

Prize Christmas Quiz – Part Four

If you missed them you can find Part One [by clicking this link](#) and Part Two [by clicking this link](#) and Part Three [by clicking this link](#) .

It's Christmas Day so there's only two easy little questions for you to ponder as you digest your excellent lunch:

1) Why is Santa always represented as being stout, with a white beard and

wearing a red suit?

2) What have a penny, Christmas day and a church got to do with a very close

relationship?

There will be answers to every part of the quiz after the New Year.

There will be a small prize (see below) for the first person, drawn at random, who correctly answers all, or the most, questions in the whole quiz and emails me their answers to

jmj@newenglishreview.org .

You may email your answers to each section as you finish it or save them all up and email me the lot when the quiz is complete, so don't lose your answers in the meantime if you choose to do the latter.

Even if you don't manage to answer every question, or think that you might have got some wrong answers, do still join in and send me your entry – you might still win.

In the spirit of Christmas I suppose I should tell you what the small prize is – after all, one is allowed to open one's presents today. The winner will receive a copy of 'The Terror of Existence: From Ecclesiastes to Theatre of the Absurd' by Theodore Dalrymple and Kenneth Francis.

This book poses many interesting questions. The cultural death of God has created a conundrum for intellectuals. How could a life stripped of ultimate meaning be anything but absurd? How was man to live? How could he find direction in a world of no direction? What would he tell his children that could make their lives worthwhile? What is the ground of morality?

Existentialism is the literary *cri de coeur* resulting from the realisation that without God, everything good, true and beautiful in human life is destined to be destroyed in a pitiless material cosmos. Theodore Dalrymple and Kenneth Francis examine the main existentialist works, from Ecclesiastes to the Theatre of the Absurd, each man coming from a different perspective. Francis is a believer, Dalrymple is not, but both empathise with the struggle to find meaning in a seemingly meaningless universe.

Part literary criticism, part philosophical exploration, this book holds many surprising gems of insight from two of the most interesting minds of our time and I thoroughly recommend it as a cracking good read for the winter.

Merry Christmas.

Enjoy!