Disgust with Life—and yet Joy of Life.

Surely there is scarcely anyone who would not (if, in private conversation with him, I were to say: my whole misfortune is that I have no livelihood, no official position, that's why people contend with me)—who would not quite coolly say: that too is fundamentally how things are—and then smile wisely. This wise smile, then, was at my expense—that I am mad enough to want actually to be self-disregarding, to want actually to serve the idea etc., and then, we are all Xns, and there are 1000 salaried teachers of Xnty—disgusting!

There are no doubt only very few who privately do not have, yes, even a great sense of the standard according to which I am right. But say it; no, none, no one will do that, or risk it. It is as if, in a kind of silent conversation with me, contemporaries said to me: die—then it will be said loudly and clearly enough, but not in living life. Disgusting!

And when I am dead—alas, how profoundly this thought hurts me, that here again the true state of affairs will not be revealed, the world acquires the appearance of being an excellent world. For the moment I am dead the declaimers will overbid one another in declaiming, and this declaiming may, perhaps even in tears, look deceptively like true ardor. It cannot be verified—for our contemporary, he is now dead; and that contemporary whom they now abuse, yes, that is something else, as it is said: he is not the truly great—perhaps until he is dead. Disgusting!

And that’s why I have a desire to live. Possibly we might even live to see someone in living life achieving both: the abuse—and then being triumphant, so long as it was an honest pers. Would to God, were it to fall to me, that I would be honest.

For it has often occurred that a man who has suffered abuse has then triumphed; but look, he was simply out for his own advantage and then, when he had triumphed, he was happy and pleased and

[1]Only one came forward, gave the impression that he was, and took credit for being, the one person who dealt fairly and squarely with my cause; and this first performance was precisely the deception that has affected me most painfully—Alas, and even I have not dared assert my right, for fear that it was impatience in the face of God, as though I would spare myself.
not mad enough to rake up the past—ergo the world got away with it.

The honest pers. who loves the truth, not himself, loves to make peop. attentive, not [to] himself; on the contrary he himself, at the very moment that he triumphs and everyone has wanted to join him, and the lie is in full swing with “it’s what we always said about him,”—those who have abused him become no one, become something rather in the way one says to the child it was the cat that did it—he, the honest pers. will precisely use that moment to say: No, stop, what do I care about this recognition that is just as untrue as was the abuse; but now I will talk of the abuse and show you how things go in the world.

This is what has been achieved here: it was the same peop., and it was in relation to the same person—cheating is impossible here—if, finally, this same pers. loves the truth rather than himself. Clearly it can cost him dearly, since these same people will be extremely provoked because they could not get permission to transform the whole world into balderdash.

Alas, but a beautiful task for an honest pers., it gives an appetite for life! Oh, you noble peop., you who through a long, long, long life’s bitter, bitter days, day after day, became victims of human baseness and were never proved right; then the grave closed over you, and only now was the most atrocious injustice done to you, now the declaimers came forward—and wept and declaimed, and it was an excellent world: Oh you noble peop., you nod to me your support. Without anger, without bitterness, I wanted just one thing: that I should succeed in catching the human baseness in the act, in such a way that the declaimers should not give me the slip. Oh, that this should be offered to me, the greatest honor and regard ever tendered a human being—and yet, my God, my God keep me so upright that I use the moment in an upright way, reject all this and just ask one thing, willingly, without anger, but certainly not without sadness, to make them attentive to what confusion life is—then I ask no more.

“Christendom” Is Nonsense.

I undertake to prove, so clearly that the plain man can grasp it, that if someone wants seriously to give expression to what is Christian in his life, things will go wrong for him. That is, insofar
as all of us get along quite well in the world, not to speak of those who even make a success of it, then the reason for this is that we abstain from Christian practice. But then what do we need the 1000 priests for? What helps us and the priests decently through life is that we refrain from doing what is Christian. So are the 1000 priests there in order to help us refrain from doing what is Christian?

Yet what else can it be than balderdash when such a thing as Xnty is supposed to be the life-view of everybody, by the millions.

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A Motto.

I have read in Scriver that there was a man whose motto was:

Aliis inserviendo consumor,

It fits my life, I am sacrificed for others. Allis inserviendo consumer.

‡

‡

A Priest’s Difficult Situation.

A widow dies. While alive she had a very substantial pension, she left some fortune. On the other hand, she has been a great benefactor. Well, that’s what the priest can say. But he is inspired, he feels (perhaps uninvited, as one says, though we certainly know what that means) called upon to speak in loud tones of this rare beneficence, he says: She was not just generous, no, like that widow in the gospel, she gave the last penny to the poor. Now this is both a lie, and—yes, now comes the satirical difficulty!—it is a lie, this can be proved—amazing!—it can be proved by the priest’s oration. If the widow had quite literally given the last penny to the poor, then she would not have left one single farthing—and accordingly neither had she left anything with which to pay the priest, and then what? She would not have had any funeral oration, at least not such a beautiful funeral oration, which is not too dear at the price of 50 rix-dollars.

‡

14 Aliis inserviendo consumor] Latin, Serving others, I consume myself. (See also explanatory note.)
About Myself.

And they accuse me of pride, that I want to stand alone. Oh, you who speak, ask yourself honestly, how am I to find one more person who (in addition to the preliminary requirements, had the time and the preconditions to work in that direction) would unite with me, not about enduring something so as to triumph (no, that could certainly be achieved), but to hold out so as to triumph—and then to use the triumph not to achieve anything, to use it to shed light on the truth, a light that might perhaps embitter contemporaries once more and even more strongly.

Blasphemy.

Although in Christendom there is Sunday talk of Christ being the exalted prototype that the Christian strives to resemble, it is always implied that no one is foolish enough to attempt any such imitation.

This, you see, is what Christendom calls piety, fear of God. If, however, anyone makes an attempt so to place “the prototype” in actuality that there might be a little earnest in this imitation, then they say “It is blasphemy”—that is, earnest is blasphemy.

Mynster’s Art of Governing.

If it is commendable from the viewpoint of political prudence, from the Christian point of view it is indefensible, since it is in principle the diametrical opposite of Christianity.

What has concerned Mynster above all, and still does, is that on no account should anyone’s life be allowed to give expression to there being something in and for itself. This in and for itself, together with the fact of its existing, is what is most dangerous for secular and temporal government, it causes disquiet; so if anyone wants to do something gratuitously, this is in Mynster’s eyes a crime; for then he and his existence become incommensurable. No, if someone, e.g., has an urge to preach, then this must find expression in his procuring a position, and thus in everything. There is to be no infinite as such; no, it must come out even; everything must be explicable in terms of the relative
and must be subsumed into the relative. Then it is a pleasure to govern, yes, an almost voluptuous pleasure. One allows (and does it oneself) the infinite to be talked about in lofty tones, that noble enthusiasm that wills the good alone—but also makes sure that this remains only a manner of speaking, because for actuality there is always an annotation interpreting it in the relative and by the relative.

One is of the view that religiousness has its place—but there is concern above all to keep it from emerging into actuality, to confine it to certain quiet hours. In such a quiet hour the speaker (and one does it oneself) may gesticulate violently in the pulpit—but then no more; this sublimity has no place in actuality.

So it is with everything Mynsterian. It is political pedagogy but the diametrical opposite of Christianity.

†

Mynster.

If Mynster had governed according to his principles of government—and for the sake of caution lived in poverty and strict abstinence, the matter would be otherwise; there would then be no doubt that it was a principle that had determined him, that it was actually for the sake of the principle. Now it’s another matter, for now it may be doubted whether he might not have governed in the way he has governed—in order to spare himself, in order to enjoy life, and the like.

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The Illusions. Mundus \textit{vult} decipi.

Let me use myself—and oh, only do me the favor of being willing to understand.

When I was reduplicating most vigorously, using most of my energy in removing illusions, my reputation was low.

Then I risked the extreme, threw myself at the rabble. I saw then that for a moment the task was too big for me; I nearly had to fear mob violence against me in the streets.

So I withdrew a little. I was seen a little less frequently on the street. I turned a little toward keeping up connections with the

\footnote{Mundus \textit{vult} decipi\footnote{Latin, The world wants to be deceived. (See also explanatory note.)}}
elite; my behavior was somewhat altered; I did not involve myself with people so much, kept them at a distance—and my standing increased—alas! for there was a little illusion involved.

Why has Mynster’s reputation been so high? Because he has been supported in such an exceptionally strong way by illusions. But then, doesn’t his reputation rest on his talents and so on? Talent and genius? Forget it. No genius was ever born so powerful as to be assured of the esteem of the crowd—without making use of illusions.

That it has to be like this is easy to see. If the crowd were to recognize the truth without illusions, then the crowd itself would of course have to be in the truth. But take it from me, it is an extremely rare person who can recognize the truth without illusion. But, if the crowd cannot recognize the truth without illusions, then of course it is also impossible for them to be able to honor and esteem it. Ergo, there must be illusions if one is to attain honor and esteem.

The geniuses are therefore ranked according to the energy with which they can dissolve the illusions, or remove them—but so much less the esteem among their contemporaries.

If the truth all by itself could be recognized by the crowd and esteemed as such, God would have benefited when he wanted to reveal himself. But what happened? The very opposite; he was mistreated and put to death. Why? Precisely because he has the power of the divine to dissolve the illusions. What helps us hum. beings is that we do not have such energies and such purity to dissolve illusions—there will always be[a] a portion of illusion left over and also to that extent, for us, some esteem.

It is this, among other things, that I want to make peop. aware of, and for this purpose I mean to use my own life. With God’s help I will not be tricked into the illusion that my growing reputation has any other ground than that I have been forced to set up a little illusion—alas! I am just a poor wretch of a hum. being, but calling attention, that I can.

*
"The System" has practically vanished. If two students converse and mention the System, they begin almost involuntarily to smile.

I hope that, with God’s help, “hidden inwardness” will go the same way: when two preachers converse and mention hidden inwardness, they begin involuntarily to smile.

“The Public” too, is well on the way. What joy when the concept one day succumbs, along with “the majority,” “the ballot,” etc.

Plus dolet, quam necesse est, qui ante dolet, quam necesse est.

Seneca ep. 98.

Mynster—and Me

M. has preached Xnty into an illusion, fixedly into an illusion—that too is why my operations had to be as dialectical as they were.

M. has this similarity with Louis Phillip: without this boost from the idea, without existential pathos, but with the judicious use of petty means, and with the understanding that making a living is what rly rules the world, and that the person who has livings in his gift rules fairly securely.

Latin, The person who feels pain before it is necessary feels more pain than is necessary. (See also explanatory note.)

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The main part of entry NB21:16 was written in a Latin hand; the marginal addition to it was written in a Gothic hand.
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What Is Christianity? Or Rather, What Christianity Is

Christianity is no doctrine.
Christianity is a believing and a correspondingly quite definite kind of existing, imitation.

Note. Christianity is not to be defined as a faith that tends toward “doctrine,” but is a believing.

That is, Christianity is a believing and an imitation. One can make faith the first and imitation the second, insofar as it is after all necessary that what exists for me in faith is what I am to imitate.—One can make faith the first and imitation the second, insofar as it is necessary that through one or another action that more or less has the mark of conforming somewhat with Christian ethics (the unconditional), I must collide with the world in such a way that I am brought into a situation and into the tension of the situation in which for the first time there can be properly be talk of becoming a believer.

This, that the action- or deed-situation is the presupposition for becoming a believer, that is, that believing corresponds to the situation: this proves the reciprocal relation between faith and imitation.

* * *

1 5

―Christ, who never gets involved with proving his teaching’s truth or with giving a reason for it, uses only one proof: “Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.” This implies that a situation of action is required in order to come into the tension in which the decision of belief can come into being; it is a deed of daring. It is not then (in the way hum.

beings have turned it around) first the proof, then the daring (which is also a self-contradiction and balderdash); no, first the daring and then comes the proof afterward—you will experience that the teaching is truth. But people do not want to take a risk; they have therefore made Xnty into a doctrine that one can sit down and prove without there occurring any essential change in one’s personal existence. And deflated, one blows oneself up with the certainty of three reasons; more inflated than a pasha with three horsetails, one turns up one’s nose at the Socratic “If there should be an immortality.” One calls it the purely subjective: and yet Christ also recognizes just this one proof of the teaching:

If anyone will … he shall experience.