma often stare (strain the eyes) even when they are asleep, and this exercise will help prevent that condition. The eyes should feel refreshed and invigorated, on awakening in the morning, and if they are not, treatment along these lines should be begun. It is essential, however, that an expert be consulted, as soon as the slightest signs of glaucoma are noted—or even suspected.

It is a matter of common knowledge that headaches are frequently due to eye-strain, and the usual procedure is to prescribe glasses, intended to correct this strain. Certainly these frequently bring relief; but the objections to using glasses have already been given, and these are as applicable here as elsewhere. . . . Glasses are "crutches," which alleviate symptoms without removing the actual causes which are responsible for the condition. They are merely palliative. Hence, instead of wearing glasses, the eyes should be trained to see without strain, and as soon as this is done, the eyesight is normal, and the headaches will disappear. The methods already given will invariably relieve and prevent such headaches from occurring.
TROUBLE IN READING

You probably know the story of the old lady who, while holding the newspaper out at arm's length, remarked, "They don't print the papers as they used to when I was girl!" Of course, there is a tendency for everyone to become more far-sighted as they grow older, so that reading matter is held at a greater distance from the eyes. But many younger people experience difficulty in reading, and their first tendency is to rush off and buy a pair of glasses. We even see children wearing them—which is little less than a crime. All such eyes can be trained to see perfectly without glasses by learning to relax the eyes and following the exercises given in this little book. No harm can possibly come to them, and immediate benefit will be noted in every case.

Difficulty in reading is, of course, due to imperfect vision, and this is due to eye-strain. Contrary to the generally accepted ideas, Dr. Bates trained his pupils to read microscopically small print—thereby insuring central fixation. The general procedure was as follows: He would instruct his patient to close the eyelids and look up at the sun for a few seconds. Then they were instructed to cover the eyes with the hands and visualize black. Then look at the sun again (with closed eyelids) and again "palm," and so on alternately several times running. Then they were told to open the eyes and look at the page of microscopic print, held at arm's length—in bright sunlight. They were told not to look at the type, but at the tiny white lines between the lines of print. Try to see these lines clearly, paying no attention to the print. Then repeat the above procedure and again look at the page. This time the eyes will see the white spaces more clearly. The eyes have become more relaxed. Do this three or four times, moving the page a little nearer the eyes each time.

After about four trials, take an ordinary well printed book. Hold it at normal reading distance from the eyes and this time look at the print. It will be found to stand out fairly clearly and distinctly. It can usually be read with relative ease. If not, repeat the exercises later in the day or the following day, using the same procedure. After a few days of this, the eyes will become relaxed and the printed page can be read.

It is, of course, necessary, in following this system, to obey instructions and take the necessary exercises every day. It is foolish to expect improvement if this is not done—just as foolish as it would be for an athlete to take a few exercises once every week or so, and expect to remain in perfect training. The instructions must be followed systematically and regularly. If this is done, the eyesight will be found to improve proportionately, and within a few days definite progress will be noted. As soon as this improvement is felt, the patient will doubtless be sufficiently encouraged to continue the exercises of his own volition. The gaining of perfect eyesight is indeed well worth striving for.

EYE STRAIN AND MEMORY

One of Dr. Bates' most remarkable discoveries was the connection between mind and vision, and particularly between memory and vision. Seeing is a mental thing. We do not see with the eyes, but through the
eyes. They are not mechanical, like a camera; they are more than this. Suppose you are looking at an object; you see it right side up—not inverted, as it is in a camera. Turn your head to one side, and you see it right side up. Stand on your head, and the same thing occurs. The position of the object does not change. In reality we always see two objects, but these are fused in the mind, and we see only one. We see with the mind, and not with the eyes.

Again, the normal memory is good—not perfect but nearly so. If it is extremely defective, something is wrong. Dr. Bates showed that there is a definite connection between memory and eye-strain. As soon as this strain is removed, the lost memories return. If there is no eye-strain, the mind is at rest; and when this is the case the memory becomes clear. There is thus a definite connection between the eyes, the brain and the memory. Relaxation of one will affect the others. Relieve the eye-strain, and the mind and memory become normal.

The simplest way to do this, according to Dr. Bates, is to visualize black. Cover the eyes with the hands so as to exclude all light (“palm ing”). Then imagine, or visualize, black. If a real black can be obtained, the nervous system (and the mind) are at rest . . . Furthermore, pain can be, to a great extent, relieved by these means. Pain is made more intense by resistance, by tension. Relax, and the pain diminishes and tends to disappear. This relaxation can be obtained by closing the eyes and visualizing black. Try it and see for yourself.

* * *

Briefly summarized, therefore, it may be said that the Bates method is based on the fundamental premise that eye-strain is the root-cause of nearly all errors of vision and other eye troubles. This strain is brought about by improper methods of using the eyes—straining them instead of looking with relaxed muscles. This strain causes deformities in the shape of the eyeball, squeezing it out of its normal shape, thereby causing near-sightedness, far-sightedness, and even more serious disorders. These muscles cannot be controlled voluntarily, but function normally when the eye is relaxed. This relaxation, in turn, is rendered possible by the proper use of the eyes; and this is insured by means of central fixation, blinking, swaying, palming, and all the other exercises given . . . By following these directions, the eyes can be rendered normal and healthy, and perfect vision restored . . . In short, you will be enabled, in very truth, to "take off those glasses!"

(Note: Anyone suffering from eye trouble should read some of the excellent books now on the market, dealing with this method of treatment. Chief among these are the following: W. H. Bates, "Perfect Sight Without Glasses"; Margaret D. Corbett, "How to Improve Your Eyes"; Dr. Harold M. Peppard, "Perfect Sight Without Glasses"; Aldous Huxley, "The Art of Seeing," etc. The importance of consulting a specialist in this method of treatment, whenever any form of eye trouble develops, is again emphasized.)

**SUMMARY OF ESSENTIALS—BATES SYSTEM**

**GENERAL**

Central fixation.
Looking with relaxed eyes.
Constant blinking.
Shifting.
The long swing.
Reading small print.
Plenty of light; sunning the eyes.
Palming.
Shifting the focus.

SPECIAL TREATMENT

Differing eye troubles require individual treatment.

ADDITIONAL HELPS

Care of the diet.
Plenty of exercise.
Deep breathing.
Relaxation.
Bathing the eyes.
Plenty of rest and sleep.
Freedom from harmful emotions.
Use your eyes.
Take off those glasses!
NOTES AND COMMENTS

By E. Haldeman-Julius

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ARE MEN TURNING TO "GOD"?

By Victor S. Yarros

Paul Hutchinson, managing editor of The Christian Century, an able undenominational journal of religion, recently returned from a round-the-world assignment for Life on the status of religion abroad. He traveled throughout Europe, the Middle East, India, China and Japan. His reports in Life and in The Christian Century have been attracting considerable attention. They certainly deserve study and candid reflection.

Mr. Hutchinson is satisfied that men everywhere are turning to God, and that there is a rebirth of religion—of all major religions, as well as of ethical creeds based on religion instead of secular and materialistic science. He is pleased and encouraged by these signs and developments. In economics and politics, he is an advanced liberal, indeed a radical. He is aware of the bankruptcy of Capitalism and the laissez-faire philosophy of our reactionary industrialists and their few professional defenders. He knows that Collectivism is coming. He demands for American labor active participation in management and other major reforms. He points out that the so-called Christian Socialists of Europe are politically strong today because of their espousal of economic radicalism.

But he is convinced that the new order will acknowledge God and the moral order in the cosmos. Spiritual values will reassert themselves, and dependence on mere science and technology will be superseded by conscious dependence upon spiritual powers.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hutchinson, who can be candid—as in the emphatic admission that men are not returning to the churches—is not clear or explicit enough in telling us just what the return to God and the moral law will mean in terms of government, industrial relations, distribution of wealth, international security, the treatment of dependent peoples, colonialism and power politics.

If a return to God and the Moral law will make no real difference in human behavior—national, international, social and commercial—then why should any intelligent and earnest person report it as glad tidings? What can religion gain from it? Have we not had more than enough of lip-service, of empty professions, of unconscious hypocrisy?

Mr. Hutchinson rejoices in the alleged evidence of a spiritual renaissance, or spiritual interpretation of history. Again, we may ask, will that interpretation throw any light on the so-called ultimate problems—the meaning of life, the end of man, the prevalence of evil? Hardly. For several thousand years learned, wise, gifted, brave, truth-loving men have wrestled with these problems—in vain. They remain insolvable. Contemporary theologians and philosophers named and highly praised by Mr. Hutchinson—Maritain, Niebuhr, Toynbee, Lewis—have no significant answers to the questions put to them by Agnostics, Athe-
ists, and Rationalists. Indeed, they have lost faith in man, in reason, in
the values of our civilization, and recommend prayer, repentance, and
hope in divine grace! All of them are guilty of circular reasoning, of
assumptions resting on assumptions, on phrases which have no ideas
back of them.

No; the alleged return to God and "his" moral law spells no comfort
to the religionists. It will not disturb the sleep or the waking hours of
the Rationalists, Agnostics and Atheists, who have not despised of
man, of reason, of science, of social progress, of the method of trial-
and-error, of good sense and good will. There is, also, but little of these
virtues in millions of men, and less in our politicians, businessmen
and soldiers. But the total amount has proved sufficient, on the whole,
to admit of progress in the past, despite war, oppression and injustice,
and progress will continue. Evil has its victories, but they are not
fatal to progress. In the midst of bitter conflict, of hate and intolerance,
of cruelty and savagery, we do discern and observe evidences of genuine
progress in the arts, in industry, in diplomacy, in education.

*A BRIGHT SPOT IN THE GLOOM*

A learned sociologist, Professor Hobhouse, a man who had even less
sense of humor than sociologists usually have, summed up some of his
research by saying: "Marriage is indissoluble amongst the Andamanese,
some Papuans of New Guinea, at Watubela, at Lampong, in Sumatra,
among the Igorrotos and Italones of the Philippines and the Veddas of
Ceylon, and in the Roman Church." If you know anything about the
lower branches of the human race you will know that this is equivalent
to saying that divorce from a soured marriage is now granted everywhere
except amongst the lowest savages and in the Catholic Church. Some-
how this doesn't sound complimentary to our Catholic fellow-citizens,
but if you point out the irony of it to one he will probably ask you if you
didn't see a piece of news in the paper the other day about the Polish
Catholic General Anders. He has made application at the Vatican for a
declaration that his marriage was null from the start: that, in effect,
he never was married. There is a lady in London whose union with him
the clergy blessed 20 odd years ago. There is a 19-year-old son to testify
that they obeyed the order to increase and multiply. But ...

Not to make too long a story of it, there is a papal tribunal in
Rome which from the time when, in the Middle Ages, the church dis-
covered that it had always held that marriage is indissoluble, has been
granting release from it by these "decrees of nullity." The bride or
bridegroom has merely to swear that she or he did not really or fully
mean it in uttering the magic "I Do." I doubt if General Anders, in spite
of all the money he has received from the impoverished British nation
in the last four years, has the requisite $50,000. It may be the Vatican
will take into account his services to come—in the war on Russia. It
may even be that the Vatican has let the news go over the world be-
cause it proposes to make an heroic gesture of refusal. However, a dozen
notorious cases in the last 20 years have reminded us that it's prepared
to grant relief from marriage to the rich. As to those who are not rich
or have other uses for their money, well, conjugal fidelity has always
been rather a joke in Catholic countries.

Half the world realized 400 years ago that all this is just a lucrative
bit of clerical hocus-pocus and began to have divorce laws. But it
didn't stop the criticism and the revolt. Today we have in most coun-
tries as many grounds of divorce as Catholics had during the first 1,000
years of the Christian Era yet the acrid murmuring goes on. Several
decades ago sexologists made an inquiry and said that they found that
50 percent of marriages are failures. Now we have quizzes that give
practically the same result. Large numbers are intimidated from mar-
rying unless one of the wedding presents is the possibility of a fat
alimony for life. Large numbers seem to be mysteriously sterile when they do marry. And now the war has enormously added to the difficulties of us poor moralists. In each of the leading countries of Europe there are several millions more females than males between the ages of 18 and 35. They can’t marry, even if every marriable man were willing, which he is not. Millions of the men are blind, crippled, or nervous wrecks anyhow. What are we going to do about our Foundation of the State? Permit polygamy, as Luther proposed to do? Start government-schemes of artificial insemination on a large scale? Have big lottery-schemes? Or just tell these 30 or 40 million young women to be virtuous and miserable? Listen for the Bronx cheers.

We look hopefully to our clerical guides, and one of them, the Rev. H. Thomas, has just come out with a sensational solution. He’s the elderly vicar of Needham Market (England), and he said it plump out to his congregation. What’s more, his bishop, to whom the married women of the parish hysterically appealed, refused to bring out his bell, book and candle. The press, with well-dissembled joy, spends itself on the local fuss about it. It’s a ray of light in the general gloom. For the worthy cleric will have none of this beastly artificial insemination. It produces “robots.” (Anymhow it administers the powder without the jam). Large numbers of unmarried spinster, he says, want beautiful and happy babies. We must restrict or repeal this law of chastity. “I suggest,” the worthy priest said to a journalist who hurried down from London, “that there might be a pool of healthy men to perform the sexual act for needy spinster.” Several objections to the scheme have been advanced, generally in the religious press, but it hasn’t been suggested that a national call for volunteers would be unheeded. The work wouldn’t be as unpleasant as coal-mining, or as dull as adding up figures in a bank.

All this may be amusing, but it reminds me again what the world suffers for lack of a common-sense standard of conduct. Apart from economics all our problems come under the general heading of behavior, and we’ll never have a smooth and serviceable adjustment of it until we discard all the old conflicting standards and just consult man’s needs and interests. The old restrictions and directions have caused and are causing incalculable suffering and frequent tragedy. Moral law is social law or a myth. The individual’s wishes are restricted only by the rights of others and the welfare and progress of the community. It’s still too ascetic, too much colored by old superstitions, to suggest that the unmarried simply want children. Everybody knows that that’s a stupid denial of facts. Let’s work it all out on an undulterated humanist basis.

* * *

DON’T CARRY AWAY DIRT!

Stripping top soil from Suffolk County, New York, for use on lawns, parkways and parks in other locations is becoming intolerable according to the chairman of the Roadside Committee of the Long Island Association. Inasmuch as Chancellor Hutchins, of Chicago University, has made the point that more top soil in the United States has been lost in the last two decades than in all previous times and “another century like the last, and civilization is through,” one wonders if many countries will not soon consider carrying away dirt as reprehensible as exporting gold or currency.

* * *

GENERAL CLAY AND GERMANY’S KULAKS

How many Americans, who were once so outraged at Soviet Russia’s treatment of its kulaks, got indignant when they read in their newspapers that our Gen. Lucius D. Clay proposed to make German farmers
loosen up in regard to accumulated foodstuffs by employing troops, if necessary? German farmers are apparently just as disposed to let the urban population of their country starve as were Russia’s kulaks before they were liquidated.

Whether German farmers are themselves getting enough calories to produce more food from their land is a question, but if urban inhabitants of Germany are getting less than 1,700 calories a day, they should all go to bed and stay there in order to keep from starving, if the figures of a prominent British nutritionist in regard to the number of calories necessary have any validity. If one recalls that experiment made on husky students of the University of Minnesota, whose calories were reduced to 1,800 for a time, one should realize that it took more than 4,000 calories thereafter to put them back into condition. If children, according to that British nutritionist, need 4,000 calories, France has no cause to worry, so far as mere man-power is concerned, that German youth will soon threaten its existence. Alsace and Lorraine will hardly be again taken from France by Germany’s puny starving children of today.

* * *

**WILL BRITONS NEVER, NEVER STARVE**

If Britons never, never will be slaves, to quote “Rule Britannia,” can they never, never starve? Judging from the statement of Dr. Franklin Bicknell, noted British nutritionist, however, they are starving already, inasmuch as they are getting only 2,100 calories daily when they need 3,000. Miners who are being urged to produce more coal than ever before fall 1,000 short of their 4,500 pre-war calories, while normal, healthy children require 4,000. “As a nation we must literally perish,” declared Dr. Bicknell on May 6, 1947, “unless we can break the vicious circle of insufficient work causing insufficient food causing insufficient work.”

Of course, nations on the Continent are even worse off than Great Britain. The average inhabitant of some of those countries has been getting as little as the 1,700 calories which Dr. Bicknell deems required for a man to sleep on. Such people need only a little more time to die on than the inmate of one of Germany’s former concentration camps.

* * *

**SOUR GRAPES OR JUSTIFIED CRITICISM?**

Judging from Sumner Welles, about everything “Jimmy” Brynes did while Secretary of State was wrong, and making Braden our envoy to the Argentine alienated South America. Some will say that, “Where Are We Heading?”, the last book of a former Assistant Secretary of State, who couldn’t stomach some of the policies of our State Department which Secretary Hull condoned, is just a literary compilation of sour grapes; others that Welles is well out of a mess which the contradictory maneuvers of our diplomacy seem to have gotten this country into.

Nevertheless Sumner Welles makes some pertinent observations. For instance: “We stand confused and uncertain at the threshold of a new era. At the close of the greatest revolution which the world has known we have yet no sign of what the future holds,” although “man has now within his hands the means of destroying all life on this planet.” And again: “The insane delusion that democracy and Communism cannot simultaneously exist in the world is rampant stupidity. Stupidity, reaction and timidity dominate the councils of the nations.” And still again, “the meeting in September, 1945, of the Council of Foreign Ministers was one of the most disastrous international conferences of modern times.”

Referring to that last observation, one may add that Brynes got
just as much out of that 1945 conference as General Marshall received at
Moscow recently after President Truman resolved to get tough.

BILLIONS FOR WORLD RE-HABILITATION

Dr. Leo Slizard, atomic-bomb physicist, managed to get the problem of
utilizing nuclear fission in war considered by President Roosevelt. Will
Congress be just as receptive to Slizard’s idea of having nations all
contribute 10 percent of their national incomes toward world reha-
bitation? Fancy the reaction of Congress to the proposition of giving
$5,000,000,000 to Soviet Russia toward restoring the industry of that
country destroyed by the Germans! Wouldn’t the hooey of our Com-
munism-fearing lawmakers be heard around the world? The yowl set
up by taxpayers at the idea of spending twice as much on education
as we do now, or 3 percent of our national income compared with the
Soviet’s 7 percent, wouldn’t be a circumstance to the indignation of
congressmen who have been cursing Henry A. Wallace for milder sug-
gestions of the same character. Hysteria, which is fearful of one Com-

“THE HUNGER IS WORSE THAN THE COLD”

Would American workers enjoying 3,500 or 4,000 calorie diets stop
work if they were reduced to 1,000? Diets in the Ruhr have fallen nearly
as low as that, according to Anne O’Hare McCormick, in The New York
Times, of May 10th. Whether or not that distinguished lady journalist
qualifies as a glorified “sob sister,” her poignant quotation from a state-
ment of Dr. Avelheid Wawerka, who is in charge of child clinics in
Vienna, should move the heart of a stone. “The hunger,” says Dr.
Wawerka, “is worse than the cold. You can find something else to put
over your shoulders or wrap around your feet. Or you can go to bed
and stay there. You can wait the cold out, for there is a beginning and
end of cold, but there is no end to hunger.”

WHAT THE WORLD WANTS

A few people who pick up a copy of The Freeman here or there
write to tell me that it’s superficial, undignified, not constructive, too
light-hearted, or too depressing. Such letters have exactly the opposite
effect of what the writers imagine that they may have. They confirm
the policy of the paper. I want to sting people, but with a light heart.
I want to tell the truth, but not in what’s called dignified language,
which generally means vague platitudes. I try to make people who
profit by untruth or injustice demand that I be boiled in oil and the
people who suffer from their untruth or injustice want to boil them
in oil. So, to begin with, I reply shortly to the question that everybody
is asking, what does this sick world want: A good kick in the pants.

How many of us genuinely want to know what’s wrong with the
world and what medicine it needs? There are men and women who
reply: why, everybody, of course. If you reflect on the matter you
begin to see that the great majority of the people who are comfortable
are not interested in such questions. But there is an easier test. By
1943 a great-cloud hung over the whole earth. It was due to the greatest
war in history and the serious possibility that the criminal aggressive
nations might win it. Well, how many people in the brighter days of 1946 wanted to know, seriously, how civilization came to suffer three nations, or less than a 10th of th era, to bring this great evil and peril upon it? No one ever pretends that Germany, Italy, and Japan armed in secret. There couldn't be a heavier reflection on the competence of our governments than to suggest it. Then why did the governments of America, France, Britain, and 10 smaller powers that were involved fail to arm to meet the menace? Readers of The Freeman know why. The press at large does not stimulate its readers to want to know.

In a sense it's worse today. A high economic authority has said that man for man and machine for machine production in the United States is 2 1/2 times as efficient as in Britain; and few other countries are more efficient than Britain. In other words, industry and agriculture are, or ought to be, enormously more efficient than in 1918, yet it's recovering far more slowly. And there's so little serious attempt to explain or understand it that millions of people snap up theories that aren't merely superficial but insincere. The world's sick because it no longer believes in hell, because it wears scanty bathing and beach dresses, because masses of people have begun to say that wealth ought to be more evenly distributed, because our novels and pictures are sexy, because Soviet Russia won't play ball, because our intellectual has out-run our moral development, because science has caused cataracts on our spiritual sight, because we are war-weary and so on. The papers and radio and political orators give no other explanations than these almost empty phrases. They're fully aware that they're distracting the attention of their readers from the genuine causes of the world's illness and slow recovery.

Nearer to the truth is the contention of Liberal writers that the world's partially paralyzed by the clash of two ideologies. But most of us care little about ideologies as such today. What we care about is the profit or loss of applying an ideology to life. Capitalism plainly pays a minority of the community today, and Socialism—there's no wish to apply straight Marxism anywhere, even in Russia—plainly means an end of that profit. But the decision is with the masses of the workers, if democracy means anything, and so the real question is, or ought to be, which system is best for them, for the majority of the race. It's when they say that their oracles, the papers and radio-speakers, prove to them every day that Capitalism provides a better living for you than Socialism that one is tempted to say that they need a kick in the pants. A severe and scientific report published by P.E.N., which is by no means a Socialist organization, showed that in Britain 24 out of 25 papers in circulation were sent out, and their policy certainly controlled, by rich men. Is it different in America? There's only one way to get cold light on the question. Give Russia and any other powers that follow its lead time to emerge from the ruin of the war and develop peacefully, and then compare. The deepest root of our world-evil is the determination to prevent just this.

It is, of course, not the only root. Another is the way in which civil governments have allowed the military and naval people to retain power. If they didn't even foresee the war, what were they likely to make of the problems of peace, which require business and economic ability? But from Japan to Italy they've been given an extraordinary power in the settlement and are gravely responsible for the slowness of recovery. The papers protect them by lies about what happened in Germany after the last war and the possibilities of a recovery of Nazism. But the deeper reason is the hope of so many that Socialism will be extinguished by violence. Foreign Offices too are as steeped in reaction as churches are, yet the peoples' governments bow down to them. Merchants and industrialists shut out all other considerations in their drive for trade, and we listen to them. We're paying for a series of gigantic blunders and have created a world-atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. And because the workers of most nations have only false leads they take

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life easy when every brain and sinew should be fully employed. Grave observers say that Europe is probably going to pass into a worse situation and that will react seriously on American industry. Perhaps that'll be the kick in the pants.

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**NOT SO FANTASTIC AFTER ALL**

Does that Milne-Haldane (Theist-Atheist) hypothesis of an expanding cosmos seem so utterly fantastic after all when one deems time only a fourth dimension? Since the time dimension in such hypotheses doubles with the doubling of the first three dimensions, the age of such cosmos, although an eternity for four dimensions, including time, is only 3,600,000,000 years calculated on our present time scale and accepting Eddington's 1,800,000,000 estimate for the present rate of dimension doubling. The following doubling would require 3,600,000,000 present years, the next succeeding that 7,200,000,000 and so on to infinity. Our scorn of such a hypothesis is doubtless conditioned on our inability to appreciate the fourth dimension of Einstein's "five-dimensional manifold." The players of three-dimensional chess, when such a game becomes as popular as its two-dimensional variety is to present Slavs, will unquestionably be less afflicted by such difficulty. The permutations possible in such a game could be measured in Kasmer "googols."

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**HEREDITY FROM TEST TUBES**

Has Prof. Kurt G. Stern, chemist of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, put himself in line for the Noble Prize by announcing the isolation from living cells of a chemical which he deems responsible for the transmission of heredity? The significance of such a discovery will probably be ignored by the medicine men of religion, who haven't even risen with the wrath of an Elijah to denounce a some-time ago inference of bio-chemists that there can be no mother love for offspring without the presence of manganese in the body of that parent. Whether both manganese and Dr. Stern's chemical function as a catalyst, further investigation will doubtless conclusively decide. Still one can already envision overproduction of human beings in a Java or Porto Rico being inhibited by chemicals, as well as human embryos being endowed chemically with genius now confined exclusively to the 200 I.Q. Although ignorant peasants in Tsarist Russia once refused to throw water on burning houses for fear of interfering with God's purpose, no theologian of the 20th century, including, the Pope himself, is likely to damn Dr. Stern. It is said that the first man to use an umbrella in England was mobbed for his temerity in interfering with God's rain. Nowadays physicists like Lankmuir and Schaeffer may convert God's mist into snow without popular disapproval.

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**IS SWITZERLAND STILL SECURE?**

Inspired proponents of military preparedness are again using the experience of little Switzerland to hoodwink the American public. Douglas Larson of N.E.A. has made a point that thanks to its "democratic" system of training, the Swiss have enjoyed "132 years of uninterrupted peace." Concerning which one may remark that political units as small as Andorra have enjoyed like tranquility although they could be extinguished by a single B-29 carrying TNT blockbusters, not to mention a single atomic bomb. Naturally the Swiss could have peace by arming its whole population with rifles and training its people as
sharpshooters just so-long as warfare remained two-dimensional in character, but any great power releasing thousands of paratroopers from the sky after reducing Swiss cities to ashes by bombing could extinguish the independence of Switzerland over night.

Writers like Larson naturally are successful in promoting world armament, so long as John Doe is insensible to the fact that three-dimensional war precludes the Swiss from triumphing at another Sem- pach. John Doe, unfortunately, still views Switzerland through the eyes of William Tell. Does Larson imagine for a moment, moreover, that members of the chamber of commerce want every American household to be permitted to keep ready an automatic rifle, tommygun or bazooka, the household’s of coal miners, for example? You bet they don’t want any Swiss-styled preparedness!

**IMPUDENT MAN**

The gall of man in assuming that he is a matter of special and peculiar interest to the “First Cause” of an infinite universe, an impertinence which theologians are still encouraging in order that their vested interest may be preserved a few generations longer, has been given another tremendous jolt by the present conclusion of astronomers that planetary systems are not exceptional in our 200 odd billion star galaxy. Such opinion, derived from the behavior of relatively next-door suns, indicating the presence of attending planets, rejects the hypothesis once promulgated by the late Sir James Jeans, that planets are but infrequently created by stellar collision. Instead of a few thousand planetary systems in our great galaxy or “island universe,” literally billions must exist. Hence man, who still deems himself a veritable lord of creation, may conceivably be descended on at most any old time by one of billions of civilizations which have learned how to utilize atomic energy.

Why haven’t we been invaded from the skies before? The answer to that question is simple—it wasn’t worth while for beings to bother us who prior to Hiroshima had reason to deem us as low in the scale of existence as we ourselves regard worms. From now on some other world biologist may consider us as important as our world’s Fabre investigating the habits of ants and bees. We’d better be prepared for such a contingency.

**IT COULD BE TRUE**

The improbable can always be the possible. “Flying saucers” could be manifestations of mass neurosis or space craft managed by Martians. It could be true that we’ve already developed an atom bomb, as asserted in French military circles, according to L’Intransigeant, capable of producing a crater 2,700 feet deep and 11 miles (!) across. That crater, incidentally, could swallow up cities like Paris or Washington and kill every living creature in areas as great as those occupied by Greater London or New York. With radioactivity taken into consideration, such a bomb might be able to extinguish all life over an area great as that of Great Britain.

Yes, we could process a bomb of that power since we should have manufactured sufficient plutonium for one since 1945. However, it is more probable that our stock of plutonium has been allocated to hun- reds of smaller bombs, half a dozen of which our newest type of bombing plane could readily tote as far as Moscow or Leningrad. The thought of Orville Wright that the “flying saucers” craze is a device of militarism to get this country into another war is less credible than the thought of French officers that bombs capable of putting a great
city, or even a nation, out of commission with a single shot have been experimented with here. Both suggestions are unlikely, but neither is inconceivable.

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**DEISTS ON VACATION**

Unitarians, one observes, commonly take vacations from God during the summer season. Their churches, wherever they exist, are usually closed in July and August. Not but what many functions of orthodox Protestant religion are also suspended. The statistics of crime have apparently no strong influence on religionists, for otherwise church activities would be more intense during the months when the moral code is most often violated, both sexually and otherwise. Besides, Protestants can’t run to father confessors as Catholics do, with confidence that the intervention of Jesus, Mary, or other notables of Christian mythology, can persuade the Deity to remit offenses which religion condemns. Of course, Unitarians, who don’t openly admit that they are as infidel as Voltaire was, realize that the sort of God they worship works only through immutable natural law. Hence if they violate one of those commandments of Moses, their deity won’t “suspend the rules” in order to punish them. All of which makes a Freethinker wonder why Unitarians build churches and pay good salaries to pastors when assembling in a meeting house on Sunday makes absolutely no difference in their post-mortem estate!

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**SHOULD WORLD COPS BE ARMED?**

Is a cop equipped with a “persuader” no more effective than a night-stick any regulator of Tommy-gun toting bandits and gangsters? Manifestly not, yet professed pacifists and many other people interested in a world police force want all atomic bombs destroyed, and all supplies of uranium 235 or plutonium deactivated. The New York Herald-Tribune wants this done, but The New York Times displays considerably more sense in this connection.

According to the Times the “resolution” of the Working Committee of the United Atomic Energy Commission, “does not attempt to eliminate atomic weapons from international armaments, and there is a good reason why it should not seek to do so.” Continuing, the Times observes that “a properly constituted international authority” should have “some recourse sufficient to meet the threat of a situation which would arise if one nation or group of nations should covertly and illegally manufacture atomic bombs and then use them as instruments of a policy of aggression. . . . Without a reserve of atomic weapons, the nations threatened with such aggression would be powerless to resist it.” And without atomic weapons, one adds, no world police could stop it from destroying civilization and probably most of the human race.

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**RELIGION FOR ROBOTS**

If creations of an alleged Jehovah should have the consolations of religion, why not the superior robots which man may create in a not too distant future, robots which, according to Prof. Wiener, can have 10 functions which theologians have hitherto ascribed to a deity’s handiwork, including vicarious response and introspection? The suggestion made by Samuel Butler years ago, when machinery was beginning to oust the handworker in England, that man might eventually devise
better contrivances than himself, and that such contrivances might turn upon and destroy their creator may prove no joke. Already electronic robots can calculate a thousand times, perhaps a hundred thousand times faster than flesh and blood mathematicians, while one in the United States Bureau of Standards can detect no less than 100 million tones and shades of color. Argument the 10 functions of a superior combination robot to that extent and man himself might just as well abdicate. The suggestion of somebody that robots have taken over the planet Mars is not as crazy as it seems, while “giant brains,” which Olaf Stapleton gave his fifth race in “Last and First Man,” a work of cosmic fiction well worth reading, should be an eye-opener to people who imagine they were created by a god in his own image.

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“HORROR STORIES” ABOUT BRITAIN

Britons are, perhaps not unnaturally, sore about our papers which are telling millions of Americans that their country is doomed. But it’s leaking out that anti-Socialist British officers and officials everywhere abroad are using the same, or stronger, language. This isn’t simply a complaint of the government press. Indignant reports to that effect from their own correspondents were published in the Sunday Observer and the Express, two Conservative papers of great influence. In Germany, the Balkans, and Italy these officers and officials, drawing good salaries and having a pampered and leisurely time, are telling “horror stories” of their own country. Some say that Britain is “on the brink of a bloody revolution, ground down by the government’s most oppressive tyranny, and hell-bent for personal and national bankruptcy.” That appeared in the Express. If British Labor ministers would forget the Communists and their own rebels for a bit and drastically purge their services abroad of idlers, grafters, and the supercilious hay-haws of Sandhurst and Oxford their problems might be easier.

Not all Conservatives, by the way, take or profess to take this dark view of the future of their country. The bankers ought to be fairly good judges and a recent conference of theirs in London was by no means depressed. When the adverse balance of trade, which scares so many, was being discussed, these men said that “the city of London is still the largest insurance and reinsurance market in the world” and that overseas banking is bringing the country a profit that rose to $150,000,000 in 1946. This is a set of men, nearly all Conservative, of a very different character from the tennis-playing, girl-chasing officers and officials with whom a middle-class tradition fills British, if not American services abroad.

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REVOLT REACHES TIBET

In the old days there was always a strongly fortified center, the citadel, to which the inhabitants of an invaded district could retire. Since mere man began in the leading civilizations to invade the realm of the gods, or their zealous earthly representatives, there has been a good deal of speculation as to the citadels to which the faithful might retire. Poland and the Balkans were suggested for Europe, but the Red Flag, which is, of course, the emblem of the evil forces, now floats over their capitals. But all were agreed that there was one area, Tibet, which would resist the profane invaders for ages. High among the clouds, with ramparts of mountains, it seemed to be divinely appointed as the last refuge of superstition. It’s not many years since its priest rulers tortured—in the name of the gentle Buddha—any white men who braved the natural obstacles and got into Tibet. It was so safe that when an
adventuress like Mme. Blavatsky found that she couldn’t dupe Americans into believing in the mysteries of Isis of Egypt she invented the myth of the mahatmas of Tibet. Even then every man who wanted to could learn how hordes of lousy monks exploited the ignorance which they protected. But the modern microbe has leaped the barriers. Rebellion against the rule of the monks and lamas is flaming. Cannon are mounted on the walls of those concentration camps of virtue, the monasteries, and regiments of sacred men march over the hills and down the valleys to blow the guts out of other sacred men. They cut the eyes out of “rebels,” who are the minority-party at any particular time, or flog them to death in the good old medieval Christian way. Apparently both sides still profess to believe in the thousand genuine devils they keep, pickled in vinegar (or some equivalent), in the monasteries. It’s a fight for power and plunder. But the 3,000,000 peasants, who are the milk cows for whom they fight, are beginning to wonder if religion really is such a precious and sacred thing.

HOLLYWOOD TO CENSOR ITSELF

So Hollywood is going to be its own censor. No films that show Americans in an unfavorable light must get abroad. If this is interpreted to mean that actresses must use one set of bathing or dancing dresses for American exhibition and what you might call an ampler form for abroad it will be a howler. Why do they suppose Britons and others welcome American films? A more careful observer says that if there’s one feature of the American film that more than another causes surprise at American life it is the law court scene. Serious people abroad know that American detectives aren’t the morons they are so often represented to be in films and the third degree is no longer so common. But scenes in court, with attorneys straining every nerve to get a conviction because they need votes, photographers in court, blatant appeals to the jury apart from the final address, and so on, don’t recommend the American idea of democracy. News films are almost as injurious. It’s these, not bedroom or bathroom scenes, that make foreigners raise their eyebrows.

THE UNCIVIL SERVICE

America is listening with pleasure, at least in Washington, Wall Street, and the editorial offices generally, to one complaint about the Socialist experiment in Britain. It’s that every extension of nationalization means a vast new army of civil service workers. If the present members of the government were big enough for their jobs, which The Freeman has always doubted, they could check this by making civil service employees work like other employees. In all countries the civil service has a tradition of graft and taking it easy. At a public meeting of British civil servants recently it was stated that there were men in the Naval Department who have done no work for 11 months. A vast economy could be made in the defense and some other departments, especially if the forces were cut on realistic principles. There’s a terrible waste and practice of ca-canny (the Scottish for taking it easy). A London paper recently asked in large type: Where are Our Million Spivs? It was estimated that a million demobilized men haven’t entered the ranks of industry. They’re mainly on the black market, the criminal market, and the street market (which for a year has made amazing profits on foreign fruit).
THE GREEK AND TURKISH PEOPLE

When The Freeman talks, not politely, about Greeks and Turks, it's hardly necessary to say that there's here no reference to the mass of the people. Athens and Istanbul (Constantinople) are notoriously not without their vices, as every traveler knows. They've both had centuries of misrule and encouragement of corruption. But the same travelers, if they know the languages and have traveled in the interior of the countries, invariably describe the people, both Greek and Turkish, as pleasant to deal with and as straight as any others. It's the bureaucracies of Athens and Angora, the very men whom the western democracies pet, whom we pillory. The royalist-clerical military-bourgeois bunch of crooks who rule Greece need no further description, but possibly many Americans are still thinking of Turkey in the days of its fine statesman Ataturk and don't realize that his degenerate successors in office at Angora base their power upon a Congress in which, as a result of clever manipulation, there are 300 representatives of the People's Party to 66 Democrats. This People's Party corresponds to the new party (Popular Republicans, Smallholders, etc.) that has appeared in most countries of Europe. It's never an honest political party with a national program. Its core is the mass of more ignorant believers who are so easily inflamed by their priests, driving forward under a false flag which enables every sort of anti-radical to join the march.

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THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

A popular novelist, by no means of the radical school, Sydney Horler, has lately written that "the editors and proprietors of our papers are still striving for the nickels of the masses, and you know the average mental age of the masses—11 years." He is sublimely unconscious that he's here neatly inliustrating a charge that the editors may justly retort upon the literary men: that they write so glibly on all sorts of subjects that require special knowledge, and the literary man, as an artist—if you care to call Horler an artist—is not a man of knowledge. Newspapers look out for the nickels of the millions, it's true, but the operative word is millions not nickels; and a big paper depends as much upon the advertisements of big business as on the nickels of the workers. In any case the jibe at the intelligence of the masses is a typical fling of the cloistered literary man. There's far more intelligence among what he calls the masses than he imagines. But I'm with him when he goes on to say:

"The prosperous newspapers should print as much of the truth as possible about 1) Russia, 2) Germany, 3) America. They should lead public opinion, not cater to the most inconsequent, depraved sections of the public."

The situation is not quite so simple as that but the words do contain a truth of the greatest social importance. It's inevitable that a commercial press shall look first of all to its circulation and its advertisements, and more than one decent editor would tell you that he endangers his circulation by merely telling the truth about Russia, for instance. We might say that greedy pioneers in the newspaper world have created a definite type of appetite in the reading masses and it
now dictates policy. The hope of a country is in the slow growth of a body of citizens who realize the conditions as regards the press and radio speakers and help to create an antidote, a provision of full and accurate information by lectures, debates, and free weeklies and monthlies.

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THE FAMOUS CASE OF LEO FRANK

By Clay Fulks

In Burton Rascoe’s newly-written story of the celebrated Leo Frank Case, of 30-odd years ago (published by Haldeman-Julius, 50c), we have that rare concurrence of a classic American tragedy, freighted with tremendous social significance, related by a recognized master of the literary art.

Though the story involves two bloody murders—under necessity of the facts in the case, for this is not fiction—the most highly cultivated reader need not fear having his taste offended by the wanton introduction of the gruesome and the macabre. Even the melodramatic is calmly excluded. A writer of real ability and of chaste and dignified style, Rascoe would scorn to employ such shoddy devices to achieve his effects. In fact, he does not strive for any sensational effects in this narrative; the purpose is much higher than that.

Nor does he stray from the record of the case, as many less humane writers would be tempted to do, to bring in “Tobacco Road,” the “cracker” character, the chain gang, “Georgia Justice,” and the occasional lynching of citizens for the “crime” of belonging to the wrong race, as stock symbols of the social and judicial depravity of the State of Georgia. He does not aim at holding Georgia up to the contumely of the country. He is respectful of the sensibilities of the civilized and responsible people of that State. After a careful study of the court procedure in the case, he credits both the chief prosecutor and the presiding judge with eminent fairness. But this, of course, is not to justify the verdict of the jury.

Indeed, in his review of the trial, he discloses a rare, ironical, and unfortunate situation. After a thorough study of the case, Rascoe was compelled to believe that the able and upright Hugh Dorsey, chief prosecutor, doubting so seriously the guilt of the accused, and, consequently, being in secret sympathy with him, risked his own official reputation again and again in giving the defense open opportunities to strengthen its position—opportunities which the famous Reuben Arnold, chief counsel for the defense, so strangely passed up, as if he secretly doubted the innocence of his client, and, consequently, could not pour the fullness of a sympathetic heart into his forensic efforts. Rascoe then, could hardly avoid the conclusion that the two contending lawyers should have occupied reversed positions in the case.

Many older readers who followed the story of the drama in the newspapers while it was being enacted, may recall much of the following summary of the case: Leo Frank, a young Northern Jew, was the superintendent of a pencil factory in the city of Atlanta when a 13-year-old girl employee, Mary Phagan, was atrociously and mysteriously murdered in the factory when, on a certain holiday, she called to collect her pay, having been absent on the regular pay-day. Of the few persons in the factory at the time, at least two men—one of whom bore an evil reputation—were shown to have been in just as suspicious position with respect to the murder as Frank was. Yet Frank was convicted upon a flimsy structure of circumstantial evidence, and the penalty was fixed at death. Appeal after appeal was taken in vain—twice or thrice to the highest court in the land—mass meetings were held in many of the largest cities; a vast volume of public sympathy was aroused, and a
quarter of a million dollars, some of it coming from Calcutta and Bombay, was poured into the defense fund. Every legal recourse was exhausted.

Finally, the governor, in a sacrifice of his political life, commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. But even this penalty, despite the weak and contradicted evidence on which the conviction rested, was not enough to appease the blood-lust of a gang of primitive, anti-Semitic Georgians. In the darkness of night, Leo Frank was snatched from his lawful keepers, spirited away to the cemetery where Mary Phagan was buried, and there, beside her grave, in a weird, torch-lit ritual, was first mutilated and then bloodily murdered.

To the lasting shame of Georgia, not one of that sadistic, murderous gang was ever put on trial. And even now, a generation later, “cracker” savagery still erupts, occasionally, in bloody and unpunished crimes, as if their perpetrators were irresponsible, chin-licking idiots.

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THE FRIEND OF THE FREE

The action of Washington in refusing aid to Rumania is generally approved on the principle that American offers only “aid to free peoples” (like the Greeks). But how many know that the worst distress in Europe is found in Rumania? The British Liberal journalist Cummings, a conscientious and veteran reporter, recently accepted these facts; and he’s one of the journalists who has frequently condemned these little countries of Eastern Europe. A terrible drought in two successive seasons has made food so scarce in what ought to be the chief granary of Eastern Europe that “3,000,000 face starvation” and in some areas two out of every three children are doomed to death.” In many districts people keep themselves alive on acorns and the bark of trees, and the infant mortality has risen to 80 percent. He says:

“In countless cases the mothers have had to make a dreadful decision. Not having enough food to keep three children alive they must choose one for survival and let the others die.”

UNRRA hasn’t been allowed to do anything for them, though it gave so generously to the “free” Greeks that soldiers saw them pitching into the sea cans of American food which was not to their taste. These unfortunate Rumanians are paying for the sins of the corrupt clique at Bucharest whom they have kicked out—and largely because they kicked them out.

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OUR PROPHETS OF DOOM

Just 100 years ago Ralph Waldo Emerson was in England and he was invited to make a speech at a city banquet in Manchester. It had even in Britain a reputation for gloom, and it was far worse, physically, a century ago. But what interested Emerson more was the moral gloom that had come upon it and upon England generally. The speech he delivered is preserved in his “English Traits,” and we still read how cheerfully and confidently he told Britishers to take no heed of the prophecies of an approaching end of the nation. He reminded them that they had seen dark days before; and in fact almost exactly 200 years earlier John Milton had said the same to his compatriots. In the splendid prose of “Areopagitica.” There have been these prophets of doom and prophets of new victory in all ages. The terror of 1847 and 1848 passed away from Europe, yet 30 years later Thomas Carlyle was growling at his country that it was “Shooting Niagara,” to quote the title of one of his dyspeptic essays. And after all this Britain became 10 times as
wealthy as it had been in the days of Emerson and held as great a place as ever in the advance of science and the counsels of the world.

Such croakers are discredited by history. It is a curious fact that when decay and disaster were creeping upon a civilization, as in the case of ancient Athens and Rome, of medieval Spain and Portugal, no writer of influence saw the approaching shadow. But now we have a whole choir of croakers in America and Europe chanting that not only is Britain doomed but the entire civilization which the race has constructed in the last 200 years may be near extinction. We may soon have long-haired prophets in the street calling for another flagellation—mania, or the Second Adventists may capture the radio network and howl at us that the judgment is near. Perhaps the Pope will, as Pope Gregory I did in the year 600 when he told the world that the last day was at hand, persuade our rich folk to give all their property to the church, as only the clergy—and the nuns, of course—have the right to appear otherwise than nude before The Great White Throne. Perhaps an epidemic of frivolity, like that imagined by Renan in his "Abess of Jouarray," which is based upon the same idea of the end of the world, will invade even our monasteries and nunneries, or the Dukhobors of Canada may become a world movement and persuade us all to put on our birth-day costumes to meet the Lord. Pardon the frivolity, but any man who knows history and the literature of different ages knows what antics this end-of-the-world idea has provoked. But since serious writers, to say nothing of bishops and politicians, have taken up the dirge, let us consider the pretext of the prophecy.

The outstanding new fact is the availability of atomic energy for destructive purposes. This alone has not the least relation to the destruction of civilization. Striking an average of different estimates we might assume that we have 100 atomic bombs, each fitted to destroy life and property with in a radius of five to 10 miles. How much of Russia would those of the bombs that were permitted to reach it destroy? Russia almost certainly has a corresponding supply, since it is six years since the great Russian physicist went back home from America with what science was then known; and as these are certainly stored where American bombs would not reach them, the "cloud-capped" towers of a score of American cities also would be good to dust. Add, if you like, the mass of poisonous gas and bacterial powder and radiation dust that America, and presumably Russia, have and you could predict that two great civilizations would be put back 40 and 50 years in their development. For the latest notion, that Western and Southern Europe can be induced to form an anti-Russian league which would advance with tanks, flame-throwers, and infantry to complete the work, is a dream that ignores fact. In such a struggle America would soon find what the corrupt rulers of Persia, Egypt, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Brazil are worth—to anybody but themselves.

And since every competent observer who is a realist and has visited Russia is agreed that the last thing in the world that Russia desires is war the key of the world's future is in America. Would the American people embark upon this dark and precarious future for the sake of ... Well, of what? It has become a little cynical about the glorious idea that it was being prepared for a crusade for the triumph of ideas over infidels. Perhaps someone has told folk that even those shining crusaders of the Middle Ages were in 90 cases out of 100 merely out for loot. A distinguished scientist said some time ago that one of the most insidious evils of our age is the fondness of statesmen for what he called "sloganberry jam." Let's drop the slogans and face facts. I think the whole policy of Washington, whatever gilded phrases are used, is the economic motive: grave anxiety about exports and the chance of another depression, the fierce determination to protect its fortune-makers by extinguishing Socialism. But behind that again, whether we agree with it or not, are questions that they themselves will not answer. How is this dream of a colonial prosperity to work out
in a world of ruins? What will be the ultimate effect upon America's productive economy of the colossal bribes, in the shape of credits, by which nations, in large part of low public character, are induced to take our goods? The workers are beginning to ask these questions. When the Russians begin they will ask them out loud. It may bring about a clear, firm, sound lead in America and Britain and, if it does, the regenerated world will in five years be laughing at the prophecy of doom and turn to the prophets of science once more.

A FAITH TO LIVE BY

Jacques Maritain, the French Catholic philosopher who came to our country to avoid bombs which might have sent him to heaven prematurely and remained to contribute to the tranquility and clearness of mind that we now possess, has an article with the above title. He'd have saved space—and lost dollars—if he just said "join my church." Any man who's familiar with the limpid and passionless accuracy of its literature might have listened to the appeal. But the article was in The Nation and couldn't be quite so bold. So it argues, brings in the historic names of philosophers and philosophies, and assumes all the characteristics of "profound" thought. Once upon a time men believed in God. He doesn't venture to say that then (in the Middle Ages) everybody was prosperous, happy, and good. Then folk were led to believe in man. He doesn't remind his readers that this was the most prosperous, progressive philanthropic period in history. But now we've lost faith in God and man. Look at this Existentialism, the expression of our mood: "the longing of man for nothingness, the temptation and desire not to be any longer." They are Maritain's italics.

It happens that Existentialism, which is no more typical of our age than Gandhi's creed is, means precisely the opposite. It urges men to exist in the fullest sense, to live vitally, to be more than cabbages in the garden. Communism is the next dreary symptom. It's "the ultimate vicissitude of anthropocentric rationalism!" but you'd hardly say that it has lost its faith in men. So all is woe and gloom and constipation. The world is so evil it has destroyed our faith in men. If you were to press him on this point he'd have to say that, as he sees it, the drama of life for the last seven years is that a few thousand men, ruling three out of the 50 nations, turned to thuggery and theft and all the rest of the world got together and hanged them. Anyway it seems that to recover our faith in man we must first renew our faith in God. If American liberalism can't find better prophets than this for us it had better close its shop.

THE USE OF HISTORY

A good historian who has written a fine book on the particular service of history in education asks in a recent article: "Where else in our time can we find a discipline that will better equip men and women to play their parts in the making of history than in the study of the history that men and women have made?"

It sounds plausible, yet the fact is that few youths and girls who leave High School, after years of history classes in that and the Primary School, have any inclination to read any more history. At 16 or 17 they're just beginning to be capable of appreciating what we call the lessons of history, and it's one of the subjects which they're least anxious to follow up. Why? One sound clue may be found in these words which were written the other day by a distinguished library critic, who might
have been explaining why literary men know so little about history. He's talking about his lack of zeal when he was at college:

"Occasionally, I admit, I became so alarmed at the extent of my ignorance that for an hour or more I would read fiercely through the pages of a small Greek history, trying to fix in my mind who had fought whom in some battle or other and when, and why."

The mass of detail that is, as the fellow said, of no use to man, woman, or beast given in the history lessons kills interest. Not only does the pupil at the time see no meaning in it but even in later life finds it of no use whatever; and the teacher has been droning weekly that the pupils are "preparing for life." Another reason, and this has become more serious in our day, when education is a science, is that historians are intimidated by sectarian interests into suppressing truths that are of importance or even encouraging untruth. The Freeman is always giving examples of this. One will do here: the social value of Christianity both today and in regard to the building up of our civilization. There's hardly one historian today who doesn't at least remain silent while propositions based on false versions of history are rammed into the mind of the public daily. At the best the situation is that while editors, politicians, radio-speakers, and preachers talk about Our Christian Civilization—meaning built and inspired by Christianity—our historians... Well, can you name one who tells the truth on that point?

WHERE'S THE WAR IN CHINA?

Most people imagine that the civil war in China is either over or has become a kid-glove affair. They would have a jolt if their paper told them—but, of course, no respectable paper will—that a communiqué from the headquarters of the Communist Peoples' Liberation Armies claims that from July, 1946, to April, 1947, the Kuomintang armies lost 676,000 men, including 150 generals, 136 of whom were taken prisoner. Chiang is calling another 800,000 men to the colors, and some think the new injection of American gold will put pep into them. But gold is too precious to be thrown away on common folk in China. Not much of it will get beyond the Chiang's supporters. We are, of course, not giving the above figure as on the same level as statements in the Bible, papal encyclicals, or Mrs. Eddy's golden book, but General Evans Carlson is reported to have said:

"Chiang Kai-shek's troops cannot lick the Chinese Communist armies because they do not have a base in the people and they are not conditioned, physically, professionally, spiritually, or morally for the type of campaign necessary to achieve victory."

That will hardly be disputed seriously. Chiang's greedy officers and officials save money (for themselves) by ordering the armies to "live on the country" in the old style. You can guess the result.

A LOOK-SEE AT EUROPE

A European diplomat who was there says of the Moscow Conference:

"The cause of the failure of the Conference was psychological rather than political or economic."

He means that whereas it's usual at these gatherings for the representatives of the powers to get together a good deal in informal conversations apart from the formal sessions there was little of this at Moscow. Why? Some suggest that the non-Russian representatives brought with them so much political and economic bias that they
were never really friendly. At all events any man could read between the lines of a large part of the American press that there was much relief when it was announced that the Conference was a failure. When will people insist that if lies are to be served up to them about these matters they ought not to be too crude? During the subsequent meeting of Bevin and Bidault at Paris all the papers had a charming photograph of the two statesmen chatting and laughing together. Bevin doesn’t know French enough to ask for a cigarette. The situation of France, by the way, is more serious than most imagine. In 1946, the adverse trade balance was nearly a billion dollars. France had to part with two-thirds of its gold reserve to meet the deficit.

THAT VOICE OF CONSCIENCE AGAIN

In a recently published scientific work I read:

“Truth and justice, mercy to the weak and understanding for the erring, are principles that require no formal justification. These are not the principles of science. They relate to spiritual rather than material laws.”

When will some scientific men learn that the branch of science of which each is a master is not the only branch, and that if one wants to talk about what professors in another branch can or cannot explain his commonsense ought to tell him to consult his colleagues? Ethics is as sound a branch of science as sociology is, and truth—whether he means truthfulness or respect for realities in one’s acts and opinions—and justice are recognized in it to be fundamental conditions of the proper functioning of social life. Mercy or pity may be claimed as a sentiment, but it’s the place of social ethics to define its application. Misapplication of it has caused and still causes much mischief. In any case to call it an instinctive human reaction to the sight of suffering removes it from the sphere of this supposed moral intuition for which the writer is obviously pleading—in the interest of religion. These folk can’t get over one difficulty: social ethical science plainly sanctions any law that makes for the good, in the broadest sense of the word, of social life, and if the supposed law doesn’t in any way contribute to that good we won’t miss it.

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Another attempt has been made to tell us what democracy really is. It seemed so simple when we were fighting for it but it’s remarkably difficult to say whether we have really secured it for one or other country, Lyman Brysen in a work, “Science and Freedom,” recently published by Columbia University, offers us their help:

“A democratic government is one that has for its purpose the creation of such conditions as will best keep and develop the intrinsic forces of man.”

In the old type of logic lesson that’s now discredited there used to be a law which said, “Definition must be clearer than the thing defined.” These Victorians had odd ideas. Now at all events you’ll be able to say which of the powers represented in UN—Egypt, Eire, Brazil, Portugal, etc.—are democratic and why.