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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

FROM DOUBT TO FAITH

Dr. James Orr, of Glasgow, whose remarkable work on the "Old Testament and Modern Criticism" took the Bross prize of six thousand dollars and is thought to be the greatest contribution to the subject ever made by any one, has delivered several times a powerful address in which he maintains that on the part of leading scientists there has been for thirty years past a tremendous reaction from skepticism toward faith. He instances such men as Virchow, Haeckel, Romanes, Sayce, and others, as examples. No man perhaps commands a wider horizon than Dr. Orr, and he is peculiarly calm and judicial. He sees a very decided trend in the direction of faith. The blankness and blackness of despairing doubt, materialism, and virtually, atheism, appeal to many who have been drifting away from all spiritual verities and certainties. If Dr. Orr is right, this is among the brightest indications of our day in the religious and intellectual sphere, a sign of the times, for which the whole Church has profound occasion to be grateful.

LARGE GIFTS

It is a marked sign of the times that there appears to be just now a unique fashion prevalent of giving large sums for benevolent work. For instance, the late John Crowle, of London, has left a fortune of about one and a quarter million dollars to be applied to temperance reform. This Wesleyan Methodist merchant gave his life, outside of business, almost exclusively to the advocacy and promotion of total abstinence, and he has left this sum for the perpetuation of this work, contingent only upon the raising of a similar sum by the Wesleyans during the next five years. He provides for ministers and other workers for the promotion of the cause in the pulpit, on the platform, in private and public, and for the organization of opposition to the granting of licenses. We hope to see the day when similar sums of money will be consecrated by the wealthy to the direct proclamation of the Gospel at home and abroad.

Referring to such donations on the part of the rich, we can not refrain from adding that if wealthy men and

AN AFRICAN'S WORK FOR AFRICA*

BY REV. WILLIAM H. SHEPPARD, IBANJ, KONGO STATE

After a time old King Lukenga died, and was succeeded by another Lukenga of a different dynasty. It is the custom for a new king to kill all the sons of the old one, so that he may feel secure on his throne. He succeeded in murdering seven; and then, remembering that I was one of the first Lukenga's sons, he sent to Ibanj, our new station among the Bakuba, messengers armed with poisonous arrows, with orders to shoot me. They came, and I heard they were there, but they went away without carrying out the king's orders. I never saw them. Then he sent a messenger with one of his scepters to ask me to come to his village because he wanted to see me. I set out with my people and traveled on foot the one hundred and fifty miles. It took us ten days. King Lukenga sat on the plain outside of the village, with as many as three hundred people around him.

"You have come," he said.

"I have come," I answered.

"I am glad you have come," he said.

"I am glad to be here," I replied.

He asked me to go into the village, and I went to a house which he had made ready for me. Later he sent me food—chickens, ducks, and corn—and the messenger said: "Here is some food for you and your people; when it is late to-night come and *come alone* to the king's palace." I determined to go. At midnight a man came and said, "King Lukenga is calling for you," so I went into the presence of Lukenga. We sat down, turned face to face, folded our legs, and began talking.

"Do you not know," he said, "that it is the custom when the crown passes from one family to another to murder all the sons of the old king? Were you not told that you were to be shot with poisonous arrows?"

I answered that I had heard it, but did not believe it.

"It is true," the king said. And he added: "Can we settle this thing now?"

"I hope so," I said, and I could see murder in his eyes.

The king called for a man, who brought a small pouch of leopard skin. The king called another man and asked him for a banana leaf. He put it over the fire to make it pliable. Then he took some strong medicine out of the leopard skin and put it into the banana leaf. After sitting awhile he had it tied up and gave it to a servant, telling him to throw it into the Lingadi River.

"Do you see that?" said the king.

"Yes," I replied.

"It has gone into the Lingadi," said the king, "from that to the Lingadi, then to the N'gala. I can not call it back, and it will not come back. Just so everything is gone that was between us which I had in my heart against you. Now, what are *you* going to do?"

"I don't know your custom," I replied, "but we have a custom of praying, and if you will allow me I will kneel here on the mat with you and pray."

After prayers we went to our houses, and a week later I returned to Ibanj.

Since then I have had an experience with the Zapo-Zaps, a cannibal tribe, perhaps the lowest in Africa, which gives some idea of the horrors which are being perpetrated in the Dark Continent, with, I am sorry to say, the encouragement of a so-called civilized nation. This tribe is in the pay of the Belgian state officers, to collect the tribute of rubber from the people of the various districts, and, in carrying out their orders, adds to the natural depravity of savage ignorance the cruelty of

* Condensed from *The Southern Workman*.

civilized (?) greed. When we were at Ibanj a native came over from Pianga and said:

"The Zapo-Zaps, the cannibals, have come down and are catching our people and murdering them inside the stockade, and we have come to ask you to help us drive them out."

"Who is leading them?"

"Malumba N'kusa leads them."

He is a man who, with his eyebrows shaved off, and his eyelashes pulled out, can yet look at the sun at midday without winking; his teeth are filed off to a sharp point; he wears little clothing, is very tall, and has a very long neck. He is a most repulsive looking man, and is an exceedingly swift runner.

"If Malumba N'kusa is leading them," I said, "there is no use of my going. He will never hear me. I have heard a great deal of Malumba N'kusa. Go back and tell your friends I can not come."

But they came again, bringing goats and chickens and other things. They said their friends had sent these presents, saying:

"Long ago you were over in our country. You said you loved us. Now we are in trouble. Will you not help us out of this trouble?"

I asked them to sit down, and then said:

"Now, if I leave the station something may happen to it while I am gone. When I pass through your country the people may take me for an enemy and murder me. When I reach the plain of the Zapo-Zaps it is nothing but murder. It is just as if I were to take a rope and go out behind the house and hang myself to that tree. Go back and tell your friends I can not come. There is no use in exposing myself in that way and tempting Providence."

We were sitting on the porch one day shortly after this, when a native called out, saying that a man was in sight, running, coming in our direction. "Yes, and he is coming from Luebo," I said. He had a letter in

a piece of bamboo; he was running fast and the perspiration was running from him. We wondered what had happened at Luebo. He handed me the letter. It was signed by Morrison, Bass, and another missionary.

"Dear Brother Sheppard," it read, "we hear of atrocities being committed in the Pianga country by the Zapo-Zaps. We commission you immediately on receipt of this letter to go over and stop the raid."

These were orders. I had to go; there was nothing else to do. I called to one of the boys and said: "Run and quickly make the church bell ring out." We had taught the natives that when the bell rang outside of the regular hours for church services they should come and come quickly, that there was a fight or a fire and every one must come. They came, and I called out: "Fall in line!" So they fell in line, five or six hundred of them. I said to them:

"You remember we have heard that there is trouble going on in the Pianga country, how the Zapo-Zaps have made a stockade and are killing all the people. We have just received a letter from Luebo that we must go there and stop the raid. You who are willing to go, stand in line. You who are not willing, go to your homes."

I looked away for a moment, and when I looked up everybody had gone! To tell the truth, I wanted to join them, for I did not want to go to Pianga at all. But I was compelled to go, so I went around and got eleven men to follow me. We knew the way to Pianga, for we had been there before. After three hours' march up hill, and across plains and creeks, we came to the first village, which was deserted. The next village was also deserted and the next. At one of these villages we called into the forest. We heard voices, and called again. Then the voices came nearer, for they knew we were friends. A man came

out and said that many of his people were in the forest. He brought out a man whose hand had been shot to pieces. He was in the stockade when the shooting began, but he had leaped the stockade. We tied up his hand and sent him back into the forest. On we went to the next village, and on and on. During the night we called out into the forest and heard voices of men crying aloud all that night. Next morning five men cried out. We said: "Give us a guide, to show us exactly where Malumba N'kusa is."

They gave us a guide, and we started on again. We were passing through a village when a native called my attention to a house, against which we saw the form of a poor woman leaning. She had been murdered and her flesh carved off. On we journeyed. At one village we sat down and lunched. We thought, when this forest is finished we shall be on the plain of the Zapo-Zaps, the cannibals. We started out, but suddenly we heard a call and saw eighteen cannibals looking for fresh people to kill. We had no time to jump into the forest. I called out: "Sheppard! Sheppard! don't shoot." One turned and said: "Stop!" They stopped. When I got my breath, I said: "Stop a moment. Is this the way you hunt animals? You don't know whether we are friends or enemies." A man stretched out his hand. This man was Chembamba, whose life I had saved two years before. For this kindness he remembered me and stopped his men, or we should have been shot at once. If we had turned our backs we should have been shot down at once.

"How many Zapo-Zaps are there?" I asked.

"Seven hundred," he answered.

"Have they all guns?"

"Yes, they are all armed with guns."

"Guide me to Malumba N'kusa. Tell him we are come not to fight, but simply to talk."

We started for Malumba N'kusa, and Chembamba and another man went on before. As we looked back we saw that the village we had left was on fire.

Away through the forest we journeyed, and when we came to the plain we saw a stockade, from which men were coming out of a trap-door. The Zapo-Zaps ran in every direction like so many ants, and started toward us, beginning to shoot. There over the plain they were coming, leaping, screaming, and shooting.

"Stand still, all of you!" I shouted, but on they came, and the one who was leading then called out:

"*Moya*" (a salutation).

"Sheppard!" I replied.

"Live!" he said.

"You also live," I answered.

Then he came up and said: "How do you do?"

Twenty-five of them said, "How do you do?" The others never reached us, for they started back to the stockade. We stood there, for they had not asked us to come up. Then we saw the chief coming out, and when he reached us he greeted us and said: "Come, come to the camp."

We started on, and I said: "I see some dead bodies on the plain. I notice men with their heads off."

"Some one has taken a fancy to them," he remarked. "They have taken their skulls to rub their tobacco with."

"There is a right hand off that one."

"Yes, you will see that when you are in the camp."

"The flesh is carved off!"

"Yes, they are eating it here in camp."

So we walked on to the small trap-door. We crawled on our hands and knees, and the others followed. One of the first things that Malumba N'kusa pointed out was the heart of a man, very black, with Malumba N'kusa's spear through it and his native medicine sprinkled around it.

He said it was the heart of N'funfu, whom I had known very well. He had been a friend to us, and had offered us hospitality.

On we walked, and saw flesh on pieces of bamboo around the fire to dry for future use. We spent two days inside the camp, and counted three hundred skeletons of people that they had murdered and eaten. N'kusa said there were sixty-two women in the upper part of the camp. As soon as they saw me they knew me, and held up their heads. I had a talk with Malumba N'kusa, but he would not let them go.

"At least," I said, "you are not going to hurt these women. You will not kill them, surely."

"No, not now, anyhow. The people had plenty of flesh."

At last we said to the chief:

"Now we have spent two days here and we want to go home."

"Very well," he answered, and the trap-door was lifted up, and we started out. It took us two days to get there. We reached home in one day.

Two fast runners went to Luebo. The missionaries wrote up our report, in which we requested the release of the women, and sent it to the Belgian state post, one hundred and fifty miles away. The runners gave it to the state officer who, as soon as he received the letter, called a man to blow the bugle. The soldiers fell into line and marched down to Pianga, caught Malumba N'kusa and his seven hundred people, and rescued the sixty women, and they were sent home into their own country. Malumba N'kusa was put in chains, and as the chains went around him and they put a strong lock on him, said: "You sent me to do this, and yet you have put me in chains!" With our own hands, while we were in this camp, we picked up eighty-one right hands and put them in baskets. These were to have been carried up also to the state post to show how many of

the natives had failed to bring in the rubber required by the state.

This story shows how much these Zapo-Zaps need the Gospel. When we first landed in Luebo not a soul had ever heard a word of it. All these centuries their fathers had died without knowing anything about the Lord Jesus Christ coming into the world to seek and save the lost.

Remembering the day when we landed for the first time at Luebo, twelve hundred miles from the coast, in a country where the natives had never seen a book, had never heard a hymn, had never seen a missionary and had never heard of Christ—remembering that time and realizing that now the Lord's Kingdom has spread east and west, and north and south for hundreds of miles and through divers tribes, and that His name is praised throughout the Kasai, we can say with grateful hearts: "Behold, what God hath wrought!"

What changes have come since we were sent out there! First, there are three thousand members of the church in Luebo alone. These have, most of them, been brought up in our school there. We have teachers from Fisk, Talladega, Tuscaloosa, and other schools in the United States, and they have given the natives an intelligent knowledge of Christ and the plan of salvation.

The First Converts

Four years of hard work passed away without a single convert. We had longed and prayed for a soul—"O, Lord! give us one soul, our faith is so weak, that we may see some visible sign of Thy favor." Soon five young men came to us crying that they had renounced their idols and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. We were indeed happy. These were carefully instructed and trained, and after some months, when we felt sure of them and had seen evidence of their changed lives, we received

them into the Church. At once these five started out as missionaries of Jesus, and preached the Gospel to their brethren. The first sign of the new life you see is that they are eager to go and tell the good news to others and bring them into the fold. They hold their family prayers daily, almost without an exception. The head of the family holds family worship morning and night. A great number of these converts have gone far away and established churches and schools—and this without pay from the mission.

The converts are tried and true; they know the Scriptures and can read them for themselves. They must know the catechism, questions and answers perfectly. We have hymns printed which they learn and can sing without trouble. But that is not all. Fifty native evangelists have been educated in our school and now have their stations, where they are preaching the Gospel to their brethren. We believe this is the plan that the Master would have us carry out: Educate the natives and send them out to preach to the others. They are quick on the road, do not need a long caravan to go

with them; they speak the language fluently, and know the trails. We have in Luebo to-day over a thousand in the school—men, women, and children—taught not only by the missionaries, but by native teachers.

At Ibanj, where we had a great deal of trouble in the early days, we now have five hundred children in school. We have native teachers there also, as well as teachers from America, a large Sunday-school, and a church of one thousand members. People come in flocks to attend the services. Before service they have brief prayers in their homes. In the way of translations, we have not only hymn-books and the Scriptures, but text-books used in our schools—arithmetics, geographies, and reading books. Some of these are printed by the natives, and several who were once cannibals are now assisting in this work. Twenty-five evangelists have gone from Ibanj station and established themselves in different parts of the country. Even at Lukenga's capital there are four evangelists who are preaching and teaching school, supported by the king himself.

CONDITION AND NEEDS OF RUSSIAN WOMEN STUDENTS*

BY A RUSSIAN WOMAN STUDENT

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."—St. John v: 25.

Truly the time has come when all men are hearing an inward voice—the spirit of man is awakening. Everywhere men are seeking God, and many are almost involuntarily uttering the cry, O God, where art Thou?

Among us women students, too, there is the same awakening and desire. From all parts of Russia, from small towns and country villages, women students are streaming into

St. Petersburg to enter different places of learning, and the "Cours Supérieurs."[†] Many of them spend their last "kopeck" for the journey and hope to earn their living in St. Petersburg, either by giving lessons or in some other way. Every one of us enters this place hoping to find something high, real, and noble—to discover the meaning and purpose of life. We finish our school life with an awakened but unsatisfied

* Written and translated for *The Students' Movement* (London).

† Women were not admitted to the university until last year. Equivalent educational facilities have been provided for them by private committees, and the diplomas given by these "Cours" are recognized everywhere.