

Absoluteness of Christ is not that of a metaphysical idea nor of a spiritual substance but of a person. His absoluteness is of personality not of idealism; His universalism is not that of philosophy but of life. His claim may be advocated in the language and the categories of philosophy, but neither the language nor the categories can do more than explain to the intellectual that part of his claim, which can be or may be brought within the limits of the mind. No philosophy can explain the Christ; no philosopher would attempt to do so. And so the propagandist has to face amongst men of other faiths than Christian, that tendency to accept in language the claims of Christ as Absolute in speculation, conduct and life, and yet to eviscerate these claims by interpreting Him as an Absolute idea or a spiritual substance.

To-day, much literature is to be found of the eviscerating sort; all of it is not written by men of Ethnic faiths. Mediating writers like mediating theologians are apt to build their houses on sand. The tide of life is apt to become so high that like the sudden rush of an African river, after a downpour of rain, sweeps everything before it and leaves behind not even the remnants of a foundation.

Many questions arise from the attitude of the propagandist and from that of others; these can only be adequately treated when some other subjects have been discussed separately. It is to be remembered that so far we have been treating our subjects analytically for reasons already stated. Their synthesis will come in due course, it is enough now to reaffirm what we have been declaring as much by contrast as by deduction that Christ is Absolute, must be Absolute to the Christian man so far as speculation, morals, revelation, creed, conduct and life are concerned. It is enough now to assert that to other men the Christian propagandist advocates this claim of Christ as a part of his creed and of his faith.

The Absoluteness of Christ therefore, implies a theistic conception of the universe and not a pantheistic, a psychological and not a metaphysical. The test of Christian conduct is to be found in the Person of Christ. Many will say that this is a curious ethical test which does not seem to accord in kind with any ethical system. But this is not so, as all ethical systems are based upon the nature of man. Whatever idea may be employed, whether altruism over egotism, self interest or self sacrifice, it originates as a moral principle in the character of the Ego or Person. The man lies behind the idea and creates it. In the case of the Christian, the moral criterion is the Person of Christ from whom will spring those moral conceptions that are Absolute. The ethical rule of Christ is universal.

His kingdom is over the forces of nature and the hearts of men. These things the propagandist must emphasise against that attitude of mind and spirit which would make ultimately the self the judge of Christ, and not Christ the judge of all men, society, creed and civilisation. In another than the usual sense attributed to the phrase, it is necessary that a man should get "out of self, into Christ," in order that Christ the Absolute may dominate him in body, soul and spirit, in creed and conduct, in speculation and life.

## Nature Study.

### Our Vanishing Fauna.

From a letter written by Mrs. John Ross on 28th December 1825, in reply to a query from her brother in Scotland regarding the wild beasts to be found at Ncera, we learn that at that time there existed, in the neighbourhood of the present Alice, lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros, sea-cow, zebra or quagga, monkey, baboon, wolf, jackal and wild cat. 'None of them' she says 'trouble us, except the wolf; he killed an ox of ours last night (this is the second) and crippled a calf two weeks ago.'

Of the larger animals enumerated in this list, the leopard alone persists in defying man. Lion, elephant, rhinoceros, sea-cow and zebra have vanished. The wolf too is gone; and baboon and jackal are following suit.

The last record of a lion South of the Orange River is stated by Sclater to be one killed with assegais near Commetjes Post on the Eastern frontier in 1842, but Kropf affirms that the Ingonyama tributary of the Tsomo river took its name from the fact that a lion was shot there in 1858.

The late cashier of Lovedale, Mr. Finlayson, told me how, in conversing one day with old Tini Maqoma who spent the last years of his life at Lovedale, he jokingly referred to the calm and peace of the old chief's retiring years and said to him, 'You're quite happy, I'm sure!' 'Happy!' retorted the old man, 'if a lion came to Lovedale—and I've seen a lion in Lovedale—would it be happy to see all these oxen and not be able to touch them?'

Apart from references in class-essays to traditional beliefs in the existence of a terrible animal—believed to be a lion—in a dark Transkei forest, the only occasion on which I have heard a native talk with knowledge of the lion has been in Pondoland, but even then the graphic account given me of its method of hunting may have been traditional.

In this connection, a pathetic interest attaches to a letter (also in the Pirie archives) of the Gaika Commissioner, the Honourable Charles Brownlee, replying to a query from his friend Bryce Ross regarding the proper Kafir words that should be used in the translation of the Bible for the "Lion's roar." 'I think Appleyard is quite right in calling one of the roars of the lion by the word *uku-Konya*. There are, as you remark, several kinds of roaring by lions; the first may be termed *uku-Konya*, that is when the lion at night after a gorge is happy and comfortable and gives expression to the pleasant sensations by roaring. . . . An old Griqua who has had a great deal to do with lions says that the roar above alluded to is the peace shout of the lion when he calls his friends and family together. Then there is the loud roar of rage and defiance when attacked.' When an elephant shouts when attacked, the Zulus say *iyaka-lima*, and this passage occurs in one of their songs in glorification of Dingana, *indlovu iyakalima, kwazaluka amatye*. (The elephant bellows, the rocks are split). Now whether the defiant roar of the lion could be called *uku-Kalima* or not I cannot say, but the word would be most appropriate—though it may not be known in this sense to the Kafirs, who probably might say *iyagxwala*,

as they say of the roaring of cattle at the smell of blood. Then there is another sort of roar or rather growling which the lion makes before making an attack; this my informant described as low and fierce but not so loud as the others; this roar or growl might be designated by *uku-Gquma*. Beyond these three kinds of roaring my old Griqua friend could not go. You have therefore *uku-Konya*, *uku-Kalima* or *uku-Gxwala*, and *uku-Gquma*, and I fancy you will not be able to get beyond these. In describing the lion in English, we had to be content with one word. My old friend 'Go' is as good a word-painter as I know. He has had a good deal of experience with lions, and he may be able to give you a word if you want more.'

That the elephant was abundant a century ago appears from the quantity of ivory that found its way to the market at Fort Willshire. This market was set up by the Governor of the Colony in 1824 to furnish clothing and garden utensils for the Kafirs. Within four months of its establishment, Mrs. Ross heard that twenty-two thousand lbs. or upwards of ivory had been sold. Before the fair commenced, ivory was very cheap, but shortly afterwards its value rose tenfold. The Rosses could have obtained ivory cheaply, but from principle kept out of this trade. As Mrs. Ross puts it, 'It does not do for ministers to be merchants at home—far less here.' The average weight of a pair of tusks in a bull elephant was 100 lbs, and in a cow elephant from 20 to 28 lbs.

In those days, the Kafir chief indicated his kraal by having an elephant's tail fixed to a pole beside it. John Brownlee saw Hints'a's kraal so distinguished.

An ivory ring was worn on the upper arm by great men as a mark of distinction and sometimes an *um-Xaka*—as the ring is called—is still to be seen on a Kafir's arm. During a recent visit of deputies from Scotland to the Transkei, one of these very valuable ornaments was presented to Mr. Houston.

In the olden days, elephants were widespread over the open country, but the great forest at Pirie was not considered an elephant forest. Yet, even here, teeth and tusks occasionally come to light; three tusks have been found by Mr. Haynes in the forest. It has been suggested that elephants retired thither to die. In the Mdiza valley there is an Elephant's Pool, but to-day it is very difficult to identify the spot so called.

The 'common' rhinoceros has disappeared like a knotless thread; it has left no trace of its former existence in any native place-name known to me, nor does it figure in Kafir-lore; it survives only in its name *um-Kombe*, which, by the way, is in Zulu reserved for the still rarer and now almost extinct White rhinoceros.

Of the sea-cow or hippopotamus we have much more traditional information. A century ago this animal was common in our rivers. John Brownlee saw considerable numbers of them on his visit to the Chalumna; and up to 1850 they were still seen on the Keiskama. Stow maintains that, on the advent of the Kafirs, the Kei and the adjoining rivers swarmed with hippopotami. The Bushmen openly attacked these huge animals, which weighed as much as four tons, with arrows and darts, and then hamstringed them; they also set

pitfalls and harpoon traps for them. The Kafirs in their turn drove out the Bushmen, and exterminated the hippos. Tradition points to Madolo's cave on the Kei as marking the large pool in which the last hippo was killed.

At the close of a lecture which I gave in Alice in 1913 on 'The Mammals of Alice,' one of my audience, Mr. Liefeldt, gave a graphic description of a personal experience which he had in his young days with a hippo on the Transkei coast.

Eastwards of the Kei lies the Umzimvubu, which actually received its name—the Hippos' kraal—from the numbers of these animals which it sheltered; and the Ntywenka tributary of the Inxu river suggests by its name that it was at one time a playground of the hippo.

To-day the hippo's name—*imvubu*—suggests to the native mind something of abnormal size, and an unusually corpulent person may be called 'Giny' *imvubu* (Swallow the hippo). The name survives also in the Kafir game *Telele' mvubu*, in which two children lift a third between them by his arms and legs and swing him pleasantly to and fro to his delight, then suddenly throw him down to his disgust or even pain.

To what animal does the Zebra or Quagga of our letter refer? In all likelihood to the Mountain Zebra, which still exists about Cradock and other parts of Cape Colony; but it is quite possible that in the days of the writer the real Quagga—now as extinct as the Dodo or the Moa—wandered about the veld not so far from Alice.

The wolf referred to in the letter is the hyena. There are two species of hyena, the brown hyena and the spotted hyena: and, if the recognised interpretation of INCUKA is correct, the brown hyena is here intended. I very much doubt if either species now exists between the Keiskama and the Kei. In the heart of the Pirie Forest is a traditional 'Wolf's Den' under the base of a huge rock. In search of this den, many years ago, a group of English officers came, and, halting at Pirie mission-house, obtained a guide. They were led to the den, but, on finding it empty, were angry at having wasted their energy to no purpose. By that time the den was a thing of the past, but these officers had not come on antiquarian research, but for sport.

The hyena figures in many Kafir tales, and in everyone of them he is made to appear as an abject fool.

**The Sandgrouse invasion.** Mr. R. F. Weir, in forwarding a female from Peuleni states that throughout September, several flocks, numbering up to a hundred and more in a flock, have been haunting his neighbourhood. The female lacks the white breast-band of the male, and has flanks and thighs transversely barred with alternate narrow bands of black and buffy-white.

Mr. B. H. Dodd reports a covey of about a hundred birds at Cambridge in the middle of September; and on the 22nd Miss Marjorie Latimer, on her way home to Chiselhurst from school, twice recognised the call and saw a flock passing over towards Nahoon.