

MATERIALISTS' COLUMN

WHO MADE THE BIBLE?

The Council of Nice invented the Bible by selecting and making changes and additions in the multitude of traditional writings that were being used by priests and bishops. Those writings were very unlike, and their followers quarreled much, each church claiming its version was the correct scriptures.

Emperor Constantine convened the Council of 318 bishops in 325. After 26 years of strife, selections and alterations they decreed what the Holy Bible should contain. Disagreements continued and other Councils were held to further change the Bible, besides the many alterations made by scribes who copied the book. When printing was invented in 1420, of course, the Bible had to become a fixture.

I never claimed that the Council of Nice made God, as Guy Phelps says I did. Gods were invented way back in pre-historic times among the savages, whose ignorance imagined there were supernatural beings that caused all the evils in nature; and the Gods might be pacified by prayers and gifts, to protect them and supply their needs.

There are historical proofs that the Jews had no written language till the time of King David. So Moses, Abraham, Job and the other Jewish patriarchs never wrote a word of the Bible. The Old Testament so closely resembles the mythology of older Asiatic religions, it is sufficient evidence that Ezra copied from them during the Jewish captivity in Persia, but changed places and names to fit with Jewish history, myths and traditions. But Ezra's Bible was missing after Jerusalem was taken.

The historians of the first century mention no such person as Jesus Christ. But learned Greek and Essene philosophers had traveled and taught everywhere, morals and religion similar to those in the New Testament.

In all the ancient nations there were plenty of priests to invent Gods and miracles and Saviors. They journeyed to the great library and school at Alexandria to learn from each other; then they went home and reconstructed their nations' religion. So their sacred books are somewhat similar.

The Hebrew priests selected from them to invent their gospels for Christianity and the Council of Nice selected from those with whatever changes they decided would work best to increase the priests' power.

Before printing was invented, for a thousand years there were no newspapers nor schools, and the masses were ignorant and superstitious. So the Inquisition tortures, terrors, dungeons, execution of all unbelievers, holy wars, witch-burnings and fear of an awful hell, made Christianity spread everywhere. The people sought safety by doing and believing whatever the priests commanded. By the confessional, the priests could make everyone confess their own doings and report what all others did or said, and all had to pay whatever the priests charged for forgiveness of sins and safety.

The way the Bible was invented proves that no God had a hand in it. Every change made in it, the dissections, persecutions, wars and tyranny, are proofs that there was no God, to prevent them, nor to protect the unfortunate people.

Millions yet worship the Bible God. Their reasons for believing in a future life and a God are all drawn from that Bible. Their divisions into creeds were founded on bible-statements which conflict; and the hundreds of creeds denounce and hate each other.

When all Christians learn that their miracles, precepts, stories of creation, deluge and crucified savior, were all copied from earlier sacred books of pagans, they will become convinced that their bible is a fraud and give up worship and belief in any kind of a God.

Then they will learn from nature and its forces and believe in evolution, materialism and practical morality; for we are all dependent on the general welfare and the right doings of each and all, not on miracle-answers of a God to prayers.

Guy Phelps' statement "that there is no right or wrong if there is no God," is a falsehood, to be considered next week. Eliza Mowry Bliven, Brooklyn, Conn.

SCIENCE FROM AN EASY CHAIR

By Sir Ray Lankester

A certain number of persons admit the development of man's body by natural processes from ape-like ancestry, but believe in non-natural intervention of a creator at a certain definite stage in that development, in order to introduce the animal which was at that moment a man-like ape, something called "a conscious soul," in virtue of which he became an ape-like man. No one ventures to deny at the present day, that every human being grows from

an egg in utero, just as a dog or cat or monkey does, the facts are before us and can be scrutinized in detail.

We may ask of those who refuse to admit the gradual and natural development of man's consciousness in the ancestral series passing from ape-like forms into indubitable man, "How do you propose to divide the series presented by every individual man in his growth from the egg?" At what particular phase in the embryonic series is the soul with its consciousness implanted? Is it in the egg? In the foetus of this month or that? In the newborn infant? Or at five years of age? This, it is notorious, is a point upon which the church was never able to agree; and it is equally notorious that the unbroken series exists, that the egg becomes the foetus, the foetus the child and the child the man.

On the other hand we have the historical series — the series the existence of which is inferred by Darwin and his adherents. This is a series leading from simple egg-like organism to ape-like creatures, and from these to man. Will those who cannot answer our previous inquiries, undertake to assert dogmatically in the present case, at what point in the historical series, there is a break or division. At what step are we to be asked to suppose that the order of nature was stopped and a non-natural soul introduced?

There must be many who will gladly accept the conclusion that the marvelous qualities and activities of living things and that inscrutable wonder, the mind of man, are outcomes of the orderly process of nature, no less than are the miracles which we call a butter cup, a rock crystal, a glacier, the noon day sun! We can trace by observation and inference the orderly growth and development of these things; we can discover continuity and common properties determining their diverse existence. But we find no explanation of them; we cannot account for the existence of anything — whether it be a drop of water or human thought and consciousness.

There are no special and exceptional "incomprehensibles" requiring us to assume that special "principles" or "spirits" are concerned with them, while the rest are to be accounted for and explained in a more general way.

Selected by F. E. Harris.

REPLY TO MR. PHELPS

By Olin J. Ross

In The Silverton Journal of recent date Mr. Phelps, among other things, says, gravely, that "materialism explains nothing. A rock falls to the beach by gravity. There was a time — Mr. Ross will admit that — when there was no rock and no gravity. Back of that point is God. God works by law in all his kingdom, all recognize that."

With due courtesy, I would say that here is a sample bunch of assertions. Those who do not analyze things would say on the spot, probably, that these assertions are an answer, but if they are, they are an answer without reason. Notwithstanding Mr. Phelps, there are a lot of people who think that materialism does explain things. In fact, it is the only thing that does. Spiritism explains nothing. What in other years, explained the movement of the stars and planets? Spirits? I should say not. What explains, now, the growing of an apple, the unfolding of a rosebud, the lighting up of an eye, the storing up in the memory things that are gone? Spirits, or material things? It is a fact that everything we know about, think about or believe about comes out of matter, even to the deceptions of the human mind as to things religious, for as Sir Hiram Maxim says, "Take matter out of the universe and there would be nothing left, only a vast dark, cold vacuum where there would be neither heat, light, motion, force, electricity, gravity, nor anything else." I am quoting from memory, but the above is the idea.

Evolution comes along and explains how nature produces many things, even the ethereal things, like love and affection, at least far more so than a supposed spirit. I heard Dr. Carl Patton preach the first of four sermons on evolution a couple of Sundays ago. He occupies the pulpit of Dr. Washington Gladden, one of the two or three most famous pulpits in America. Dr. Gladden being too old to preach regularly, and he said, among a lot of other things about evolution, that it was the greatest production of the 19th century in the world of thought, and that it sheds more light on how things came to pass than any other one thing that has ever been discovered. Dr. Gladden believes the same way, he having been present last Sunday night to hear Dr. Patton on "Evolution and the Bible." Dr. Patton said that the Bible did not teach evolution and that the account of creation in the book was directly against the teachings of science.

Your God, Mr. Phelps, neither in the Bible, nor anywhere else, explains

the mysteries of nature. Neither does any other god explain them, and if the gods do not, then, where do the thousands of revelations that now light up the world come from? Your God was as ignorant of the world he was credited with making as a Hot-tentott savage was two hundred years ago, and as brutal, in the halcyon days of yore when he talked to the Jews. As "God always got his foot in his mouth when he did talk about the world, and as he has kept still for 1900 years, I would like to know how Mr. Phelps knows that "back of that point is God," that is, back of the rock and gravity.

If this 'ere God is so interested in us as to make the mountains and the forests, etc., for us, why does he not come around now and then and show himself, like as he did to half civilized people of other days? No, indeed, Brother Phelps, there is not a particle of evidence to show that "back of the rock and gravity is God." It is like saying, "Over in that ravine in the woods is the ghost." It is true that back of the rock and gravity are some things that have not been fully explained, but this does not come within a billion of miles, as it were, of proving the existence of a God. If we were allowed to prove the truth of a statement by pleading our ignorance, and that is exactly what it means to plead a God, why then our ancestors could likewise have explained the construction and the appearance of the snowflake by saying that a species of six winged birds up at the northpole made them. Three hundred years ago it would have been just as reasonable for Christians to say that the snow flakes were made by these birds as it is now to say that back of that rock and gravity is God. Just back of some things today is our ignorance, just as back of the rainbow two hundred years ago was ignorance, and not a God. People finally explored the rainbow and chased our old friend into the background.

We found that rainbows were produced without thought of any kind, and thought must necessarily be the constituent part of a God, for without that he would not be above the status of an idiot. Every time science discovers how a thing is done, and not one of the objects and phenomena in nature has been found to be the production of thought, God gives up a trench, as it were and retreats from the last stand. Not knowing a thing about God, never having tasted one, felt one, heard one, seen one or smelt one, Brother Phelps ambles gaily to the front and says that "God works by law in all his kingdoms," and that everybody knows this.

Well, law implies intelligence. Ants have certain rules or laws. Birds have also, as well as insects, fowls and animals up to man. In all these laws there is some sort of intelligence. Take thought, intelligence out of a rule, and how can it properly be called a law. We may call it a law in the absence of intelligence, but that does not make it a law, as a matter of fact. Here is where confusion enters the mind, and oftentimes misleads the reasoning faculties. An apple falls to the ground. What made it do so? Intelligence? No. The apple did not think about falling; neither did the ground think about it, and, neither did the whole earth, nor a star think about it.

So, I think that it is clear that no intelligence ever laid awake at night and cogitated over the problem of getting an apple from the tree to the ground, outside of human intelligence. What brought the apple to the ground was blind force, much the same kind of force that drives the wheels of a locomotive, and this force that runs the locomotive was in the universe long before any human intelligence operated upon it, and if there is a God that thinks, this matter and this force were in existence long before he was able to think or do a thing. Tell me, Mr. Phelps, how could intelligence, no matter how great, make our sun out of nothing? Tell me that before you go to insisting that "back of the rock and gravity" is God. Why, my dear sir, you might as well talk about a carpenter and stone mason making the capitol at Washington out of nothing as to talk of another intelligence, called God, or what not, making the illimitable universe out of nothing. The truth is, that no opium smoker ever had wilder dreams than these Christian friends of ours have had about God and what he has done for us.

Mr. Phelps says that "in order that I might have a biscuit for breakfast God put the sun where it is, arranged the other worlds in proper relation," etc., but he has no evidence to sustain the statement, except the flimsiest hearsay, the babblings of people over whom hung the night of superstition. To be brief, his dictum is supported by evidence no more strong — and his biscuit reminds me of the case — than was the belief of the Jew, Colonel Ingersoll speaks about, who went into a restaurant, got a whiff of fried bacon and was tempted to eat. In the meantime a storm arose and when he came out the lightnings were

weaving their courses far across the heavens and the world was lit up by them. White in the face and trembling with excitement he went up to the keeper of the restaurant and said, "Who would have thought they would make such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?" That 'ere sun up there, Brother Phelps, was no more put there to furnish you a breakfast than the storm was sent to scare the Jew, and this in turn reminds me that last year I had a running argument by letter with a young man who believes in all this folderol about a Holy Ghost, an immaculate conception and God's only son dying to save men. In reply I spoke of the vastness of the universe, the millions of suns, planets and moons, and the utter insignificance of our own little earth, a mere speck in the stupendous panorama, and then told him it was as unreasonable for one of the creators of all this to sacrifice himself for men as it would be for his mother to die for a parcel of bedbugs. The human microbes, in comparison, would be more out of proportion than the bedbugs. Our Christian friends would reject the story of a woman who gave up her life to save bedbugs, but they will accept that of a God dying to save men.

The young man did not answer as to this credibility, but he did come back at me and claimed that I did not read my Bible aright; that I should always take God with me, just as he did, etc. I wanted to know how he could tell that God came to him and helped him to read and listened to him and instructed him, and then I again spoke of the vastness of nature, and assured him that he could get Emperor Bill, the Czar of Russia or King George of England to come over and listen to him read, a thousand times sooner than the creator, or even the son of the creator of the illimitable universe. I said that Bill would come in a minute as compared to the God. The truth is if some fellow would say that Emperor Bill came over and helped him to read a book every night even Christians would reject the story, and, yet, that story would be easy as compared to the other.

As a reply to what I said about drunkards being reformed in the Murphy and Washingtonian movements "without giving their hearts to God," Mr. Phelps comes back and pays glowing tributes to the Godly character of Murphy and John B. Gough, which is as much in point, so it seems to me, as if he had said that they were good lawyers, doctors or school teachers. I would like to take up his boasted uplift claims for Christianity, but space forbids. Olin J. Ross.

Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 13th.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC DAY

When the project of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was launched several years ago, the Southern Pacific company was among the first to offer its moral and financial support. In view of this fact, the officials of the exposition have set aside March 10th as the day on which to pay public tribute to the railroad company for its efforts contributing to the success of the fair.

On that day, which is to be known as "Southern Pacific Day," every employe of the largest corporation in the West that can be spared from duty will attend the exposition. At the same time, the Southern Pacific building on Palm avenue will be thrown open to the public.

An interesting feature of Southern Pacific Day will be the attendance at the exposition of the veteran corps of the railroad — the retired and pensioned employes who helped to make early California and Nevada intelligence operated upon it, and if there is a God that thinks, this matter and this force were in existence long before he was able to think or do a thing. Tell me, Mr. Phelps, how could intelligence, no matter how great, make our sun out of nothing? Tell me that before you go to insisting that "back of the rock and gravity" is God. Why, my dear sir, you might as well talk about a carpenter and stone mason making the capitol at Washington out of nothing as to talk of another intelligence, called God, or what not, making the illimitable universe out of nothing. The truth is, that no opium smoker ever had wilder dreams than these Christian friends of ours have had about God and what he has done for us.

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3. The hypocritical and absurd pretensions and confidence games of all humbug religious fakers.
4. The effort to destroy our public schools, our other American institutions of civil and religious liberties, free thought, free speech and free press, by the foreign power known as the Roman Hierarchy, and its treasonable efforts to destroy the American government and prevent our progress in perfecting "a more perfect union."
5. The cause of poverty and crime and the remedy by the destruction of political trickery and false hero worship and how to establish universal knowledge of the true principles of government on the basis of equality of opportunity and the inalienable right of every citizen to an equal chance to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
6. The awful effects of the use of stimulants and narcotics on the human race and the best methods of emancipation from their destructive slavery.
7. The principles of the universal (genuine Catholic) religion of righteousness, and a true, progressive and modern Protestant faith of destroying ancient errors, which have held us in bondage; and that the salvation of our race depends on the solid rock of "the brotherhood of man."

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