

Satirical Verse *The Blasted Pine*
[The following poems seem consistent with the overall thrust of the
material on this web page.]

Satirical Verse: Some Poems from *The Blasted Pine*¹

THE PROGRESS OF SATIRE

(To F.R.S. and A.J.M.S.)

Reading a dead poet
Who complained in his time
Against bad laws, bad manners,
And bad weather in bad rhyme.

I thought how glad he'd be
To be living in our time
To damn worse laws, worse manners
And worse weather in worse rhyme.

Luis Dudek

THE USE OF FORCE (p 111)

Please don't believe
The use of force
Is how we change the social course;
The use of force
You surely know
Is how we keep the status quo.

John K Rooke

TO A GENERATION UNEMPLOYED (p 42)

Epitaph

These at a time when stocks were falling,
A hour when bonds had taken flight,
Forsook their mercenary calling
And walked out blindly in the night.
They ceased to earn and markets mended;
They starved and spared the budget grief.
We all were brave; ah! They were splendid
And rescued business—on relief.

AQUARIUS

From *Canadian Forum* October 1956.

¹ F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith *The Blasted pine: An Anthology of Satire Invective and Disrespectful Verse Chiefly by Canadian Writers*. (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1957).

FIVE-PER- CENT (p 38)

Because I have ten thousand pounds I sit upon my stern,
And leave my living tranquilly for other folks to earn,
For in some procreative way that isn't very clear,
Ten thousand pounds will breed, they say, five hundred every year,
So as I have a healthy hate of economic strife,
I mean to stand aloof from it the balance of my life.
And yet with sympathy I see the grimy son of toil,
And heartily congratulate the tiller of the soil,
I like the miner in the mine, the sailor on the sea,
Because up to five hundred pounds they sail and mine for me,
For me their toil is taxed unto that annual extent.
According to the holy shibboleth of Five-per-Cent.

So get ten thousand pounds, my friend, in any way you can,
And leave your future welfare to the noble Working Man,
He'll buy your suits of Harris tweed, an Airedale and a car;
Your golf clubs and your morning *Times*, your whiskey and cigar,
He'll cosily install you in a cottage by a stream,
With every modern comfort, and a garden that's a dream.
Or if your tastes be urban, he'll provide you with a flat,
Secluded from the clamour of the proletariat.
With pictures, music, easy chairs, a table of good cheer,
A chap can mangage nicely on five hundred pounds a year,
And though around you painful signs of industry you view
Why should you work when you can make your money work for you?

So I'll get down upon my knees and bless the Working Man,
Who offers me a life of ease through all my mortal span;
Whose loins are lean to make me fat, who slaves to keep me free,
Who dies before his prime to let me round the century;
Whose wife and children toil in turn until their strength is spent
That I may live in idleness upon my Five-per-Cent.
And if at times they curse me, why should I feel any blame?
For in my place I know that they would do the very same.
Aye, though they hoist a flag that's red on Sunday afternoon,
Just offer them them thousand pounds and see them change their tune.
So I'll enjoy my dividends and live my life with zest,
And bless the mighty men who first—invented interest.

ROBERT W SERVICE

From *Bar Room Ballads*, 1940

HYMN TO THE GLORY OF FREE ENTERPRISE (p 39)

Solo: An Elder Statesman

1.
Of freedom this and freedom that the drooling leftist chatters,
But Freedom for Free Enterprise is all that really matters;
This freedom was ordained by God, upon it rest all others,
For man's divinest impulse is to over-reach his brothers;
And so to this celestial urge we make our offering votive;
Behind all human greatness lies the noble Profit Motive,

Chorus of Bankers, Brokers, Executives and Advertising Men

Then hail we now Free Enterprise
Extol and give it praise!
In it the world's salvation lies,
Without it every freedom dies;
O glorious Free Enterprise—
The enterprise that pays!

Solo: The President of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association

2.
For victory we're giving all, at scarcely more than cost,
But what's the good of victory if Free Enterprise is lost?
The war's demands for well-laid plans most loyally we've heeded.
But peace is quite a different thing—no planning then is needed.
So, while today these damned controls have stretched us to the rack
The moment victory comes in sight we want our freedom back.

Chorus:

Then hail we now Free Enterprise,
Extol and give it praise!
In armed revolt we'll all arise
If any postwar party tries
To undermine Free Enterprise—
The enterprise that pays.

Solo: The President of the Canadian Banker's Association

3
We face today a dreadful threat from foes who would destroy us'
Of something called "Security" they prate in accents joyous.
Security? Its cost alone would drive us to perdition;

Besides, it kills initiative and suffocates ambition.
Security breaks down the will, the urge that keeps men free,
It stifles effort, starves the soul—except in men like me.

Chorus:

Then hail we now Free Enterprise,
Extol and give it praise!
While Marsh and Beveridge theorize
Their deadly bolshevistic lies
Are poisoning Free Enterprise—
The enterprise that pays.

Solo: The President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

4
At periods when Free Enterprise may not provide employment!
We dread the thought of hungry men—it lessens our enjoyment;
The government must then step in, with this consideration:
That any public works proposed do not increase taxation.
Depressions, after all, my friends, much as we may deplore them,
Are acts of God. Who ever heard of blaming business for them?

Chorus:

Then hail we now Free Enterprise,
Extol and give it praise!
Of course, when profits shrink in size,
To lay men off is only wise;
We dearly love Free Enterprise
But only when it pays.

Solo: The President of the Advertising Association

5
Conspirators on every side Free Enterprise have slandered,
Forgetting that it's given us the world's best living standard'
We eat and drink supremely well at Royal York and Rideau.
And no one drives more Cadillacs or bigger ones than we do.
How blind the socialist who plots this way of life to shatter!
Free Enterprise brings wealth to all—at least to those who matter.

Chorus:

Then hail we now Free Enterprise,
Extol and give it praise!
The working man must recognize,
That, if in want he lives and dies,
It just his lack of enterprise—
The enterprise that pays.

Solo: The President of a Very Large Corporation

6

Free Enterprise, does not, of course, means actual competition,
And cutting prices—God forbid! That’s treason and sedition.
A “Gentleman’s Agreement” is the best of all devices
To stabilize our dividends, our markets, and our prices.
For taking risks we’ve little love; we set our whole affection
On something like monopoly, with adequate protection.

Chorus:

Then hail we now Free Enterprise,
Extol and give it praise!
In it the world’s salvation lies
Without it every freedom dies;
O glorious Free Enterprise
O wonderful Free Enterprise,
O marvellous Free Enterprise—
The enterprise that pays.

J. D. KETCHUM

THE SERVICE CLUB (p 43)

1

The Service Club, on Wednesday noons,
Put on their tags, and shouted tunes—
All songs of noble theme and style,
As, “Pack your troubles up and smile”.

These “angels” never sang hosannas
But chanted, “We have no bananas.”
The air was thick with “Bill” and “Jack”,
And each man thumped the other’s back.
A bowl of soup, a slab of beef
Went swiftly sliding down each throat:

Their mastication would bring grief
To ostrich, pelican or goat,
Then cigarettes cam out to heal
All memories of their awful meal;
And some to ease digestion's scars
Smoked wheezy pipes and fat cigars;
For dinner at a service club
Is strong on smoke and short on grub.

2

The president then rapped a gong,
And chairs scraped back in raucous song;
And with a monumental boost
The speaker then was introduced.
And, when he started in to tell
Them only things they cared to hear,
Like blurring ghosts in cloudy hell
They gave him an attentive ear.
The famous orator was brought
Because he never dislodged thought.
And if the interest seemed to lag
He praised the clergy and the flag
He lauded surgeons and their knives,
He blessed all mother and all wives.

His talk was like a soothing drug
That made men want to kiss and hug;
Or give one hundred thousand bucks
To under-privileged woodchucks.
Who got this way, now here's the rub,
Because the motto of this club
Was ever this—the thought quite missed 'em—
That no one musty destroy the System.

3

The speaker paused; he knew his speech
Had not disturbed a soul in reach;
And so he brought his gifts to rally
In one magnificent finale,
Wherein he spake, with raised hand:
“We live in God's anointed land,
The world is fine, the weather's grand!”
And at this most amazing truth
He took his chair and picked his tooth.
And all the ghosts in cloudy hell
Cried “Bravo, bravo, all is well.”

And when their wild applause had died
Men rushed in torrents to his side
And told how they were edified.

4

Next Wednesday noon, at half-past twelve,
These men to Barnum's Inn will go
To keep the vacuum of their days
In one sublime perpetual flow.

WILSON MacDONALD

From Comber Cove, 1937.

Psalm 23 (p 113)

Revised Version

The Christian's my keeper; I shall not want.
He letteth me to eat rock in pastures;
He slaketh me beside the salt waters.
He visas my soul;
He heedeth me with the stamp of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yes, though I crawl through the alleys of the countries of death,
I will feel no sanction: for thou art with me.
Committee and staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a paper about me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest mine-ear with words; my cup runneth over.
Purely Aryan blood-cells may flow for all the days of thy life,
But I will dwell in the blood of the Lord for ever.

RALPH GUSTAFSON

THE SCEPTIC (p 85)

My Father Christmas passed away
When I was barely seven,
At twenty-one, alack-a-day,
I lost my hope of heaven.

Yet not in either lies the curse:
The hell of it because
I don't know which loss hurt the worse—
My God or Santa Claus.

Robert W. Service

Spiritual Passages:

Isaiah 10²

1 Woe to those who make unjust laws,
to those who issue oppressive decrees,

2 to deprive the poor of their rights
and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,
making widows their prey
and robbing the fatherless.

3 What will you do on the day of reckoning,
when disaster comes from afar?
To whom will you run for help?
Where will you leave your riches?

... for I was hungry and you gave Me food;
I was thirsty and you gave Me drink;
I was a stranger and you took Me in;
I was naked and you clothed Me;
I was in prison and you came to Me.

Assuredly, I say to you,
inasmuch as you did it to one of
the least of these My brethren,
you did it to Me.

Matthew 25:35-40

John Watson, *The Interpretation of Religious Experience*.

“... the only church which can possibly guarantee truth is the invisible church, the spirit that works in humanity as a whole. ...The only defense of any form of religious ritual must therefore be its adequacy to express in symbol the ideas and emotions of the human soul. ...The work of that rational spirit which constitutes the essential nature of man [and which has resulted] ...in the formation of the family, the industrial community, the state...is therefore to build up social and

² New International Version (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society
<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?search=isaiah%2010:1-3&version1=31>

political institutions, which free him from the tyranny of his immediate impulses and make him a member of a whole larger than his individual self.”³

³ John Watson, *The Interpretation of Religious Experience*. The Gifford Lectures, University of Glasgow 1910-1912. (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1912). See in particular: Lecture Thirteenth, “The Invisible Church and Immortality,” 304, 299. The argument implicit in the syllogisms provided above may be viewed against that of John Watson in *The Interpretation of Religious Experience*. For example: •298 “Evil, as we have seen, marks the transition by which man advances to good, and in this sense it is a necessary condition of good. This transition cannot but take place, because man’s true nature is that towards which he is progressing, not his first or original nature. In man the clear spirit of God is immanent, and when he comes to a clear consciousness of himself, he learns that only in identity with that spirit can he overcome the evil in the world and in himself.” •298 “The process by which man comes into union with God is not one which belongs purely to the individual, but is made possible only by the combination of men in society.” •298 “We must ...be careful to distinguish between the church as a special organization and *the true or invisible church, as composed of all who aid in the never ceasing warfare of good with evil.*” Italics added. •299 “[the will of God] ...is practically embodied in all the agencies which help him [man] realize his true nature. ...it is the invisible church, which must be identified with the Kingdom of the Spirit. The invisible church comprehends the whole of life.” ...•300 “...identification with the universal good.” •299 “The work of that rational spirit which constitutes the essential nature of man [and which has resulted] ...in the formation of the family, the industrial community, the state...is therefore to build up social and political institutions, which free him from the tyranny of his immediate impulses and make him a member of a whole larger than his individual self.” •300 “Religion is life in the spirit, and the spirit specializes itself in all the agencies which tend to uplift humanity.” •301 “Science art and religion are all essential to the complete development of humanity, and the perfection of any one of them is made possible only by the perfection of the others.” •302 “The invisible church is not a community of slaves but of free men, and therefore men must be allowed freedom of action, even if it leads ultimately to evil. In no other way can a spiritual community be developed. ...Compulsion and freedom are incompatible, and not less compatible are compulsion and spirituality.” •302 “...the invisible church... is eternal; but its eternity is that of a living, growing and developing organism, which never loses its identity, and yet is perpetually undergoing change.” •302-303 “The invisible church had its beginnings in the first gleam of the higher life that presented itself to the obscure vision of primitive man, and it can never perish, because it is the expression of the divine spirit as it works in the inner being of man. ...the principle upon which it is based can only suffer development, never complete abrogation. That principle is the essential identity of man and God—a principle which is ever receiving a deeper and wider application, but which always preserves the same fundamental character.” [This means, I, take it, that God is an all embodying character, “wholism” is holism. If man and God are identified according to Watson, then the ultimate nature of man is to embody holism in his being and living expression. So transcend disciplinarity, be sustainable.] •304 “...the only church which can possibly guarantee truth is the invisible church, the spirit that works in humanity as a whole. ...The only defense of any form of religious ritual must therefore be its adequacy to express in symbol the ideas and emotions of the human soul.”