

Paradise

I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to believe any longer in the Christian religion, that is to say in any unqualified or unvarnished shape. The discrepant accounts in the Gospels of the Resurrection appearances taken in conjunction with the recent action of the bishops in the House of Lords is almost overwhelming against any literal interpretation of the commonly accredited number of King Solomon's wives. All these things must be recast in the light of modern learning and research. Professor Waldstein's <sup>recent</sup> success ~~with the process~~ in the flotation of a scheme for the excavation of Herculaneum shows how much can be done by a thorough and painstaking archaeological method. Our old ideas are not so much overturned as upset. The old is not destroyed; it is replaced. We <sup>simply</sup> learn to see new things in a different light. It is hardly to be supposed that in the general flux and decay of the notions which satisfied an older generation, the unchanging truths, which must forever face us when we candidly confront the stupendous mysteries of the universe, would altogether escape that evolutionary influence, so demigly applied by Professor Darwin to the movements of the heavenly bodies in his last presidential address to the British Association. But in our general words and amazement at the vast field of knowledge and power for the first time unfolded before the human race, and at the singularly opportune action of the local county councils in fixing the last rung of the ladder connecting the board school and the university, we must not forget all that we owe to the past, to its sacrifices and to

its inspirations. I may say that for my own part, finding myself as I do for the first time in the University Pulpit, I do not regret the long years that I have spent inducing the trousers upon the lean and naked flanks of the Epicueneas of the Pampas. I look forward to a long and, I hope I may say, useful career in this country, where through the agency of that much abused institution the Tunis Book Club (and I am supported in this opinion by nine or ten Rear Admirals) I have for the first time come in touch with Dr Frazer's notable work on Syphilis, Attis and Osiris. I may say that he has brought much confirmatory evidence to bear upon many of the most difficult problems both of the Old and New Testament. His extraordinarily vivid descriptions of the ~~most famous~~ spots in Asia Minor most famous in a remote antiquity have but served to strengthen the opinion, based upon a long familiarity with the somewhat peculiar and inverted manners and customs of the Epicueneas, that although scarcely a word in either the Old or New Testament is true now, whatever they may have been once, yet very few are false. Mr Bertrand Russell's recent discovery of the nonexistence of the proposition affords an additional argument from a usually hostile source. We have but to pause for a moment before the veil of the temple, gaze with an all-victorious faith upon the falsehoods there inscribed; ~~and~~ lo! it will dissolve before us and we shall be the first to perceive the fundamental truths which have been taught and believed by all men in all ages.

Of these there is one on which I would particularly dwell to this afternoon. Gladly would I dwell on all, were it not for two unfortunate circumstances. In the first place in view of the special collection on behalf of the Episcopians, to defray the expenses of my visit to that country, with which the service will close, it has been thought suitable for the word Episcopians to be sung between each line of the hymn. In the second place the holy symbol of the coffee and whale, miraculously converted week by week into that coffee and those whales that once nourished the scruffy Tomlinson, must not be unduly delayed lest that moment come when the sacred elements fearful of the approach of the covetous and profane lips of the bedmaker relapse into their original culinary constituents.

Yes, my brethren, there is one <sup>truth</sup> on which I would particularly dwell - the doctrine of Paradise. Even the Episcopians believed in Paradise, a place which the modesty of my position forbids me to describe. Even more indescribable are the beliefs of the Nicobanamaunders, ~~amongst~~ <sup>with</sup> whom that devoted missionary ~~now~~ the Reverend A.R. Brown has lately thrown in his lot, who ~~believe~~ believe, according to a letter recently received from the Reverend gentleman, that after death their members will extend upwards of two yards in length <sup>so</sup> ~~and~~ that with them they may beat their waves and strangle their enemies. Mr. Brown goes on to say - but perhaps these matters are better dealt with in a learned journal, for after all they deal more with

this life than with the next, which, according to precedents with episcopal and even archiepiscopal sanction, is my special theme on this ~~present~~ occasion ~~of an address to your assembly about to enter upon its anniversary~~ ~~cases.~~

What then is this doctrine of Paradise in which people so far asunder as the Epicueneas and the Nicobanamanders have united to believe, and which we who live midway between can hardly afford to despise?

My view of the matter is this and I hope the Reverend the Master of Trinity will wake up with a start if I am wrong, as on the sea of Galilee of old his Lord and Master woke when the boat was really going to the bottom.

Heise seized the tempest o'er the deep  
Epicueneas  
Watch did thine anxious servants keep  
Epicueneas  
The Master wrought in fruitless sleep  
Nicobanamander  
~~Cabin as to till Epicu~~

As Mrs Verrall has put it in her automatic writing - Each member of the Trinity is his Master and he is the Master of each member of Trinity: and as St Paul adds 'For we are all members of one body', no doubt referring to Mr Russell's nut class, or the class that has no members - but we are all too rapidly reaching the point where Mr Frayer's notable volume <sup>join issue with</sup> ~~and~~ Mr Brown's important letter, which pending the issue of the Book War and the abolition of the licence of stage plays must remain unpublished, ~~and~~ and I must return to my <sup>own</sup> view of the matter.

The time has come, I think, when a remarkable book from the pen of an Edinburgh philosopher George Moore can no longer remain unnoticed in the pulpit in which I stand. I have not, I confess, followed every step in the convincing argument by which he proves that with the possible exception of the slavery in the moon nothing whatever is good except a man's relations - as Moses said of old 'Honour thy father and thy mother and thy ~~self~~<sup>day</sup> shall be long in the land that the Lord thy God has given thee'. I am more concerned to notice, in connexion with the doctrine of Paradise, what I took to be an attack on the pleasures of life. I would also say a word about the late Immanuel Kant, for it is as important that theology should keep in touch with recent philosophy as with the work of the archaeologists. Now Kant, as opposed to George Moore of Edinburgh, propounded as I think the correct view and that most in accordance with the Book of Genesis interpreted in ~~accordance~~ the light of the latest research. ~~Now~~<sup>For</sup> Kant ~~was~~ was not so foolish as to hold the altogether heathen doctrine that pleasure is the good or indeed any good at all, but for all that he preached that it was the proper reward of good men and gallantly faced the paradox that the reward of the good should not itself be good. And that is a view which any prayerful reader of Genesis must surely sustain. Paradise was not a good place, but a place for good people. If it had been good, Adam could never have fallen, and if it had been for bad people he could never have been turned out.

The idea of reward seems to me to be a valid one. We have been too ready to give up Heaven and Hell because our geographers could not mark them on their maps; for surely a well regulated universe could be without them.

I suppose Calvin and St. Augustin were right; in a sense not even Mr. Roby could have helped himself - so he was born or so circumstances moulded him. He does not and did not exist - he is not there for it to be his fault; but that is no reason why he should not be happy, and happy forever.

George Moore may be right that pain is bad and pleasure is not good. I may grant him that and yet pray God nightly on my knees that there may be a Hell mental and physical with flames and furies, and a Paradise with boys and books, with friends, beauty, excitements and pate' de foie gras.

For wicked men are not wicked because they are in pain; yet I would have them in pain and in proportion to their wickedness. Nor are good men good because they are happy; yet I would dole them out pleasures in proportion to their goodness.

May the time come when the bad shall be no more; but let us not abolish hell until we have abolished wickedness, or despise Paradise so long as some of us are good.

This is the lesson which Moses and the Pentateuch still have to teach us; this is why it was fitting that our Lord should speak the word which drove the devils and the swine together down a steep cliff into the sea; this, my brethren, is why beasts have numbers.

The mealy mouthed of this generation are in danger of losing the most potent message of Christianity. There is, or at least there ought to be Heaven and Hell, Heaven with differing heights and Hell with differing depths. This much have the manners and customs of the Episcopians taught me.

As my opening words announced, albeit to the Master of Trinity's great scandal, neither I nor the Episcopians can henceforth believe in the Christian religion. But that is no reason why we should not cling with the whole tenacity of our natures to Christian doctrine, doctrine which raised the British and ruined the Roman Empire, doctrine which has doubled the birth rate and halved the death rate amongst the Episcopians.

Other things also has the Pampas taught me.

I believe in Woman's Suffrage and the New Mathematical Tripos, in the abolition of the House of Lords and the Sodomy Acts, in cheap weekend tickets, in Heaven and Hell and the Times Book Club. I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.