

Lee, William. 'A Moral Satire, by Daniel Defoe'. *Notes and Queries*. 3rd Series.  
VII (3 June 1865): 431.

I duly placed to the credit of Defoe the compliments I received on account of his letter last published in *Notes and Queries*. My manuscript of his hitherto unknown writings now fills many hundred pages of foolscap paper, and is increasing daily. I have no doubt the following Introductory Article, from *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* of the 28th October, 1721, will be equally acceptable; and, if desired, I will afterwards send one or two articles containing my author's views on the Assassination of Rulers, mournfully appropriate to the present time.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr Applebee, It is a long while ago that I wrote to you anything about Religion. I pray you, if it be in the Power of any of the Members of your Oracle, tell me what Religion are you Journal Writers of?

I have heard it related, how true I know not, that when the Dutch Ships came to Japan, and the Merchants heard that the King of the Country had resolv'd to admit no Christians to Trade there, no not on pain of Death; they resolv'd, when the Question was ask'd them, not to say they were Christians, but to say they were Hollanders.

Now, I think, when any Man asks, as above, what Religion you are of, that is, you of the Brotherhood, you should answer, not that you are Christians or Protestants, but that you are *Printers*.

As St James says, that out of the same Mouth comes Blessing and Cursing; so out of the same Printing House comes Prayers and Play Books, Bibles and Ballads; the same *Types*, or Letters, compose the Companion for the Altar, and a Companion for the Halter : One Day you print for King George; and another Day Treason against King George; one Day you print Devotion, and the next Day Blasphemy; one Day for the King, another for the Pretender; one Day for God and the next Day for the Devil; and all is one to the Printer; he is a Printer still.

Well, the Letters may be Tories, but the Press is always a Whig; for it lives by Liberty, and often times (like some Whigs too) it turns that Liberty into Licentiousness : Liberty of the Press may be the most needful Liberty, but it is the most abus'd Liberty in the World; and therefore it is that I argue, that you ought not to say you are of any Religion, but that you are *Printers*.

And yet, after all, you may plead in your own Defence, that you have as much Religion as your Neighbours; for pray, if we come to argue upon the Square, let them tell us :

1. What Religion is a Bookseller? that sells you all you print, and puts the Money which he gets by Religious Books, or Blasphemous Books, Modest and Bawdy, Adorable and Horrible, all into one Pocket, and all the Men alive can't know the Shillings asunder.

2. What Religion is a South Sea Director? who gives one Account in upon Oath, and swears 'tis true, *so help him God*; but when his Neck is ty'd to it, and he is to say, *May I be hang'd if it is not!* then gives another Oath, and another Account, perhaps double to the former?

3. What Religion is a Statesman? who to-day serves one Prince and to-morrow serves his Enemy; to-day swears to him, to-morrow fights against him; to-day wears his Badge, to-morrow affronts him : of such this Nation has had many. I do not say there have been any in this Age; and if there were, I am not talking about them!

4. What Religion pray is a Modern Arian of? who prays to Christ Jesus, and denies him; worships him, and yet disowns his being a God; stands up at the Prayers, and sits down at the Doxology; stays in the church at the Psalm, but goes out at the *Gloria Patri!*

Certainly these are Hereticks, they must not be call'd Christians : I could name you abundance of double-minded Christians of this kind, besides these; but, for the present, let these few serve, and when I can be inform'd what to call these People I may talk with you again.

In a Word, Religion is so much lost among these Sorts of People, that if I were of their Council, they should be advised to talk no more of it in the World, or to separate it, at least, from all the rest of their Management, as a Thing they can as well do without; and thus, I think, I have made your Printers amends for enquiring after your Religion.

There are some Exchange-Alley Men whose Religion it would be hard to determine; but as they belong to another Country, where that may be Honesty which is not Honesty in our Country; and where that may be Religion which is not Religion in our Church, I therefore leave them to be try'd by a Jury of Foreigners like themselves, and shall talk next Time to you of the Religion of another sort of Folks, who pretend to more Religion than other People, but really have as little as any Body : 'Tis a strange thing to say, but it is too evident, there are Hypocrites in Politicks as well as in Religion; and we see some of your Profession practising the Art of Daubing as well as other Painters; but of this more hereafter.

I am, Sir, your Humble Servant,  
"Sincerity"

I did not remark upon the beauties of the last letter forwarded. It is equally unnecessary to do so with the present, especially to the readers of *Notes and Queries*.  
William Lee

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<sup>1</sup> Any communications illustrative of the life of Defoe will be acceptable. –Ed.