

affray, such a man was the very Presence of God, and his words as a banner and a sword.

'This invincible faith in God's love was part of his heritage from his mother. I have told of her last prayer: here is another story of her dying time. She told her son that she had remembered with great pity the souls that are outcast for ever. "But the All-Merciful may save them yet," she said. "It repented Him once, it may repent Him again." The text she alluded to (Gn 6^b) has been a stumbling-stone to many, but what a strong faith it was which struck from it a spark of eternal hope!

'Grant had much the more philosophic mind. He met such an incident as that of the old Frenchman, not by a simple child-like statement of his continued and triumphant belief in God's love, but by seeking some explanation along lines I have already indicated—the existence of a Fate in the world, created, but not inevitably controlled, by God. He used to point out that there was a heartlessness in things. One could see it in Nature, he said. And he would quote:

"Ye bank and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How *can* ye bloom sae fresh and fair?"

as an illustration of the careless indifference of the most beautiful things to sorrow and heartbreaking. When he was challenged to square such ideas with the cardinal thought of the love of God, he pointed out that our games consist in overcoming difficulties which we ourselves have made. In golf we could walk up to the hole and drop the ball in with our hand—as Struthers did on one occasion at Bo'ness—but, instead, we multiply the difficulties—bunkers and rules—and the game consists in getting the ball into the hole in spite of these. Even so, he would say, God has made rules for Himself with regard to us. He has created Fate; He has made rules, which we call natural laws, and which by their action break an old Frenchman's heart or somebody else's, every day, every hour. And we have to play the game also—with these rules. We have to accept the killing of the white mice, and loved ones ten times dearer; and the game is to keep loving God, and knowing that He loves us, in spite of all.'

Retardation of the Beatific Vision.

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THIS heresy, if indeed it be a heresy, is chiefly of importance for its relation to the question of Papal Infallibility. On November 1st, 1331, Pope John XXII. at Avignon preached a sermon for All Saints' Day on the doctrine of the Intermediate State. He maintained that the saints who have no need of purgatory must await like ordinary mortals for the Beatific Vision until after the Resurrection and the Judgment; for, if otherwise, the Resurrection, by adding nothing, would condemn itself as superfluous: 'The soul separated from the body has not that Vision of God, nor can it have before the Resurrection.'

John was little prepared for the outburst that followed. On December 15th he found it advisable to preach a second sermon to explain the first. In this sermon, John concludes with the words: 'I say with Augustine that if I err let him who knows better correct me. I cannot hold otherwise unless the determination of the Church or the authority

of Sacred Scriptures be shown to be contrary.' In a third sermon (Jan. 5, 1332), 'in the presence of cardinals, prelates, and doctors,' the pope, aroused to his need of the defensive, showed that his opinions were not new. He referred especially to his contention that if the blessed do not enter at once into heaven neither do the wicked enter into hell until after the Judgment. In a fourth sermon (Feb. 2, 1332) John acknowledged that there were many murmurs against his opinion, but added, 'I can do no otherwise.' John did not see the far-reaching consequences of his doctrine. In reality he swept away popular medieval worship, for if the saints are not in heaven prayers for their help become vain. Moreover, did this doctrine apply to the Virgin Mary, for no pope had yet ratified the favourite dogma of the Paris University, the Immaculate Conception?

On the news of the pope's sermons being brought to Paris riots broke out, and in the autumn an

English Dominican, Thomas Walleys or Walsh, preached against them in a sermon still preserved at Cambridge. He was arrested by the Franciscan inquisitor, cast into prison (Jan. 9, 1333), and brought to Avignon. In spite of the efforts to release him of the French king, Philip, Walsh lingered on in prison, occupying his leisure in writing a larger reply to John, called *de Instantibus et Momentis*, now also at Cambridge. As Paris was still seething with excitement, the pope caused his sermons to be translated into French and dedicated to Queen Joanna. He also obtained a decision condemning Walsh from eighteen doctors, five of whom were English, among them John Luttrell, late chancellor of Oxford, a letter of whose on the subject of the Beatific Vision is at Cambridge. Philip replied by summoning twenty-nine doctors of Paris to Vincennes (Dec. 19, 1333) under the chairmanship of the famous Nicholas de Lyra.

They had no option but to gratify the king by a verbal condemnation of the pope's heresies. 'The souls,' they said, 'which have no need of purgatory, or which have already finished their purgation, pass at once to the Vision, naked, clear, beatific, immediate, and intuitive, of the Blessed Trinity, a vision which the Apostle calls Face to Face.' This, they held, was a necessary consequence of the Descent of Christ into Hades and His Harrowing of Hell. Not content with this verbal condemnation, Philip forced them to reduce it to writing, and send it to John (Jan. 2, 1334).

But hearing of the king's intention, John had held a Consistory at Avignon to discuss the matter (Dec. 28, 1333-Jan. 2, 1334). All the cardinals except two and a great number of prelates and doctors were present. 'No one here to-day,' said the pope, 'would give as much as I would for the affirmative to be proved, for then I myself, my parents and friends, would come more quickly to the Beatific Vision.' 'But if,' continued the pope, the Consistory should decide otherwise, 'we protest that if perchance in the sermons referred to some things be met with at all contrary to Scripture and the orthodox faith . . . we expressly revoke the same, for it is not our intention to stick to them or defend them either now or hereafter' (*Chartul. Univ. Paris*, ii. 435). After John's speech five days were spent in reading authorities for and against. Each member in turn was then forced under pain of excommunication to declare 'what seemed to him to be the truth according to

the testimony of Scripture.' The result is not known, but would seem to have been neither unanimous nor satisfactory. A certain Dominican present, Friar Armandus by name, who had already compiled a defence of Walsh (according to a letter of his still preserved together with his Defence (*Responsiones*) at Cambridge), summed up decisively against the pope and called his theory 'a new and strange idea.' Later in the year a second attempt was made by John to settle the matter, but without success.

On December 2nd, 1334, John was seized with a fatal flux. His kinsmen, it is said, surrounded his bed and urged the pope to save his soul by a complete retraction. The old man (he was over ninety) at last yielded. According to his successor, Benedict XII., the value of whose evidence is discounted by his opposition to John's ideas, the pope summoned the cardinals, 'together with some prelates and public notaries.' John then 'caused a letter to be read, engrossed under his name,' several copies of which, spurious or genuine, are still preserved. In this letter John declared that if 'he had said anything whether in sermon, dogma, or teaching contrary to the determination of the Church, Sacred Scripture, and good customs, we wish them to be regarded as if they were not said.' The letter goes on to affirm that John now 'confesses and believes that purified souls though separate from their bodies are already in heaven and see God face to face.' Thus the pope 'made confession, revocation, and submission concerning the matters discussed in the letter.' A few hours later John lay dead (Dec. 4, 1334).

Whether the letter be true or false, the next day the Curia published to the world John's letter and the story of his deathbed repentance (Dec. 5, 1334). From the first it was received with incredulity and contempt. Several of the chroniclers of the day openly contended that the letter was a forgery, and the repentance a myth. John's opponent, the famous English Franciscan, William of Ockham, poured ridicule on the whole story. John, he said, had died a heretic. Whether the letter is genuine it is now impossible to decide, but of the convenience for the Papacy of the story of this deathbed repentance there can be no doubt. Within a year of John's death his successor, Benedict XII., settled the matter with the help of a committee of Paris theologians, most of them young men (Jan. 29, 1336). Henceforth in the Roman Church, by the constitution *Benedictus Deus*, it was

held to be heresy to agree with the views of Pope John xxii.

Of the whole transaction, John's sermons included, there is now only one existing MS. (Camb. Univ. Library, MS. I. i. 3. 10), which has never yet been published, and scarcely noticed by theologians or historians. Fragments of John's third sermon, not in the Camb. MS., are in the Vatican, which also contains a number of treatises on the subject

collected by a certain Franciscan friar called Nicholas (*Chartul. Paris*, ii. 414). A sister MS. which once existed in Paris was destroyed by some ultramontane in the 17th century. Valuable notes on the whole matter, by the Abbé Denifle, will be found in the *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ii. 414 ff., as also in *Archiv für Literatur- u. Kirchengesch.*, vol. vi. See also an article by the present writer in *London Quarterly Review*, 1903, and H. Lea, *History of Inquisition*, iii. 591 ff.

Contributions and Comments.

Numbers xxii. 21-31.

S. REINACH, in his book *Orpheus* (Engl. tr. 1909), remarks that one of the most curious episodes in the Book of Numbers 'is that of Balaam the prophet, whose ass seems to have been an echo of the worship of the ass, considered as an oracular animal.' He compares the story (Nu 22²¹⁻³¹) with those animal fables which were widely prevalent in ancient times, and thinks that 'the primitive stories which were combined and revised to form the Bible must have bristled (!) with tales of animals.' Yet he is obliged to admit that in the Bible, as it has come down to us, animals are represented very rarely as speaking. There are only two instances: that of the serpent in Genesis, and that of Balaam's ass in Numbers. With the former I am not concerned at present.

According to the *Encyclopædia Biblica* (s.v. 'Balaam'), the story in Numbers, 'though welded with some psychological skill into the surrounding narrative, is a decoration derived from folklore.' So also, according to G. B. Gray (*Numbers* in 'Inter. Crit. Com.'), who compares the talking cow in the Egyptian *Tale of the Two Brothers*, 'a piece of folklore is here utilised for the purposes of the story.' But in the light of the new study of psychic phenomena, it seems to the present writer that the explanation of some of the strange episodes in the Old Testament as pure fables or myths requires to be modified. In the present instance, even if we grant that the vision-interpretation of Maimonides is unsatisfactory, we are not driven to invoke the aid of the sacred ass or to compare such fantastic fables of talking animals as we find in many Oriental writings (cp. the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, Syriac and English, ed. by W. Wright, 1871).

The story admits of a psychological explanation. We are told elsewhere in the Old Testament that the prophets and others rode on asses. Here the animal is introduced quite naturally. The only remarkable incident is that speech is ascribed to it. Now, in the experience of recent ages animals of course do not speak. But in the experience of mankind in all ages voices have been heard which

have seemed to come from anywhere or nowhere (cp. T. J. Hudson, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, 1907, pp. 243-250); and in ancient times, when men had not learned to distinguish between subjective and objective phenomena, it is not surprising to find these voices ascribed sometimes to extraordinary causes. D. B. Macdonald, in speaking of the Arab poet (*The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, 1909), with whom he compares some of the Hebrew prophets, says truly that 'often, as to Socrates, his own decision must have come as with a voice from without, and it would take little to add a visible form.' In the case of Balaam, a visible form was present in the animal he rode. What could be more natural than to ascribe to this a voice which Balaam may have heard distinctly? Balaam was requested by Balak, king of Moab, to go and curse the Israelites, that is to say, to bring them under the baneful influence of a powerful spell. At first he refused to do so. When at length he did consent to go, it was with great reluctance and hesitation. He went in a meditative mood and in an uneasy state of mind. It is well known that the sympathy between a rider and his steed is often such that by a kind of telepathy the animal is influenced by the mental state of the rider. Balaam's uncertainty communicated itself to the animal, which several times tried to turn back. The prophet beat the animal, and at length heard a voice rebuking him. This voice Balaam himself, or his reporter, ascribed to the animal. Whether what Balaam heard has been rightly recorded is another question. But the tradition that the animal had been known to speak is not difficult to understand. It is possible, therefore, that this story, with others which have seemed equally fantastic, is a faithful record of a psychical experience which was real enough but was misunderstood.

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