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Views and Opinions

About God

Let us assume there is a God. That is a very large assumption, but it is made by millions of people, and though it may be illogical, yet it is only by way of the illogical that one assumes God. For the only way to prove the existence of God is to take him for granted. The biblical "Though he slay me yet will I trust him," may well find its worldly analogue in "Though all I say concerning God may be unadulterated nonsense, yet will I regard his existence as one of the most unshakable and the most valuable of truths." The religious man may reach truth—of a kind—but he cannot begin with it. Some of the finest religious conclusions have no foundation, in fact, and if lack of logic or relevance was an offence under the vagrancy acts, a great many religious beliefs would be imprisoned, or impounded, for having no visible means of support. Consider the state of mind of the cleric who mourns the decay of an *indestructible* religious faculty! Or the bulky volumes that are written to prove that the existence of God is self-evident. Consider also the screaming campaign now carried on by ministers of all denominations, to prove that God alone can give us the victory against Germany, that we must give all our spare time to prayer, but put all we have into the making of guns, aeroplanes and battleships, and build bombproof shelters for use during air-raids. Church altars are protected by sandbags and Church valuables are buried in deep vaults. Decidedly we must be illogical if we are to continue believing in God. It is the only road by which we may reach God; it is the only method by which we may keep him once we have found him.

* * *

Suppose God Exists

So let us assume that God exists. And when I say God I mean the kind of God in which religious people of all ages have believed. It will not do to follow the prevailing fashion and call anything God. A kind-of-a-sort-of-something will not do. It must be someone, not some thing. One cannot kneel in prayer before a mathematical formula or rhapsodise on the prospect of standing face to face with the Infinite, even though we spell it with a capital initial letter. A man may find comfort in the company of a dog or feel less lonesome in the presence of the "harmless necessary cat," but both are alive and respond to our approaches with a friendly wag of a tail or an appreciative purr. The real value of these attempts to convert "God" into something so general and so meaningless, a mere abstraction that is an excuse for perpetuating a sheer superstition, is seen when we turn to a genuine religious service in any Church, the kind of service by which a clergyman earns his bread and butter—if so gross a phrase as bread and butter may be used in this connexion. Then all these abstractions are set aside and God becomes a father, a ruler,

a companion, one who listens, who hears what we want, who delights in the form of flattery and supplication that is in all ages the very essence of prayer. God is once again an exaggerated human being, who punishes and rewards and helps—on terms. All the fantastic and unreal apologies why the modern educated man attends a religious service falls to the ground, and we are back with the big bogey man ruler of nature who is addressed with the same formality employed by the swinehead of earlier days addressing his Lord.

The plain truth is that the God of real religion has always been and still is a bogeyman, with a personality similar to our own, but unfettered by the social rules that govern us. If God was not of this kind, we might take the same interest in him that we take in some animal monstrosity, or natural curiosity that might find its place in a museum, but it would be the height of absurdity to sing hymns to him, to praise him, or to look to him for help.

Certainly, then, if we are to be religious we must be illogical, and just a trifle dishonest, particularly if we are engaged in the parsonic business, and are busy touting for more customers for the industry we represent. Then the parson dons the dress of the medicine-man and adopts the ancient attitude to the gods that man has made in his own image. This game of in and out, worshipping an anthropomorphic deity disguised as a metaphysical abstraction is called deceit in common life—when it is not called by a yet harsher name, but in religion it illustrates the inextinguishable thirst of man for God. The police have another name for it.

Now let us assume that God, a real true-blue God exists. What does he exist for? What does he do? Does he do what we might reasonably expect him to do? And does he do it in the way we might reasonably expect him to do it? After all we are asked to praise him for his goodness, his wisdom, his power and his concern for the well-being of man. So much is this the case that up-to-date preachers assure us that God suffers with us, that he feels every pang we feel. The questions just asked are, therefore, not irrelevant to the situation. I think most believers would agree that if God did nothing, or if what he did was bungled, if his acts were more promiscuous than a Fascist raider scattering bombs, we should all agree that praise of God would be out of place.

* * *

Past and Present

In the heroic age of the gods it would have been meaningless to ask such a question. The gods did everything, and the question of whether they did it or not could not arise. The question of whether what the gods did was good could then only arise with reference to individual cases, and in terms of individual pains or pleasures. But the right of the gods to reward or punish could not be questioned. For the gods did as they pleased, and man's sole concern was to avoid their anger and secure their goodwill. If what the gods did was pleasing to man so much the better, if it was displeasing the question still remained, how to get right with God—as a Salvationist would put it, who is a fine anthropological survival of these early days.

But one must not be unfair, even to Salvationists. Survivals may be found wherever we look. In our English prayer book there will be found, on the one side, the assurance that whether sickness or health

comes to man they are "God's visitation," and on the other hand we have set appeals to God for fine or wet weather, petitions in time of war, in times of pestilence, prayers for Army and Navy, for a good harvest when the seed is sown, and prayerful thanksgiving at the reaping—whether the harvest be good or bad. There is a prayer for rain, with a very artfully-worded reminder to God not to lose his head and drown the world as he did in the time of Noah. And all these prayers have no meaning whatever save to register the very primitive belief that whatever happens come from the gods, and because the gods are pleased or angered with mankind. Apart from this belief they are meaningless antics.

But does anyone believe that the gods do any of these things? When we have a good harvest does anyone believe that God has had a hand in it? The language is plain enough in the prayers, but is it believed in these days that any prayer one may offer will bring rain or sunshine, will have any effect on the nature of the soil or the skill of the farmer? Books on meteorology take no notice of any possible influence of God on the weather. And in pre-war days the B.B.C. in spite of its religion saturated nature, made not the slightest allowance for God's action. It did refer to a depression in Iceland, or something else in Russia, or Ireland, or over the Atlantic, but never, never did the B.B.C. allow the smallest margin for the action of God.

Do we, does anyone believe that our success in this war will depend upon anything God may do, or upon any time we may spend informing God that a war is on and will he kindly help us lick the other fellow? Our reliance seems to be on our airmen, our sailors, our soldiers, and on the resistance shown by the general public. And one may feel assured that when an air-raid warning is given no one bothers whether the parson is spending his time at the altar asking God to lend a hand, or has, with his followers made a bolt for his "dug-out."

Now I am not foolish enough to argue that if there is a God he ought to be good, that is, that he ought to conform to our standard of goodness. The question of the existence of God and the goodness of God are quite distinct questions. And it is certain that in early stages of society the distinction does not arise. It is only as man becomes more humanized that ethical conceptions begin to play their part in civilizing the gods. The gods are never better than men, and generally lag a little in the rear. The horror that was expressed at the thought of God slaughtering his enemies was nothing more than the reaction of their humanity on early religious beliefs. Gods have nothing to do with morals, except so far as man's humanity force decency upon his gods. I am not concerned with arguing whether God is good or bad. The first thing is whether God exists. Does he do things? The question of whether he is good or bad, is secondary, and can wait. And history supplies us with all sorts of gods, good, bad and indifferent. There is not an evil that man could commit that has not been sanctioned by some god or other, or that has not been committed in the name of a God.

Assume God exists and the world does not cease to present problems, it becomes an intellectual absurdity and a moral horror. To believe in God to-day is absurd because we know the nature and origin of the belief. It is a heritage from the most ignorant stages of human history. Our disbelief in the evidence is based upon actual knowledge. The belief in the existence of gods is based entirely upon ignorance, upon mistaken interpretations of facts that are either completely or better understood. The facts upon which the belief in gods was built are well known to us, we can see the process at work with existing primitive peoples, and in the mentality of the primitives in our midst. And this leaves us with this alternative. Either we must assume that our remotely primitive ancestors were absolutely right in the one thing about which they could know nothing.

while they were wrong about all things of which knowledge was possible, or we must, in the light of present-day knowledge and understanding count the belief in gods as one of humanity's greatest and most disastrous illusions.

The moral aspect of the belief in gods is no less objectionable. The history of the god-idea is largely a record of the moralization of innumerable stupidities and brutalities. It has distorted the social and ethical side of life to an extent that only the competent anthropologist can appreciate. Shelley's lines, "The name of God has fenced all crime with holiness," is a plain statement of a hideous fact. If it is said that merely dismissing the belief in God will not solve our problem, I agree. But it will at least enable us to face them with open eyes and with minds freed from false beliefs and dangerous assumptions. Nature is neither good nor bad, it is blind to our suffering and deaf to our cries, but it is within our power so to utilize nature that we may build a society which will give us the maximum of human happiness.

CHAPMAN COHEN

The Humour of Heine

Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Information, eighteen authors have had their works burned publicly under the Nazi regime in Germany. Among the tabooed books are Einstein's *Meaning of Relativity*, H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*, and, curiously, the *Story of My Life*, by that remarkable woman, Helen Keller, who is blind, deaf and dumb. It is still strange to find among the books which Germans are forbidden to read, Heinrich Heine's works. Before Hitler was born Heine was to the Germans almost what Robert Burns is to Scots. The Kaiser might have objected to the erection of a statue of the poet at Dusseldorf, but literary Germans read and enjoyed the poems and prose of that bright genius whose works have survived the winnowing fan of time for a century.

This is not to be wondered at, for Heine's fame has outlasted all his contemporaries, with the exception of Goethe, whose reputation has suffered an eclipse in Germany in the post-war administrations, both Republican and National Socialist. Apparently, there is little room for a writer who acclaimed love, truth, and beauty, and who was great enough to say:—

How can I hate anything unless I am myself filled with hatred.

And, who, in his version of "Faust" contributed an outstanding work to literature and justified the old Greeks of their children. For Goethe was nothing if not Grecian in his outlook on life, and modern Germany is barbarian.

Heine, on the other hand, is timeless, and belongs to no period. His writings have a freshness and vitality as if they were written overnight, and not a century ago. Even his "pot-boilers" have that extraordinary quality of being evergreen, whilst his more important work has a sparkle nowhere paralleled in literature save in the bright pages of Voltaire. Heine declared, in his own inimitable fashion, that his function was to wake people up, like a flea. And, indeed, he has aroused the sleepers for five full generations.

Heine's genius almost defies analysis. He is, and must ever remain, a problem. Multifarious, luminous, brilliant, he is like a diamond giving light from a hundred facets. In one vivid personality, he gathers all those influences of his time which are live forces to-day. Such a nature was bound to be misunderstood. The puritanical Thomas Carlyle called him "a Blackguard"; the pious Kingsley thought him "a wicked man." Thackeray, on the other hand, admitted

his "great genius," and Matthew Arnold hailed him as the mouthpiece of his stormy generation in unforgettable lines:—

The spirit of the world
Beholding the absurdity of men—
Their vaunts, their feats, let a sardonic smile
For one short moment wander o'er his lips,
That smile was Heine.

These varying estimates are typical of the general attitude. Heine kindled enthusiasm or roused repulsion wherever he was read. If we would seek a comparison, we may find it in Voltaire. Both men championed Liberty, and deeply impressed their generation, and left immortal legacies to posterity. The writings of both ring with a defiance against Priestcraft.

Heine was born at a great crisis in European history. The long and terrible period during which the worst phases of Feudalism had battered on Europe was ending rapidly, and before his tenth year little Heine had lived through, and seen, great events. It was the day of Napoleon, and, as Heine puts it, "all boundaries were dislocated." As a boy, he found it hard to learn Latin declensions, which he was sure the Romans never did, "for if they had first to learn Latin, they never would have had time to conquer the world."

Republican leader as he afterwards became, Heine admired Napoleon. Nor is this to be wondered at, for the Code Napoleon to the Jewish race in particular, was a charter of freedom from the ghastly ghettos of the Middle Ages to the rights of free-born citizens, and the Jews hailed Napoleon as their deliverer and protector.

As a child, Heine loved reading. His favourite authors were brave old Cervantes and witty Jonathan Swift, and he revelled in *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver's Travels*. At the age of seventeen a rich uncle at Hamburg tried in vain to induce him to choose a business career, but it was useless. Full of lofty ideals, young Heine disliked commercialism. Later, he studied law, and fell under the influence of Hegel. Years afterwards, he referred caustically to this period as that in which he "herded swine with the Hegelians."

With the appearance of his first volume of verse he began to take his true place. He still talked of becoming a lawyer, but his thoughts were all for other things than "wise saws and modern instances." For instance, he broke out:—

Red life boils in my veins. Every woman is to me the gift of a world. I hear a thousand nightingales. I could eat all the elephants of Hindustan, and pick my teeth with the spire of Strasburg Cathedral. Life is the greatest of blessings.

The idler had found his vocation. All his energies were devoted to writing, and not to pleading. Instead of seeking for clients he wrote his *Travel Pictures*, a book so full of word-magic that it proved him to be as great an artist in prose as in verse. Its irony was so mordant, so disrespectful, that it was at once placed on the Index Expurgatorius. Indeed, as a writer, he never elected to dwell beside the still waters. Ever a fighter, his enthusiasm burnt for noble ends. And let a man love Freedom and live long enough, and there is no doubt with whom his place must be in the end.

In *The Romantic School* he attacked the then-popular writers in their tenderest spot. He compared their reversion to medievalism to the hallucinations of Charenton, the Bedlam of Paris. This, for example, is how he ridicules Ludwig Tieck:—

He drank so deeply of the medieval folk-tale ballads that he came almost a child again, and dropped into that juvenile lisp which it cost Mme de Stael so much effort to admire.

It was not to be roses all the way. There came a tragic stage in which the poet could no longer:—

Sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Nœceira's hair.

But when the sad, bad days came he never whined. For seven long years prior to his death he lay bent and solitary on "a mattress-grave," his back bent, his legs paralysed, his hands powerless, his sight failing. His ungrudging nature even found excuses for his friends' desertion of his sick-room in the reflection that he was "unconscionably long a-dying." As Matthew Arnold so finely sings in his fine dirge on his brother-poet:—

Oh! not little, when pain
Is most quelling, and man
Easily quelled, and the fine
Temper of genius so soon
Thrills at each smart, is the praise
Nor to have yielded to pain.

The untamable humourist kept his most wonderful jest for the last: "God will forgive me," he said, "it is His trade."

Heine was a Freethinker, and he hated Priestcraft with every drop of his blood. He never wearied of pouring scorn on the "molley-coddle homeopathic soul-doctors who pour the thousandth part of a pint of reason into a gallon of morals, and send people to sleep with it on Sundays." He loathed that "abortion called State religion," that monster born of the intrigue between temporal and spiritual power. He was not "over partial to anthropomorphism." The bolts of his unerring irony are often directed towards the most sacred characters in the Christian mythology. In an oft-quoted passage he says that God is dying, and, in a daring figure of speech suggests the administration of the last sacraments of the Church. On another occasion he suggested that the parvenu God of the Christians is angry with Israel for reminding him of his former obscure relations. In the lambent flames of his sardonic humour he searched everything that the Christian counts dearest. Writing of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he said:—

Immanuel Kant has pursued the path of inexorable philosophy; he has stormed heaven, and put the whole garrison to the edge of the sword.

Even the idea of immortality, the very sheet-anchor of faith, did not escape his sharp satire. He suggests, smilingly, that the notion of living for ever must have first occurred to some young lover in the arms of his mistress, or to some worthy citizen sipping his beer in the cool of a summer evening.

As a poet, Heine is already a classic of that height in which praise has become superfluous; but in the character of iconoclast he has a lasting claim on the attention of Freethinkers. Heine himself said he knew not if he were worthy of a laurel-wreath, but, he added proudly, "lay on my coffin a sword, for I was a brave soldier in the war of the Liberation of Humanity." No one will deny the laurel-wreath, and assuredly to Heine belongs the sword of a valiant soldier of Liberty.

MIMNERMUS

A Brilliant Modern Humanist

THE early death of Lytton Strachey was a severe loss to English literature, perhaps the heaviest since the premature demise of the supremely promising poet, Rupert Brooke. Strachey's studies of celebrated Victorians made him known to the general reading public. Yet, his *Landmarks in French Literature*, which is probably the best introduction to Gallic letters in our language, attracted little attention. So much so that this masterpiece—his maiden effort—sold so slowly that more than ten years elapsed before a second edition was called for.

Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, however, published in May, 1918, proved an immediate success in England and America, and was translated into French and German. As Dr. Srinivasa Iyengar of the University of

Bombay, reminds us in his *Lytton Strachey, A Critical Study* (Chatto and Windus, 5s.): "Here was an author as good as unknown, a book, and its title so commonplace; and hence, amidst the uncertainties of War . . . people might have ignored the book altogether; yet the unpredictable thing happened. Across the murky horizon of 1918 the book flared up like a rocket; it became the talk of two continents; it even travelled to far-off India." Constantly reprinted and widely read, the book's contents were loudly acclaimed, although many elderly and staid citizens were gravely perturbed by Strachey's irreverent audacities, irony and malice.

The essay on Manning caused heartburning in clerical households. Yet, the artful and ambitious Cardinal had previously been painted with all his warts in Purcell's very candid biography. In this, Newman's mistrust of his unscrupulous adversary was shown when, in response to the overtures of Manning, he said that when dealing with him, he (Newman) scarcely knew whether he was on his head or his heels. Dr. Iyengar thus summarises Strachey's study: "Manning was a scholar and had superabundant energy; he was, within his limits, conscientious; but the urge of ambition was in him, and such an urge harbouring in a priest cannot but be a peril to himself and others; ambition can brook no obstacles to its advancement and can bear no Turk near the throne."

If, in some respects, sardonic, the study of Florence Nightingale freely acknowledges the priceless services she rendered to the sick, wounded, and half-starved soldiers at Scutari. If her tireless energy killed Sidney Herbert, she rudely awakened the War Office from its slothful slumber as perhaps it had never been roused before. For Florence exposed the "endless ramifications of administrative incapacity—from the inherent faults of confused systems to the petty bungs of minor officials, from the inevitable ignorance of cabinet ministers to the fatal exactitudes of narrow routine."

The appalling conditions prevalent in the Crimea ultimately gave way to something approaching order and commonsense. Suffering was greatly alleviated, and the decencies of life were in some measure restored. Miss Nightingale's personality proved overpowering. As Strachey observes: "A passionate idolatry spread among the men; they kissed her shadow as it passed. . . . Before she came, said a soldier, 'there was cussin' and swearin', but after that it was as 'oly as a church.'"

Matthew Arnold's parent, Rugby's Headmaster, is very tartly treated. His clerical prepossessions and his misuse of his educational opportunities are relentlessly depicted. Dr. Arnold had excellent opportunities for introducing humanistic culture into our public schools, but these he disregarded in the interests of conventional theology, morals and refinement.

In Victorian days, General Gordon was the idol of a certain section of the public and his tragic fate was long used as a stick by its opponents to belabour and discredit the Gladstone Government of the day. Deeply religious, Gordon was by many esteemed a spotless, shining saint. But according to Strachey, Gordon sought solace in the brandy bottle's contents, while there co-existed in his character "intertwining contradictions—intricate recesses where egoism and renunciation melted into one another, where the flesh lost itself in the spirit, and the spirit in the flesh."

It was, however, with the publication of *Queen Victoria* that Strachey's fame was firmly established as a literary sovereign. This unconventional study must have proved an onerous task in preparation. Its title was not attractive, for to many Her Majesty was a comparatively uncultured commonplace woman, whose life, apart from her duties as a constitutional monarch, was devoted to her numerous family and the memory of her dead husband.

Yet, she displayed an imperious will in her relations with her ministers. Peel and Palmerston both fell

into disfavour when they refused to bow to her caprices. As Strachey mordantly remarks: "The complex and delicate principles of the Constitution cannot be said to have come within the compass of her mental faculties, and in the actual developments it underwent during her reign she played a passive part. From 1840 to 1861 the power of the Crown steadily increased in England, from 1861 to 1901 it steadily declined. The first process was due to the influence of the Prince Consort, the second to a series of great ministers."

So many characters are depicted in this biography, and all are so vividly drawn, that the volume is as fascinating as a fine work of fiction. We see Victoria as an inexperienced girl Queen, then as the dictatorial wife and despotic mother, and at last as a venerable lady anxious to perform her duties in accordance with her limited outlook. But even in this closing stage of her reign her biographer's irreverence remains. As Dr. Iyengar remarks: "We find him making fun of her views on smoking, on womanhood franchise; . . . of her taste for low brow fiction and drama; of her intellectual limitations; of her unliterary and platitudinous style; of her utter lack of humour. There is no question at all of Strachey's coming to seoff and remaining to pray."

Elizabeth and Essex is a remarkable study in a well known story. At times obscure, much is left to the reader's imagination and, indeed, this is perhaps the most speculative and suggestive of Strachey's writings. The last of his works published in his lifetime, brilliant as it is, it was more widely welcomed in America than in England, and "within two years as many as ten impressions were printed to meet the growing demand."

Strachey has been denounced as an unemotional cynic who subjected our most venerated heroes and heroines to derision and scorn. That he frequently damned with faint praise must be admitted, but that he was willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike, is an unproved charge. His misdemeanour really consisted in his faithful portraiture of celebrated people, whose lives and characters had been depicted by their adulators as spotless examples of intellectual and moral perfection. But the frailties of mankind, Strachey is apt to stress more strongly than its virtues, and that is all.

Strachey's contempt for the current religious creed was very thinly veiled. A clergyman cited by Dr. Iyengar deplores the fact that "the two subjects which above all others strike Mr. Strachey as genuinely and intrinsically funny, the two subjects which he can scarcely introduce without a covert snigger are Revealed Religion and the procreation of children in lawful wedlock." Strachey's references to sex may not always conform to conventional rules, but there is scarcely anything in them to which any really healthy-minded reader can take exception. Yet even Dr. Iyengar, perhaps with an eye on a Puritan public, finds passages in *Victoria* and *Elizabeth and Essex*, "clever but also detestable."

Strachey's aversion to Christianity is plainly evident. He thus refers to the Oxford Movement: "The new strange notion of taking Christianity literally was delightful to earnest minds; but it was also alarming. Really to mean every word you said, when you repeated the Athanasian Creed! How wonderful!"

The Papacy itself does not escape castigation. "For seven centuries," notes Strachey, "the immaculate conception of the Virgin had been highly problematical; Pio Nono spoke and the doctrine became an article of faith. A few years later, the Court of Rome took another step: a *Syllabus Errorum* was issued in which all the favourite beliefs of the modern world—the rights of democracies, the claims of science, the sanctity of free speech, the principles of toleration were categorically denounced and their supporters abandoned to the Divine wrath."

In his essay on Gordon, that pious soldier's creed is made to appear supremely ridiculous. Victoria's

crude religion is shown in her sincere admiration of pious platitudes suitable to a girl of sixteen. "The Queen who gave her name to the Age of Mill and Darwin, never got any further than that."

Deadly indeed is the thrust at persecution in Strachey's reference to the bitterly intolerant Philip II. of Spain. In *Elizabeth and Essex*, he writes: "Was he not God's chosen instrument? The divine inheritance was in his blood. His father Charles the Fifth, had been welcomed into heaven, when he died, by the Trinity; there could be no mistake about it; Titian had painted the scene. He also would be received in a similar glorious fashion; but not just yet."

Strachey was utterly disgusted with the humbug and make-believe so long associated with the profession of Christianity. Indeed, Dr. Iyengar frankly confesses that Strachey "was a rationalist, a humanist; and the orthodox Church's hypocrisy and self-contradictions stung him more than its supernatural beliefs, and made him stand and stare in sheer self-defence."

But when he deals with sincere and emotional piety, such as that of Newman and Keble, he speaks of their sentiments with the utmost respect, however alien they may be to his own convictions. Mr. Bonamy Dobrée trenchantly declares that Strachey "hated Christianity because in his view it destroyed, or smutched, a great deal that was lovely in humanity, and gave rise to muddled emotions, muddled thinking, and abomination of abominations, hypocrisy and cruel dealing. He had no reverence for Christianity, certainly, but, on the other hand, he much revered the things he believed it spoilt."

Strachey's standing in the republic of letters may be deemed secure. He has inspired a host of imitators of his biographical and critical methods. Few, however, are those who can touch the hem of the garment of the master who gave us so many literary treasures, overflowing with irony, learning and wit.

T. F. PALMER

Acid Drops

It must be of special value to bombed Londoners to learn that the Dean of St. Albans has ordered special prayers to be said on their behalf. Having permitted the destruction of human beings, ranging from the babe at the breast to old men and women tottering on the edge of the grave, what is there that is left for even God to do? Can he restore to life those who have been killed? He may, it will be said by the Dean, take them to Heaven. Admitting this fantastically absurd statement to be true, is there a mother in the world who will take this as compensation for losing her baby? Will any husband or wife who really love each other think it does not matter whether his or her partner in life is here or in heaven? To ask the question is to answer it. Of course those who are still in that frame of mind which gave rise to the petitioning of gods and devils for mercy may be soothed into a pseudo-contentment, but that is all. Literally, their contentment is on a level with that which might be derived from getting blind drunk in the face of the disaster that has come upon them. Prayer may serve, to those who have not grown beyond it, the purpose that any kind of a drug serves in the presence of great anguish, but that is all.

We have said many, many times, that whatever Atheism may not do, it at least gets rid of the situation that makes us the mere sport of a heavenly monster who rules our lives and plays with them as a vicious child does with a pet animal that is left at its mercy. The situation was well described by the late W. H. Mallock, who said that looking at the world as it is, said:—

Evidences of God's wisdom, love and goodness . . . when taken in connexion with others, only supply with a standard . . . by which most of his acts are exhibited as those of a criminal madman. . . . Habitually a bungler as he is, and callous when not actively cruel, we are forced to regard him . . . as not divinely benevolent, but merely weak and capricious. . . . Not only does his moral character fall from him, but his dignity disappears also.

The loss of dignity and character which the world indicates with regard to its assumed creator, is indicated in the character of our clergy who glibly tell their dupes here that everything will be made right in an unbelievable second existence in an impossible heaven. There is far more healthy humanity in the man who offers a bottle of whisky to a mother mourning the murder of her child, a man facing the mutilated body of his wife or a wife looking on the dead body of her husband. That, in most cases, may bring at least a temporary relief, but the drug offered by the clergy, if effective, deadens the moral sense and induces a state of mind hardly distinguishable from down-right stupidity. Whether the bulk of the clergy really believe in the nonsense they serve out to their followers we cannot say. We are ready to believe that some of them, perhaps the majority, are themselves using the drug they serve out to others, but we believe that many of them have too keen an intelligence not to be merely fooling their followers, and persuading themselves that it does at least remove some of the pain felt. That is, in plain language, the dilemma in which modern thought places our medicine-men. Either hypocrisy or stupidity. They cannot retain a reputation for both sincerity and ability.

The comfort that is derived from *human* sympathy and the presence of others—themselves perhaps suffering is a real and a fine thing, but that has nothing to do with either God or heaven, and the greater the shame that this should be prostituted to the interests of organizations that are kept in being for the sole purpose of perpetuating a foolish superstition. The men and women who have worked so courageously to help others, even while bombs were exploding around them, is something of which we may well be proud. But to say that this is only possible so long as we believe in a God, and because we shall be rewarded for it in another life, is one of the vilest slanders on human nature that is conceivable. Men may easily believe religion is false, but such teaching as we have just criticized, is enough to make one hate it with all the strength of one's nature.

A little while ago the Roman Catholic Church was raving against Mr. Alfred Noyes for having written a work on Voltaire, in which he disproved some of the religious slanders on the great Freethinker. Now there is another storm in being, because the Catholic Book Club has chosen for the book of the month, Miss Weddel's book *Peter Abelard*. The *Universe* asks, "What will be the reaction of the pious people and the converts who subscribe to the Catholic Book Club to such passages as that in which the marriage of a Canon of Notre Dame, Paris, to his housekeeper is discussed, and a brother Canon offers the opinion that the root of all love is lust?" We do not know what the reaction of the Book Club members will be, and we do not greatly care. But we do know what it ought to be. It should awaken people to the fact that the belief that all love is lust is deeply rooted in the Christian religion. It is in the English prayer-book, and it is implied in historic Christianity. It is plain enough in the Catholic Church, which in form is nearer to the primitive savage than any other branch of the Church. Someone, we forget whom, described celibacy as consisting in one being content with another man's wife, and history proves the accuracy of the description. In fact, it was the feeling that with a celibate priesthood no woman was safe that the opposition to a celibate clergy assumed the proportions it did. Of course the Roman Church stood out against it, but the Roman Church has always been on more open terms with primitive superstition than has any other of the Christian bodies.

A representative of the *Stoke Newington Observer* has been interviewing a number of people on the value of a day of prayer. As the result there seems not a great deal of faith in the district in the power of prayer. Sixty per cent definitely did not want it, and that says more than appears on the surface of things. For conditions do not yet make for complete frankness on such matters, and the Churches having roped in the King to "appoint" a day of prayer is bound to tell with some people, just as when Edward the Eighth changed the shape of his hat it meant a boom for hatters in that style of headgear. The common sense of the situation was well expressed by one young lady interviewed—"Prayers didn't prevent the war. Prayers won't end it." That is "horse-sense," but it will not prevent another National Day of Prayer being "appointed." Altogether thousands of people have been imprisoned for practicing the confidence trick, but it is still largely and widely practiced.

Mr. J. M. Connell, the author of a sketch of the life of Thomas Paine, sends to the *East Sussex News*, published at Lewes, the following letter by W. J. Linton, the well-known

Radical reformer, published in *Scribner's Magazine* of February, 1881:—

The letter to *Scribner's Magazine*, dated February, 1881, to which reference is made was as follows:—

Sir,—The extensive circulation of *Scribner's Monthly* may, I hope, be sufficient reason for your allowing me to correct a statement in your columns which is likely to produce a false impression.

The statement of which I complain is in the following sentence, at page 32 of the number for November, 1880, volume XXI., number 1, article "Bordentown and the Bonapartes"; "His (Paine's) favourite resort was the bar-room of the Washington House, and the visitors to that ancient hostelry are told that nothing but brandy and atheism passed his lips."

This is said to have been "during a period of several years," and nothing in the context alters the bearing of the sentence. Of course I cannot dispute the statement of such tales being told to the Washington House visitors: I only deny the truth of the tales.

Paine was neither brandy drinker (implied drunkard) nor atheist. Against the atheism his own works are sufficient evidence. Throughout his writings, especially in the *Age of Reason*, and his *Thoughts on a Future State*, is proof that, although not a believer in Christianity or the Bible, he was a steady theist—what in those days was known as a deist—as distinct from the Unitarian, who accepts the authority while denying the divinity of Christ. In his will, Paine expressly directs that his adopted sons shall be instructed in "their duty to God."

For the brandy-bibbing there is as little warrant as for the atheism. I have before me a letter of his, to a friend intending to visit him (it is dated some years later than the bar-room period, but there is no record of any variation in his habits), in which he says:—

"When you come you must take such fare as you meet with, for I live upon tea, milk, fruit, pies, plain dumplings, and a piece of meat when I get it; but I live with that retirement and quiet that suits me."

In truth, these aspersions of atheism and brandy, like the insolent appellation "Tom Paine" (to which even your contributor stoops, though he does not write Joe Hopkinson or Jack Adams), deliberately intended to cloak him with an atmosphere of vulgarity, are but proofs of the reckless blackguardism of polemical writers of Paine's time. It is not at the present more courteous day, at least not in America, that the author of *Common Sense* should be so treated.

Forty years ago I was employed to write Paine's *Life*. Knowing nothing of *the man*, I was careful to examine everything I could find for or against him. I was also in communication with men who had known him personally. I found him to be that typical Englishman, honest, courageous and constant, a lover of justice, a man of the real Old New England stamp, religious according to his light. It may be pugnacious in attacking what to him seemed error, but at least more tolerant than his opponents, benevolent, and generous. Born of the lower classes, with only a grammar school education, he must have made something of himself, must have also acquired some decency of behaviour, to become the friend of Franklin, Jefferson and Lafayette, and for a time the companion of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, living in the same house with him in Paris. Of him Lord Edward writes, October 30th, 1792, no such great while after the accustomed visits to the Bordentown bar:—

"I lodge with my friend Paine. We breakfast, dine, and sup together. The more I see of his interior, the more I like and respect him. I cannot express how kind he is to me. There is a simplicity of manners, a goodness of heart, and a strength of mind in him that I never knew a man before possess."

So also Colonel Burr, who knew him after his return to America, and who replied to an inquirer as to Paine's habits (it was the inquirer himself who informed me). "Sir, he dined at my table," adding: "I always considered Mr. Paine a gentleman, a pleasant companion, and a good-natured and intelligent man: decidedly temperate, with a proper regard to his personal appearance, whenever I saw him."

Yes; this man, still pointed out to abhorrence as a coarse brawling, brandy-tipping reviler of religion, was indeed a gentleman, a high-souled man of genius and philanthropic purpose, a man of remarkable probity and disinterestedness, a notably good man; and known to be so in his own day, however buried now in the mud flung at him

by calumniators, and heaped again by those who care not to learn the truth concerning him.

Bournemouth Town Council is still wondering whether it dare take the terrible risk of opening cinemas on Sunday. It has again deferred the question for one month. The opposition, of course, comes from the Churches and Chapels. One Alderman, in opposing the opening of cinemas, actually produced a petition against the proposal which contained 147 signatures. That should be decisive, since Bournemouth has only about 200,000 inhabitants. Bigotry is usually brutal, but it is always absurd.

From General de Gaulle's French paper, issued in this country we learn that Marseilles is so short of oil for the lighting of Churches that the Bishop has authorised the use of electricity in the Churches. It occurs to us that in the good old days when God attended to this kind of thing he miraculously multiplied the quantity of oil possessed by a widow.

Edinburgh Churches have combined to form a "Go Out to the Public" campaign. This obviously because the public without organising had developed a "Stop out of Church" movement. But what a change for Pious Edinburgh! The revival of religion about which some of the clergy talk, does not appear to have reached Scotland. Yet Edinburgh is dead enough on Sunday to drive some people to church. Perhaps if it always rained on Sunday more people might be expected to attend divine service and listen to a badly trained preacher, talking in a badly ventilated Church on a badly understood subject to a badly brought up handful of worshippers.

It is one of the chief (avowed) aims of Christianity to bring love and brotherhood to all. Christians repeat that phrase daily, and have repeated it so frequently that they can now say it without a smile. It is probable that by sheer repetition Christians have persuaded themselves that they believe Christianity can and does have that effect. The strange thing is that the first account we have of Christians—from non-Christians, and from rival Christians—is not of a community filled with kindness and affection, but a body of men wrangling, quarrelling and indulging in bloody riots in the public streets in terms of their particular sectarian teachings. And that story has continued until to-day.

We were reminded of this phase of Christian history by reading in one of the religious papers some comments concerning the desirability of bringing about a reunion between the Roman and the English Church, but regretting the great difficulties in the way of the feat being accomplished. But this is the union of the two of the Churches only. And the difficulties here of getting Christians—not to live together, the civil law, not the religious one, compels a certain decency of behaviour—to pray together, to worship together, or to talk to God together. We wish some of our Christian readers would consider this aspect of the matter when they talk about Christian love and Christian brotherhood. Let them note that there is no civil occupation that Christians cannot work together amicably with other Christians and non-Christians. But let religion crop up, and there is an impassible dividing line at once. These different sects may believe they *may* go to hell together, but they will see each other damned before they will go to heaven in each other's company.

A Conscription Law is now in operation in the United States. But America has followed our example in exempting from service the clergy and theological students preparing for the ministry. Why? Age, infirmity—mental or physical—are quite understandable disqualifications. But why religious preaching or preparing for that very onerous task? If the clergy, as priests, really give real help in the conduct of the war, why not increase the number of clergy? If they do not, why relieve them of military service? There are, we know some of the clergy in this country who decline to accept the situation, and we respect them for doing so. But the majority agree that as clergymen it is not fitting for men in their position to fight—they may only induce others to fight. Like Artemus Ward, they volunteer to stay at home and look after the wives and widows. There are some who explain that they would join the army but their bishop forbids. But the bishop cannot prevent them joining, he can only block their promotion if they survive the war. Analyse the religious motive in almost any direction in the modern State, and it is found to be a curious mixture of self-interest and hypocrisy.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

- F. HENDERSON.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.
- L. MARCH.—There are a few copies of *Possession* to be had, price 5s. 6d., postage 7d. extra. It is a book all Freethinkers should read.
- J. SHARPLES.—We commented very sharply on the Mayors and other officials, including some employed by the London County Council using their positions to conduct a sectarian campaign, and need not repeat so soon what we then said. We suggest again that ratepayers should offer a very strong complaint against this abuse. The abuse of his position in this way by Lord Halifax led the way, and displayed a lack of a sense of responsibility that should disqualify him for public office.
- L. N. WALLIS.—Thanks for offer, but there are too many things for us to look after to leave London. And quite apart from other considerations we simply cannot retire to some place that is "safe," and leave others to do our job in conditions from which we have run away.
- W. ACKROYD.—Thanks for addresses.
- T. B. CHAPMAN (Brighton).—We have read your letter with great interest, and hope you will persevere in the good work. A fitting retort to those who say you will "grow out of it," would be to hope they would develop enough to grow into it. On the face of it the man who rejects religion has at least thought about it while, on the other hand the man who accepts religious teachings never need do more than simply believe what he is told. Thanks for other compliment.
- J. PEPPER.—Thanks for addresses. Copies are being sent.
- W. BARRETT.—Your account of the subservience to Squire and Parson in the village in your boyhood was once very common. But the English people have not yet outgrown the feeling that there must be an "upper class" to receive deference. Social equality is of a slow growth in this country. Pleased to have your appreciation of this journal.
- H. PARKER.—Literature is being sent as requested. As we said in our paragraph, selected parcels of literature will be sent to anyone in the forces. But it is advisable to suggest what will be of the most use.
- Mrs. E. TRASK.—Writes of a road wherein resides the Bishop of Kingston. Recently a bomb fell in that road, and, she says, the Bishop "fled as rapidly as I should have done had I been a few doors nearer." We are not surprised at the Bishop bolting in such circumstances. The power of religion is not very evident in such cases.
- J. SHARPLES.—Thanks for offer, which we will bear in mind.
- J. HANSON.—Thanks for copies. They should prove useful and enlightening.
- The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.
- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums

This issue of the *Freethinker* is in war form. We have held our usual course, not unhampered by the war, but unruffled. And now we think it advisable to fall into line with all other papers by reducing the number of pages issued. But there is little alteration in the quantity of matter published, and none at all in quality. One other point. Readers will have noted that a certain part of the paper is printed in smaller type than usual. That is entirely due to accident—the bombing of our offices, and to our being compelled to have the type-setting done off the premises. That will be set right in the course of a week or so.

We have received many letters concerning the bombing of the *Freethinker* office, and they have confirmed our opinion of those who have written. We never doubted their support, and we know they are ready to do their part whenever called upon. We are beginning to get more ship-shape, but the work is being conducted under great inconveniences. To add to these we had further trouble connected with the printing of this issue of the paper—the typesetting only was done at the office. A big building next to the firm that does our printing was bombed and the machinery of our printer put out of action. We owe much to the action of our printers in securing the issue of this paper, a few hours later than usual, but still out in good time.

Unfortunately the damage to books and pamphlets on our own premises is much greater than we had at first imagined; the exact loss cannot yet be assessed. Among these a considerable number of Mr. Cohen's *Almost an Autobiography*—which is still selling well, and which has won golden opinions, must be counted. Luckily there are enough on hand to meet all demands. Some of the old Freethought publications will look very shabby by the time they have dried out. We were reminded of Milton's "He who killed a good book," etc. That German bomb did not *kill* good books, but they look as though some one tried to drown them.

Added to our troubles—those connected with the carrying on of the paper—we have to add those of our shop-manager, Mr. F. Skidmore, who has worked like the proverbial nigger (much harder we suspect) to get things in order again. He now has his own private troubles by the bombing of his own house in North London. He will have the sympathy of all our readers.

Will all those who wish items of any kind of news inserted in the forthcoming issue of the *Freethinker* see to it that their letters reach us by Saturday's post. Otherwise we cannot, in present circumstances, promise insertion.

BATTLE CRIES

SHALL we die "for God and Church"?

Like our fathers when they loaded?

No: we've left those in the lurch,

They are quite out-moded.

Shall we fight "for God and King"?

That cry's useless now to sing.

"King and Country" used to raise

Men to fight in former days.

Modern minds may think it, bluff

Like the other ancient stuff.

So let's fight this war for "Freedom"

Or for "Peace"—we bond-slaves need 'em.

But for those to whom war's hollow,

Those who cannot that dope swallow

Halifax cries "Christianity!"

The last climax of insanity!

* * *

Clever folk let others die;

Money is their battle-cry.

So while wounded fighters groan,

And while bleeding children moan,

Let us, our stockbrokers, 'phone

For a little more War Loan.

C. G. L. DU CANN

Facts are still facts, resent them as you may.

Euripides

Religion remains as impotent as it was before the war.

Dr. Inge (1919)

He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.—Shakespeare

Out of the Blue

I REMEMBER, when a young man, reading a volume, *Thunder and Lightning*, by Camille Flammarion. An incident was recorded of a family of farm labourers, mother, father, sons and daughters (including one little girl), sheltering near a haystack during an unexpected thunder-storm of great violence. After a vivid flash of lightning the youngster fell on her knees. The reply was another flash of lightning and the child lay dead.

The vagaries of lightning were well outlined in that volume. It was shown that on one occasion it could kill an entire flock of sheep; on another, decimate it, and, on a third, a solitary sheep (sometimes near the middle of the herd) would be the unfortunate victim. Sometimes a flash of lightning would divest a person of every stitch of clothing, leaving the pedestrian going on his or her way rejoicing. Sometimes it would strike a museum, sometimes a brothel. Often (it would seem) it struck a Christian temple. Even an English judge could not have been more impartial than he who sits up aloft and controlled the lightnings. The Lord of the Thunders and the Lightnings could be convicted of caprice, but not of class feeling, or, in fact, of any type of prejudice. He played the "All In" game, nothing was barred. His lightnings flashed and animate and inanimate suffered alike: ant, buffalo, wart-hog, man, elephant, willow warbler; store, factory, church, chapel, wayside shrine. If they were in the line of God's fire, they suffered. Just as the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children; just as all mankind were condemned because of the misdeeds of one Adam (or Eve) the visitations of God's lightnings were not based on equity; like the decorations of an aristocracy there was no damned merit or demerit in the judgment served out by the lightning's flash.

Early man dreaded the thunder and lightning. He felt helpless; he *was* helpless. "The recalcitrant and dephlogistic messenger of Heaven," to use a humorous phrase of Mark Twain, was beyond his management. He could do nothing, and when he felt so miserably inept in the presence of such a merciless death-dealing instrument, he knew it to be of God. The Acts of God were to him (and still are to many of to-day) the things that are unmanageable and inexpressibly nasty. The flash of lightning caused terror; and where there was terror there was God in the midst of it.

The Lord thundered from heaven and the most High uttered his voice, and he sent out arrows and scattered them, lightning and discomfited them. 2 Samuel xvii. 14.

Man has never seen the justice or the humour of the lightning flash, but he has felt it is of God, as it is so merciless, so incalculable, so wayward. Man feels so ignorant and helpless, and when man feels that way, then is the Ghosts' High Moon:—

When the night wind howls in the chimney cowl,
and the bat in the moonlight flies,
And inky clouds, like funeral shrouds, sail over
the midnight skies—
When the footpads quail at the night-bird's wail,
and black dogs bay the moon,
Then is the spectre's holiday—then is the ghost's
high noon.

Man has tried to tame the lightning, but so far God has played his hand so well that man has only been able to score a few points in the game. The lightning conductor was an attempt to curb the insolent majesty of the Gods, it is difficult to-day on an empirical survey to be too much encouraged by man's *riposte*. Besides, to attempt to limit the frenzied lightheartedness of God when he ran amok was always considered as impious. The judge of all the world who does right so infallibly could be relied upon, it was argued, to look after his own. It was a big struggle to get lightning conductors on churches; the saintly who had lisped

"Though He slay me yet will I trust in him" scented an incongruity. One of the Georges emphatically refused to subscribe to the erection of a lightning conductor on a church. "God's job!" he said laconically. If divine intent can be gauged by the vagaries of the lightning flash, then the temples made with hands are indeed amongst the Almighty's pet aversions.

To the accompaniment of thunders and lightnings the Ten Commandments were enunciated on Sinai. These are the specific hall-marks of Divinity. Out of the blue they come and kill wheresoever they list. God wills it as he wills many things:—

He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them;
And frogs which destroyed them.
He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar
And their labour unto the locust.
He destroyed their vines with hail,
And their sycamore trees with frost,
He gave up their cattle also to the hail,
And their flocks to hot thunderbolts.
He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger,
Wrath, and indignation and trouble,
He spared not their soul from death.

Out of the blue come all these things. Man must counter them or perish—though acts of God they may be.

T. H. ELSTON

Emotion in Apes

(Concluded from page 598)

OTHER emotions were expressed in characteristic ways. Sultan was ordered to remain behind and collect the fruit skins in a basket. This he did on two occasions, and then grew quite bored with the task, which was certainly not an inspiring one for a creature of his intelligence. He also rebelled occasionally against being made to experiment. His knowledge of a solution was not in doubt, since it would be a mere repetition of previous successes, but the important element of *interest* would be lacking. Kohler once insisted to the end; Sultan, after long remaining sulky and stiff-necked, played about gloomily with the stick and then finally did the job, and there followed a frenzied scene of reconciliation with his master.

Kohler found that prohibitions had no effect in his absence. The prohibition intended would be, for instance, "Don't smear the body with excrement" (the child's first artistic material, by the way). This would be interpreted, "Don't smear it *while Kohler is present*." If the apes had broken some rule, however, they would on Kohler's return give themselves away by restless and shifty behaviour. They would also be anxious on behalf of a friend. Kohler once found Chica in a state of agitation. Inquiring further, he saw parts of her devoted companion, Tercera, bobbing about in an effort to hide from him. It was not unusual for one of the chimpanzees to plead for another who was about to be punished.

On the other hand, jealousy was manifest if any received a special favour. Tercera especially would pout and try to push the other away from Kohler, nudging him all the time.

The apes corresponded with each other by various signs and actions. They beckoned with a peculiar wave of the hand, and a form of greeting was, with Tschego, to let her friend put a hand to her sex-lap, where she also kept her valuables wedged. She would return this gesture.

A good feast in common would make them cordially seize hands, etc. (compare the atmosphere of *bon-homie* prevailing for after-dinner speeches.) On these occasions enmities would be quite forgotten. As regards speech, Kohler decided that any display of phonetics was emotional and subjective, not descriptive.

Some of the apes had characteristic gyrations in

emotion; Sultan would scratch his head when thinking over a problem, and various signs and signals were noticed indicating desire. Rana would thus come and ask to be petted, while Tschego would turn her back to enable Kohler to tickle her back and ribs, which she liked exceedingly. One ape passively allowed another to press from an abscess on the lower jaw, working with an old rag: the treatment was most successful. They removed splinters from each other, and one of them got a splinter out of Kohler's finger most skillfully, using fingers, nails and teeth. Kohler decided that a good deal of what looks like "loosing" is really expert skin treatment. An ape with an injury would make a sorrowful noise and extend the injured part to Kohler for treatment.

The apes form a community in which mutual help is evident. But let us note their reaction to newcomers. An invalid female, Nueva, was introduced into the stockade. She was the most inoffensive creature conceivable, and a portrayal of her face shows far less bestiality than a number of human faces which will readily jump to mind. Kohler released her at the entrance, and the poor creature took a few uncertain steps into the stockade. The apes stopped playing and gathered in a group round Tschego, glaring angrily at the intruder, who stopped in her tracks. The tableau endured. Then Rana screamed and the whole mob of chimpanzees in a trice had smothered the unfortunate newcomer with bites, scratches and all kinds of rough usage.

Extricated at last, Nueva sprang on Kohler's back, whining for protection, clasping him with three limbs, and stroking him with the fourth; this behaviour she repeated later on other occasions. She was placed in quarters of her own for a time.

The following note is most interesting. It was the foolish Rana, least intelligent of the apes, who had unwittingly given the signal for the combined attack, who had, so to speak, put a match to the fire of fury. It was Sultan, the most intelligent, who had played the least part in the demonstration and it was he whom Kohler selected to be the first to go into Nueva's private quarters. Kohler tells us he eventually got her out of her shyness "with his sparkling eyes, friendly manner and childish sexual advances." Nueva was weak and no fighter, and after this she appealed to Sultan when in danger and, we are pleased to learn, he responded gallantly.

On her re-introduction to the stockade there was jealousy and stone-throwing, Tschego in particular treating her cruelly whenever she saw a chance, after slinking up. Chica and Grande, though mutually unfriendly, were the last to accept her, and this threw them together at one end of the stockade away from the rest. But at the approach of danger Nueva would forever fly to Sultan's protective embrace.

Nevertheless, her ill-health meant keeping her to her own quarters for some periods, and while isolated she showed a calm and contented face to life, and excelled as a collector of odds and ends. She was exceptionally intelligent and made up little pastimes for herself (Sultan also indulged in gyrations when isolated.)

It was an education to keep Nueva in observation, and her death was a great loss to the experimentation, for she was the quietest and most carefully proceeding animal. While on her own she would get cups of water and pour them into the butt to and fro; she loved to dip her hand in the water and watch the drops fall; or she would dip her bread in, suck the water out of it and put it in again for more. Constantly she would add to her heap of banana skins, wood, stones, rags, bits of wire, etc., and out of these she would make nests, or contain them in a tin bowl. She also split a wooden plank and drove wire into the gap. Another feat was to tie a rag to a stick, looping through and pulling taut. She could also weave and plait straws through wire, and had a special fancy for knots. She preferred human society to that of the apes, and

would wail if they left her. Kohler found all the apes especially docile when ill.

Another newcomer, the tiny Koko, a male, was so badly received that Kohler never dared let him go near the others. He too was kept apart, and tied to a post, or put with Nueva. He is described as a permanently indignant little being.

A human child was much better received, especially by Tschego, who showed great friendliness, and apes put their heads down to try to look under its clothes.

The reaction to other animals varied. The more grotesque and unfamiliar the animal, the greater fear displayed.

To the touch of a lizard they withdrew the hand quickly. A cat proved sufficiently interesting to investigate, but they retreated when the spitting began. Sultan, while taken for a walk, approached some chicks, but fled like mad when the hen objected. (Kohler similarly found that a weaker chimpanzee, when enraged, would sometimes pursue a stronger one.) When oxen were led across the apes' quarters the effect on them was quicker than that of Epsoms, and after the passage of a camel they looked most anxiously in the direction of the receding bells, and experiments were impossible for some time.

Little stuffed toys produced terror and the digging in of heads. One left in the stockade produced nothing but terrified glances for half an hour, even though it had under it the apes' breakfast. Finally Tschego snatched one banana from under its tail and tore off again at top speed, after much hesitation and retreat when making the approach. During another series of experiments at Berlin Grande cautiously pushed a toy horse over; there is a more reassuring aspect about the imitation of an animal well known.

When Kohler grew a beard Grande and Chica were particularly interested, but there was no fear apparent. On the other hand, he once, when walking towards the apes, suddenly put on a hideous mask. There was immediate panic, except in the case of Grande, who was the last to retire. In several ways Grande appeared rather less feminine than she should have been.

Given a photograph of herself, Tschego looked round the back of it and put it in her lap fold. Rana also tried to grasp the ape she supposed to be at the back of a mirror; she was at first friendly towards her reflection, and then indignant. She tried all means of making contact, and waited slyly, in chimpanzee fashion, in the way she was wont to do at the bars, waiting to pounce at the first human hand laid on them. The mirror was very popular with the apes, and struggles for possession were frequent.

Tschego played and grimaced over her reflection in the water, and, sunk in contemplation, put in her hand. It was quite common for the animals to move about and experiment with reflections of themselves and other objects.

G. H. TAYLOR

Heresies and Heretics

(Continued from page 621)

According to the theologians, God, the Father of us all wrote a letter to his children. The children have always differed somewhat as to the meaning of this letter. In consequence of these honest differences, these brothers began to cut out each other's hearts. In every land, where this letter from God has been read, the children to whom and for whom it was written have been filled with hatred and malice. They have imprisoned and murdered each other and the wives and children of each other. In the name of God every possible crime has been committed, every conceivable outrage has been perpetrated. Brave men, tender and loving women, beautiful girls, and prattling babes have been exterminated in the name of Jesus

Christ. For more than fifty generations the Church has carried the black flag. Her vengeance has been measured only by her power. During all these years of infamy no heretic has ever been forgiven. With the heart of a fiend she has hated; with the clutch of avarice she has grasped; with the jaws of a dragon she has devoured, pitiless as famine, merciless as fire, with the conscience of a serpent. Such is the history of the Church of God.

I do not say, and I do not believe, that Christians are as bad as their creeds. In spite of Church and dogma, there have been millions and millions of men and women true to the loftiest and most generous promptings of the human heart. They have been true to their convictions, and with a self-denial and fortitude excelled by none, have laboured and suffered for the salvation of men. Imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, believing that by personal effort they could rescue at least a few souls from the infinite shadow of hell, they have cheerfully endured every hardship and scorned danger and death. And yet, notwithstanding all this, they believed that honest error was a crime. They knew that the Bible so declared, and they believed that all unbelievers would be eternally lost. They believed that religion was of God, and all heresy of the Devil. They killed heretics in defence of their own souls and the souls of their children. They killed them, because, according to their idea, they were the enemies of God, and because the Bible teaches that the blood of the unbeliever is a most acceptable sacrifice to heaven. Nature never prompted a loving mother to throw her child into the Ganges.

Nature never prompted men to exterminate each other for a difference of opinion concerning the baptism of infants. These crimes have been produced by religions filled with all that is illogical, cruel, and hideous. These religions were produced for the most part by ignorance, tyranny, and hypocrisy. Under the impression that the infinite Ruler and Creator of the Universe had commanded the destruction of heretics and infidels, the Church perpetrated all these crimes.

Men and women have been burned for thinking there was but one God; that there was none; that the Holy Ghost is younger than God; that God was somewhat older than his son; for insisting that good works will save a man, without faith; that faith will do without good works; for declaring that a sweet babe will not be burned eternally, because its parents failed to have its head wet by a priest; for speaking of God as though he had a nose; for denying that Christ was his own father; for contending that three persons, rightly added together, make more than one; for believing in purgatory; for denying the reality of hell; for pretending that priests can forgive sins; for preaching that God is an essence; for denying that witches rode through the air on sticks; for doubting the total depravity of the human heart; for laughing at irresistible grace, predestination, and particular redemption; for denying that good bread could be made of the body of a dead man; for pretending that the Pope was not managing this world for God, and in place of God; for disputing the efficacy of a vicarious atonement; for thinking that the Virgin Mary was born like other people; for thinking that a man's rib was hardly sufficient to make a good-sized woman; for denying that God used his finger for a pen; for asserting that prayers are not answered, that diseases are not sent to punish unbelief; for denying the authority of the Bible; for having a Bible in their possession; for attending mass, and for refusing to attend; for wearing a surplice; for carrying a cross, and for refusing; for being a Catholic, and for being a Protestant, for being an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and for being a Quaker. In short, every virtue has been a crime, and every crime a virtue. The Church has burned honesty and rewarded hypocrisy, and all this she did because it was commanded by a book—a book that men had been taught implicitly to believe, long before they knew one word that was

in it. They had been taught that to doubt the truth of this book, to examine it, even, was a crime of such enormity that it could not be forgiven, either in this world or in the next.

The Bible was the real persecutor. The Bible burned heretics, built dungeons, founded the Inquisition, and trampled upon all the liberties of men.

How long, O how long, will mankind worship a book? How long will they grovel in the dust before the ignorant legends of the barbaric past? How long, O how long will they pursue phantoms in a darkness deeper than death?

Unfortunately for the world, about the beginning of the sixteenth century a man by the name of Gerard Chauvin was married to Jeanne Lefranc, and still more unfortunately for the world the fruit of this marriage was a son, called John Chauvin, who afterward became famous as John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church.

This man forged five fetters for the brain. These fetters he called points. That is to say, predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. About the neck of each follower he put a collar, bristling with these five iron points. The presence of all these points on the collar is still the test of orthodoxy in the church he founded. This man, when in the flush of youth, was elected to the office of preacher in Geneva. He at once, in union with Farel, drew up a condensed statement of the Presbyterian doctrine, and all the citizens of Geneva, on pain of banishment, were compelled to take an oath that they believed this statement. Of this proceeding Calvin very innocently remarked that it produced great satisfaction. A man by the name of Caroli had the audacity to dispute with Calvin. For this outrage he was banished.

To show you what great subjects occupied the attention of Calvin, it is only necessary to state that he furiously discussed the question as to whether the sacramental bread should be leavened or unleavened. He drew up laws regulating the cut of the citizens' clothes, and prescribing their diet, and all whose garments were not in the Calvin fashion were refused the sacrament. At last, the people becoming tired of this petty, theological tyranny, banished Calvin. In a few years, however, he was recalled and received with great enthusiasm. After this, he was supreme, and the will of Calvin became the law of Geneva.

Under the benign administration of Calvin, James Gruet was beheaded because he had written some profane verses. The slightest word against Calvin or his absurd doctrine was punished as a crime.

In 1533, a man was tried at Vienne by the Catholic Church for heresy. He was convicted and sentenced to death by burning. It was his good fortune to escape. Pursued by the sleuth hounds of intolerance, he fled to Geneva for protection. A dove flying from hawks, sought safety in the nest of a vulture. This fugitive from the cruelty of Rome asked shelter from John Calvin, who had written a book in favour of religious toleration. Servetus had forgotten that this book was written by Calvin when in the minority; that it was written in weakness, to be forgotten in power; that it was produced by fear instead of principle. He did not know that Calvin had caused his arrest at Vienne, in France, and had sent a copy of his work, which was claimed to be blasphemous, to the archbishop. He did not then know that the Protestant Calvin was acting as one of the detectives of the Catholic Church, and had been instrumental in procuring his conviction for heresy. Ignorant of all this unspeakable infamy, he put himself in the power of this very Calvin. The maker of the Presbyterian creed caused the fugitive Servetus to be arrested for blasphemy. He was tried: Calvin was his accuser. He was convicted and condemned to death by fire. On the morning of the fatal day Calvin saw him, and Servetus, the victim, asked forgiveness of Calvin, the murderer, for anything he might have said that had wounded his feelings.

Servetus was bound to the stake, the fagots were lighted. The wind carried the flames somewhat away from his body, so that he slowly roasted for hours. Vainly he implored a speedy death. At last the flame climbed around his form; through smoke and fire his murderers saw a white, heroic face. And there they watched until a man became a charred and shrivelled mass.

R. G. INGERSOLL

(To be continued)

A Dialogue between a Missionary and three Chinese Converts

MISSIONARY: How many Gods are there, my brethren?

First Convert: Three.

Second Convert: Two.

Third Convert: None.

Missionary: Horrid! These answers are from the Devil.

All: We know not where you got the religion which you have taught us, but thus you have taught us.

Missionary: Blasphemers!

All: We have heard you with patience, nor ever thought of crying out against you, how much so ever you surprised us by your doctrine.

Missionary: (Recovering himself and addressing the First Convert): Come, come, recollect: how can you imagine that there are three Gods?

First Convert: You told me there was God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and by my Swanpan I find that one and one and one are three.

Missionary: I! I see your blunder. You remember but half the lesson. I told you also that these Three are One.

First Convert: I know you did, but I thought you have forgotten yourself, and concluded that you spoke the truth at first.

Missionary: O no! You must believe not only that there are Three persons, each God, and equal in power and glory, but also that these Three are One.

First Convert: That is impossible. In China we do not believe contradictions.

Missionary: Brother! It is a mystery.

First Convert: What is that, pray?

Missionary: It is—it is—I know not what to say to you, except that it is something which you cannot possibly comprehend.

First Convert: (smiling): And is it this that you have been sent 10,000 miles to teach?

Missionary: O the power of carnal reason! Surely, some Socinian has been doing the Devil's work in China. But (turning to the Second Convert) how could you possibly imagine there are two Gods?

Second Convert: I thought there were many more till you came and lessened the number.

Missionary: Have I ever told you that there are two Gods? (Aside) The stupidity of this people makes me almost despair.

Second Convert: True, you have not said in so many words that there are two Gods, but you have said what implies it.

Missionary: Then you have been tempted to reason upon this mystery?

Second Convert: We Chinese are wont to put things together, and to come at truth by comparison. Thus you said there were three persons that were each perfect God, and then you said that one of these persons died in one of the countries of the West, a long while ago; and I therefore concluded the present number to be two.

Missionary: Astonishing depravity! O the depths of Satan! It is in vain to reason with these poor benighted creatures. But (addressing the Third Convert)

perverse as your two brethren are, you appear worse than they: what can you possibly mean by answering that there are no Gods?

Third Convert: I heard you talk of three, but I paid more particular attention to what you said on the point of there being only one. This I could understand; the other I could not; and as my belief never reaches above my understanding (for you know I am no learned Mandarin) I set it down in my mind that there was but one God, and that you take your name of Christian from him.

Missionary: There is something in this; but I am more and more astonished at your answer—"none."

Third Convert (taking up the Swanpan): Here is one, I remove it. There is none.

Missionary: How can this apply?

Third Convert: Our minds are not like yours in the West, or you would not ask me. You told me again and again, that there never was but one God, that Christ was the true God, and that a nation of merchants living at the head of the Arabian Gulf, put him to death upon a tree, about eighteen hundred years ago. Believing you, what other answer could I give than "None"?

Missionary: I must pray for you, for you all deny the true faith, and living and dying thus, you will without doubt perish everlastingly.

First Convert: Cong-foo-tse, our revered master, says that bad temper always turns reason out of doors, and that when men begin to curse, the Good Spirit of the universe abandons their hearts.

Second Convert: You must be angry with yourself and not with us, for you have been teaching us at different times doctrines as contradictory as those of Cong-foo-tse and Buddha. The immortal emperor Sin-chong has said that he is not to be numbered with wise men, not to have a name in the hall of ancestors, who undertakes a voyage without making up his mind to its purpose, and preparing himself to give a clear and kind answer to the question of a stranger.

Third Convert: These rebukes are just: but Ter-whangtee says, in his golden words, that mirth is better than rice. You came, it seems, to bring us a new riddle; but while we thank you, we beg to inform you that Kienlong, our late celestial emperor, has supplied us with a plentiful store, much more entertaining than yours, and when you can read as well as speak our divine language, we recommend to you his delectable history of the Mantchoo Tartar, that pretended to be inspired by the Grand Lama, but could never be made to comprehend the Swanpan.

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