

Religion

Mr I S Hamilton poises his condemnation of religion on the persecution practised by the people who had vested interest in it and exploited it to their own sordid selfish ends. If some perverted persons perpetrated atrocities against their fellow beings in the name of religion, poor religion should not be made the butt of criticism for no religion tolerates persecution or intolerance. It stands for love, virtue, tolerance and universal brotherhood of man. 'God', says religion 'is thy father,' If He is our father, every human is our brother.

It is distorting the meaning of religion to include communism among the religions: communism is a political set-up designed to provide for the hungry stomach, which is all too mundane, whereas religion exists to inspire man to spiritual heights. And the founders of religions were no tyrants like Mussolinis or Hitlers ; they wished nothing but well by humanity and it is not befitting to assert that their teachings have subjected mankind to intellectual suffering.

'Religious belief' says Mr. Hamilton, 'is an accident of birth.' It is not. When a religion first came into the world, people rallied round it, not because they had inherited any belief in it, but because it gave solace to their souls tortured by how and why. People have laid down their lives for their religious beliefs because they valued their religion above all other things in the world. Is religious belief not more than a mere accident of birth?

To seek to destroy religion because the existence of God cannot be proved scientifically in a laboratory is a fallacious idea. Science is concerned with what is physical but the metaphysical is beyond its ken. You cannot perceive God with your physical eyes or the intellect; to perceive Him you require spiritual eyes. A man who has set foot on the path of spiritualism has no right to say that God does not exist, An owl might as well say that the sun does not exist because it does not see him!

Religion as I see it, is a tie that binds a man to God, the Supreme Force, the source of all creation and the fountain-head of all virtue, (I do not subscribe to the anthropomorphic conception of God) as well as to humanity. By enjoining man to treat his neighbour as his own self, religion has spread the gospel of humanism long before the humanist made his debut. The religious belief in the responsibility of man to God for his actions in this world makes man behave well, not because of fear of punishment for evil deeds, nor because of hope of reward for virtue, but for the sake of doing his duty that goes with his being a man. Is religion not more humanistic than the humanist himself and all that he stands for?