

Editorial Comment

Yes, There Is A Santa Claus

Throughout the centuries men have written great social doctrines and codes for living. A multitude of these works have survived and remained ever applicable to present day situations.

This literary ability is not confined to men in one field but includes scientists, philosophers, politicians, psychologists, poets, essayists and newspapermen. Each has contributed some great work or works to the world society and has received recognition for his efforts in relation to the degree of social acceptance.

So, because it is Christmas and because Church's editorial hits so near to home in the minds and hearts of many people to whom Christmas has a special meaning, The Nebraskan reprints the famed editorial which was entitled "Yes, There Is A Santa Claus."

Dear Editor, I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says "If you see it in the Sun it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon.

Dear Virginia, Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds.

Logic Ad Nauseam

Resolved: That God Has a Place on Campus. The headline, which appears in the news columns of The Nebraskan introducing church news to student readers and which has been the church column headline since Sept. 25, 1953, has currently been under fire in The Nebraskan Letterip columns.

The Nebraskan has not commented further editorially for several reasons. First, because the headline does not violate journalistic ethics of editorializing in the news columns as has been accused.

Second, because we believe that the headline has been tested of its acceptability by the fact that, after a year's publication, it has only recently been attacked.

And third, The Nebraskan felt that there was actually no argument because ethically the headline violates nothing—except the personal views of a few students.

Let us say that the following remarks are in explanation of the headline's use, rather than in defense of it—for The Nebraskan regards its answer as clarification of policy.

Beginning with the Declaration of Independence the United States was established "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence," and the authors assembled "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions." Therefore, the United States as set forth in the Declaration of Independence was established as a nation with a majority belief in a Supreme Being, that being God or whatever name one chooses to give Him.

The preamble to the Constitution of the State of Nebraska states: "We, the people, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom . . ." and the Constitution itself provides that "All persons have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences . . . Religion, morality, and knowledge (however) being essential to good government, it shall be the duty of the Legislature to pass suitable laws to protect every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship, and to encourage schools and the means of instruction."

With these two major points of reference we feel we have given a satisfactory explanation of the social and political acceptance in our nation and state of a Supreme Power—a God. And according to journalistic ethics what is acceptable to the majority of society and provided allegiance and protection in documents of law is acceptable for publication in news columns without the fear of editorializing.

You may note that the above quoted statements specifically state "according to the dictates of their own consciences" and "its own mode of public worship." The documents do not set forth any law or suggestion as to what degree or in what form worship takes. However, it does establish the object of worship—whatever the degree or form—as being God.

The logic of the attackers is based on degree of belief. The Nebraskan believes that to what extent a person accepts a God is his own personal matter. To point out the various degrees of belief on our campus: some of the religious houses on campus feel that the headline infers that God is thrown in and barely included among the many other activities on campus, that He has only a small portion of the student interest. In other words—God does not have a large enough place on campus. The opposite view—of the persons who attacked the headline in the Letterip column—presents the argument that for God to have a place on campus is a

are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world around him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world, which not the strongest man that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God! He lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

mere supposition and that there are those students who believe that God does not have a place on campus, and those who do not believe in a God at all.

The Nebraskan headline does neither dictate what place on campus God holds nor what place God should hold. Therefore, logically there is no attempt to influence students' degree of belief. But the headline does refer to God. That there is a God and that He is on campus is upheld by society's accepted faith in general and documents of law specifically.

An attack upon the headline as a quarrel over the degree of faith the campus has in a God should be confined to philosophers, theologians and speculators. The Nebraskan does not attempt to invade these realms. Our policy stands that God Has a Place on Campus is not an editorialization in that our nation, state and society are were founded upon guidance and protection of a Supreme Being—God—the proof of acceptance evidenced in documents of law and judged as a common truth. J. H.

Two-Fifths Headache

The arrival of the second semester, or any semester for that matter, always brings problems with it. However, the second semester of the 1954-55 school year might be the beginning of what will become the number one student headache—class scheduling.

For those who have taken time to read the front page of the class schedule this problem is readily apparent. For those who have not taken the time, this sentence will serve something other than a repetitious function: "University regulations require every student to schedule two-fifths of his classes in the afternoons and/or on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday mornings." This ruling is an old one which fell in disuse some years ago and which has been revived this year.

The reasons for its disinterment is simple: too many students take their classes between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Their love of these hours and these days has caused, according to the Office of Registration and Records, a shortage of open classes and class rooms at these times.

The ruling will be enforced this semester on an individual basis; that is, students with all or more than 80 per cent of their classes scheduled for MWF might be forced to change their schedule to include TTHS or MWF afternoon classes.

No definite schedule has been established defining the basis on which exceptions will be made. Enforcement of the two-fifths rule will be the responsibility of a few persons who will allow exceptions or force changes on their own interpretations of the individual case.

Floyd W. Hoover, director of Registration and Records, has shown outstanding ability on coping with the problems and difficulties in setting up a registration system with so few snarls as is in operation now. He has attempted a solution to an obvious problem. However, the solution as it stands now is incomplete, even dangerous, in that no definite policy for enforcing the two-fifths rule has been set up.

Students could go a long way in helping themselves by making suggestions of how a well-intended, necessary program, such as the two-fifths rule, can be carried out. The Nebraskan "Letterip" column and staff members are an excellent channel for such suggestions. T. W.

On Behalf Of Scrooge

Dickens' Meanie Called 'Visionary'

By DAVID E. OWEN (This writing is reprinted from the December 1953 issue of the Harvard Alumni. The author, a professor of history at that University, first made his defense of Scrooge's attitude toward "Yuletide" in a speech to the Student Society several years ago.)

In this uneasy age of changing perspectives, literary and otherwise writers thought to have been permanently buried suddenly re-emerge as significant figures. Others who were once classics fade into semi-oblivion. And if authors, why not their characters?

I venture to salute the holiday season with a word on behalf of one of these characters, an unrecognized hero of nineteenth-century literature, a kind of fictional Leonidas at Thermopylae of Old Guard at Waterloo. He yielded in the end, but only after the powers of the supernatural world had been turned loose on him. Granted that admiration for this lovable old eccentric is a highly personal emotion of mine. I don't expect everyone to share it, but, no doubt, most people respond more sympathetically than I to the approach of Christmas. Put me down at the outset as the spectre at the Christmas feast, the jarring note in the Christmas carol.

One must admit that Ebenezer Scrooge was not without his weaknesses. He was a bit on the brusque side and short on urbanity. His conversational range was fairly limited. ("Humbug" was a less than adequate comment on the Christmas saturnalia that he was doing his best to resist.) But Scrooge was blessed with a certain acuteness of perception, at least until his flagrantly synthetic reformalism. He could detect an avalanche when it was merely a little snowslide. Christmas at the Cratchits' may have been harmless and jolly enough, but it was the beginning of the road that would lead to the office party. Nothing could have more shrewdly anticipated the emotions of millions of latter-day parents than Scrooge's exclamation, "I'll retire to Bedlam."

Now obviously Dickens didn't like Scrooge and certainly didn't understand him. He assumes that Scrooge's tastes are unnatural and misanthropic, whereas in essentials they will strike many of us as being merely sensible. For example, Dickens seems to think it strange that the old man doesn't warm to the prospect of dinner at his nephew's. But nephew, though well-meaning enough, was a hearty type, and nephew's wife, possibly suffering from a thyroid complaint, seems to have been one of those bouncing hostesses who was determined that all should have a good time, whatever the consequences.

It was not only nephew and wife who offered the hazard, for wife's female relatives, apparently six or eight strong, converged on the party. Poor Scrooge suffered not only from indigestion but especially from indigestion contracted at large family dinners. At nephew's, while sitting around stuffed and torpid, he would be easy prey for the amateur musician and parlor-game enthusiast. The former, Scrooge's niece, played some agreeable innocuous airs on the harp. Then the sisters and the cousins and the aunts tackled the game issue in earnest—forefeits, blind-man's bluff, and the whole deadly armory.

As long as Scrooge was asleep and conveyed by the Spirit of Christmas Present, he thought it all great fun. But, awake and in his right mind, he regarded it as an unutterable bore. To Dickens, preferring to sit on the sidelines while parlor games were in progress was a sign of a perverse taste. To others it implies ordinary intelligence.

I have said that Dickens didn't like and didn't understand Scrooge. But Scrooge didn't like Dickens and understood him only too well. Dickens, he foresaw, was creating the modern Christmas under the appealing fiction of the "old-fashioned Christmas" and using him, Scrooge, as the instrument. He was correct in his suspicion that the genuine old-fashioned Christmas had little in common with the marzipan-covered fiestas of Dickens.

At the time Scrooge made his appearance, mid-winter peace was still hanging in the balance. Social tranquility was not irretrievably lost for the month of December. The rowdy-religious Christmas had never recovered from the regime of the Puritans and the Victorian Christmas had not yet come to full flower.

(However) Scrooge found himself an unwilling participant in the creation of a modern myth. Washington Irving had already launched the old-fashioned Christmas in America, and now Dickens was preaching the same gospel even more persuasively to the Victorian middle classes.

During the 1840's the ingredients of the old-fashioned Christmas were assembled in England. From Holland, probably by way of the United States, came St. Nicholas, alias Santa Claus, who in due course was assimilated into the English tradition of Father Christmas. Within a few years the aviaric of children—and tradesmen—was to be further stimulated by the introduction of the Christmas stocking, persumably from Germany via America. As for the first Christmas card, that lacked only a month of being a twin of Scrooge himself, to the old man's considerable embarrassment.

Scrooge, being a persistent fellow of long experience in the world, was disturbed by what he saw developing . . . Ebenezer could that this comparatively unpretentious Christmas of the mid-40's would presently get out of hand. Dickens he pictured as a kind of Victorian sorcerer's apprentice—Frankenstein is entitled to take the Christmas vacation off—who was releasing forces over which he would have no control, and he had even less regard for Dickens's agents.

Scrooge's premonitions, most of us would concede, have been amply justified. The propaganda for the Christmas of the future was to have consequences far different from those which its author in his innocence had sought. Scrooge's clarity of vision needs no further emphasis. The argument must now be shifted from his head to his heart. Was he, in fact, the flinty miser Dickens describes?

Though by no means indifferent himself to pounds, shillings and pence, Scrooge was outraged by the notion of putting price tags on nostalgia. Wholesale present-giving, he was aware, formed no part of the traditional English Christmas. But from Christmas boxes for servants and tradesmen, through sweetmeats for the children, and Christmas annuals, it would be only a step to presents for everybody, the principle of saturation-bombing to holiday observance.

To accept Scrooge as an incipient humanitarian admittedly requires an exercise of the imagination; Ebenezer, being an Englishman, did not wear his heart on his frayed sleeve. (However) our pilgrimage to the austere quarters of Ebenezer Scrooge has, I hope, made him seem a less repellent figure.

Plainly the time has come for the twentieth-century Scroogians to rebuild Ebenezer's reputation. Perhaps a formal organization—say "Scroogians for Holiday Inaction"—is indicated. There must be many disaffected adherents of Saint Nicholas who could be easily won over to Saint Ebenezer, especially if they were not required to embrace his Total Abstinence Principle.

'Summer Of Happiness'

Movie Lauded As 'Beautiful'

By ELLIE GULLATT

Once in a great while a movie is filmed which is so exquisitely beautiful in every facet that one feels quite unable to discuss it adequately. Such a movie is "One Summer Of Happiness" now showing at the State Theatre. Although spoken in Swedish and "understandable," in the sense of words, only through the medium of English subtitles, I felt that the movie might have been even more beautiful had the subtitles been omitted entirely. For the simplicity, the sensitivity with which this story was filmed, gave it a universal appeal far beyond the immediate cogency of verbal expression. I wish I had the space to take each scene individually and discuss it; but since I don't, I will merely say that, in general, the photography was done with infinite taste and discretion, the acting was handled with restraint and intelligence, and the story was the quintessence of simple and poetic innocence.

In regard to the photography, I felt that it so far outclassed the average run of films that there would be no ground for comparison. Every shot said something relevant to the story, yet nothing was grandiose; the subtle studies in human character given in the very first scene of the movie, for example, are worthy of the Grand Prize awarded this film at the Cannes Film Festival.

The acting and the story must be discussed jointly, since they are ultimately dependent upon each other for life. The acting had the quality of intense understanding that can only be achieved by artists, and the story

they acted was one of the rarest pieces of beauty one could imagine—the story of love between the souls of the eternally and tragically young. It was the story of innocence in a world of self-righteous hypocrisy, of delicate human emotion amid the grossness of over-civilized ignorance. This is an honest movie; and, for that very reason, it is misunderstood.

My main criticism lies not with the film itself, but rather with the audience which hooted and sniggered at its loveliness. Perhaps I saw it on a poor night, but I left the theatre very much disgusted by the audience reaction. The movie was advertised as "for adults only" but the advertisement should have read—for adult minds only. To reduce this film to the level of pornography is, in my eyes, to reduce the tenderness, the nobility, the immortality of man to a ludicrous and slightly jaded joke.

Toulouse-Lautrec once said, when accused of painting lewd pictures, that the obscenity was not in his work but rather in the mind of the spectator. For me, the hoots and cat-calls, obviously an expression of vicarious excitement, which I heard in the climactic moments of this film were proof of the high degree of adolescent thinking in the minds of those 21 and over. "One Summer of Happiness" has all the poignant, momentary beauty of innocence; it is pure poetry—and if viewed with a sensitive, intelligent mature attitude, it is bound to touch the deepest, most responsive emotions in the soul.

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