

stars, superseded among the living only by his own cinematic heirs Clint Eastwood and Mel Gibson.

What this tells us is that the hunger for heroism remains, and when the upper reaches of the culture decide to starve it of genuine nutrition, the lower reaches will step in and offer it a banquet of junk food. I would be the last to deny that some of this junk food—like McDonald's hamburgers—tastes good. But O for "a little touch of Harry in the night"!

The question is whether we—or rather our children and grandchildren—will ever get it again. Not, I fear, if the feminization of our culture that the women's movement has been laboring to achieve should proceed apace. But my guess is that this campaign has already begun to encounter more resistance than it was running into up until very recently. This resistance is coming perhaps even more from women than from men.

To be sure, the leaders of the feminist movement, having already feminized so many other institutions in our society, have set their sights on purging even the armed forces of what a high female official of the Defense Department derisively called "macho culture." For this, far from being fired, she was praised, and it was only when she later denounced the Marines as "extremist" that she had to apologize and resign.

Yet other women, desperate to marry before their biological clocks run down, can more and more be heard complaining that all the men out there are either "wimps" or gays. It has been said that men are born aggressive and predatory and that only women can tame and civilize them, which is true. But it is also true that if women fail to demand that men be strong, and courageous, and honorable—if, that is, they fail to live by the dictum that "only the brave deserve the fair"—then they will find no one worth bestowing their favors upon. No doubt they will—human nature being what it is—perforce bestow their favors on, or at least resignedly decide to marry, the wimps they secretly despise. But there will be no more touches of Harry in their nights, or indeed in anyone else's. □

A Remembrance Of Heroes Past

GEORGE MACDONALD FRASER

I THINK most people would agree that this is not a heroic age. Occasional individual heroisms there are, of course, but the present generation is not in sympathy with heroism as I understand the word. I was a child of empire, so my heroes were mostly people like Drake and Livingstone, Nelson and Kit Carson, Joan of Arc and Robert Bruce, Hereward and Harriet Tubman, the defenders of Rorke's Drift and the Alamo, the Light Brigade, my own Highland ancestors, and those almost-forgotten fliers of the Great War—Bishop, Ball, Rickenbacker, McCudden, and others. Service as a foot-soldier in Burma in the Second World War did not alter my

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views, for the men of the XIVth Army seemed to be cut from the same cloth as my boyhood heroes. They were men of action who prized the same old-fashioned virtues, judged matters (more or less) by the same standards, shared the same hopes for themselves and their country, and had the same unspoken notions of loyalty and personal honor. But like my heroes of old, while grateful tribute is paid to them on anniversaries, they and their values belong to the past.

For one thing, they were not politically correct. Indeed, when I think back on that platoon of hard-bitten Cumbrians, they look as politically incorrect as it is humanly possible to be. They had hopelessly reactionary views on crime and punishment and discipline, believing in an eye for an eye, and believing that you paid for your faults and mistakes, and you might, with luck, be rewarded for your virtues but shouldn't count on it. They expressed no views on human rights, their own or anyone else's; their concern with the environment was limited to wondering how many Japanese it might conceal. They had immense pride, which led them to hide their fears and to take hardship and pain and even death in their stride—not without loud and obscene complaint, mind you, but without expectation of special treatment or consideration; the notion of crying on anyone's shoulder, or of giving way to self-pitying emotion, they would have thought shameful. By today's standards they were hard, uncharitable, uncivilized, even un-Christian men; they had no compassion for their enemy, only a deep abiding hatred; they believed that the only good Jap was a dead one.

They understood that he had the same point of view, and



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besides hating they respected and even admired him. It goes without saying that they were guilty of the only unpardonable modern sin, being racists (as if that made them different from anyone else since time began), but they were racists who had a loyalty to their Indian and African and Chinese and Burmese and Afghan and Gurkha comrades which no modern liberal could even begin to understand.

No, they were not politically correct. But then, neither were Drake and Livingstone and Kit Carson—or Wash-

How the Battle of Britain pilots, or the American seamen at Midway, or the Russians at Stalingrad, got by without 'counseling' we can only guess.

ington and Jefferson, or for that matter Abraham Lincoln. And how I wish sometimes that that great and kindly man could be reincarnated, if only so that he could explain his views on race relations to an audience of today's politically correct.

Actually, it wouldn't faze them in the least. They would probably think he was kidding, for the twin pillars of political correctness are willful ignorance and a steadfast refusal to face the truth if it doesn't fit with what the politically correct wish to believe. At worst this involves them in deliberate lying, at best in *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. At its most innocent, political correctness can be touchingly naïve: just last month I noticed the slogan on a tray of poppies being sold for Remembrance Day. It read: "A caring force for the future." Plainly someone wants to think of the army as a sort of humanitarian organization taking care of people (which, indeed, can be one of its roles) but doesn't like to face the brutal truth, that an army's ultimate function is killing people. I take no satisfaction in that truth, but I know that the day we forget it, for the sake of feeling cozy and comfortable, we are on the way to suicide.

As for those values I mentioned above—those of my long-dead heroes, which were still honored in my generation—courage, certainly, is still admired but not quite, perhaps, in the way it was. Recently a young Englishwoman, a nursery-school teacher, defended her charges against a maniac who was trying to kill them with a machete. She saved the children; she was a heroine, no question—and her name was coupled in the press and in public admiration with that of a mother who had spent years working to bring to book the murderers of her son. Now I have unbounded admiration for that mother, and for the determination with which she pursued justice, but I have difficulty putting her in the same category with the young teacher who without hesitation laid her life on the line for her pupils. It seems to me that the definition of heroism is being blurred. We have in Britain an annual award ceremony for Children of Courage. Some are children who have coped bravely with a disability; others have done something actively heroic. I'm not minimizing the fortitude of the disabled children when I say that it seems there are two different kinds of courage here, and that to

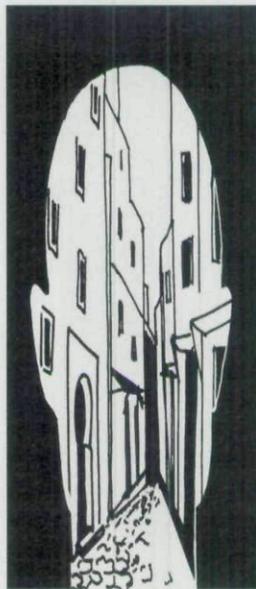
pretend that they are not different is to encourage, however unwittingly, the idea of the victim as hero.

That is something which is gaining ground in our culture, the conferment of heroic or semi-heroic status on someone who has suffered grievous misfortune or loss. We saw a remarkable example of this in the near-hysterical reaction to the tragic death of the Princess of Wales. No doubt many were, to use the fashionable word, devastated, and there certainly was throughout the world a deep and genuine regret for a young life so dreadfully blotted out; there was also in Britain an unprecedented media-manufactured campaign in which the public, including the Royal Family, was virtually blackmailed not merely into mourning, but into mourning in the way which the media dictated. What C. S. Forester so cruelly and accurately described as lower-deck sentimentality had a field day, culminating in the event at Westminster Abbey. Mr. Blair felt proud. I felt ashamed. Perhaps it was the contrast between the vast carpets of flowers outside the palaces and the modest, decent tributes laid at the cenotaphs on Remembrance Day each November; perhaps it was the reflection that a heroic figure second to none in our century, Churchill, received no such monumental outpouring of grief at his passing—and wouldn't have wanted it. He might have wondered what change had come over his nation to make such an extravagant demonstration possible, and why grief, or the manifestation of grief, should now be regarded as something noble.

For grieving has become a positive virtue, and the response to tragedy, and especially to fatal crime, has become a ritual: the florists' shops must be stripped so that tributes can be strewn at the scene; there must be tears and harrowing interviews for the cameras; the tragedy must be denounced as unacceptable; swarms of so-called "counselors" must be called in to mouth their platitudes; above all, everyone must be seen to be mourning. It is a splendid substitute for actually doing something to prevent repetition of the tragedy, which all too often nowadays is the horrific murder of a child. But of course doing something effective about that would certainly be politically incorrect. Lip service to grief is so much easier.

My generation was lucky. Grieving was not a virtue or a duty then. When a schoolfellow died there was a quick word of sympathy from our teacher, and life went on. No counselors arrived to damage our young minds by harping on the tragedy or insisting that we "come to terms" with it. But counseling today is a thriving business. Firefighters are counseled, and sometimes even awarded large sums in compensation, just for doing their jobs; when a young policewoman is fatally stabbed, it is suggested that her male colleagues may need counseling for the trauma they have suffered. How the Battle of Britain pilots, or the American seamen at Midway, or the Russians at Stalingrad, got by without "counseling" we can only guess.

SO how did the cult of the hero come to be replaced, at least in Britain, by the cult of the victim? How did the nation that shed its blood in a hundred wars and fed its seas for a thousand years and endured Flanders and the Blitz and was accustomed to burying its dead with a quick



salute and carrying on, undergo such an apparent decay of the spirit?

I don't know. I've heard it suggested that loss of empire, and the consequent loss of a heroic spirit, is a partial explanation. I suppose you can hardly lose control of one-quarter of the human race and one-fifth of the world's land surface, and command of its oceans, without a few withdrawal symptoms. But I wouldn't have expected them to be quite so traumatic, or the reversal of national outlook to be so complete. We are even meant to apologize for the past. Our new prime minister recently apologized for the Irish famine. I didn't know he had caused it. And since we know he didn't, we can only conclude that he accepts the monstrously dangerous, stupid, and incidentally racist concept of inherited racial guilt. This is political correctness run barking mad. I daresay the Native Americans (a term, by the way, invented by Theodore Roosevelt to describe Americans of European descent) have demanded that the United States apologize for Sand Creek and Washita and Wounded Knee. But have the Native Americans ever apologized for Fort William Henry and Fort Ven-

ango and the Pontiac Conspiracy? But of course political correctness demands that only one side of the coin be looked at.

Of one thing I am sure: my country needs heroes now—and I don't see any coming up. But it is some consolation that even in this unheroic age, when my old comrades of the XIVth Army can be pelted and insulted with jeers of "Heil Hitler!" at a Remembrance Day parade, and when so much of my nation's worthy past is devalued—in such a time it is comforting to remember that not so long ago there was someone who was in no doubt what it meant to be British, and stood firm when it mattered, at the time of the Falklands. It can't have been easy; there were faint hearts and dissenting voices, and even some who seemed more concerned for the enemy's casualties than for our own; fortunately they were not around in 1940 to agonize about the human rights of the Luftwaffe. Anyway, she stood firm, as precious few men would have done; she did not go wobbly. And for that, on behalf of a damfool generation, and in the language of the XIVth Army, I'd like to say, "*Shabash, memsahib.*" Which being translated means, "Bravo, lady." □

The (Scientific) Case for God

STEPHEN M. BARR

PATRICK Glynn, a political journalist and former Reagan Administration official, has given us an elegantly written and absorbing account of his return to religious faith and the reasons for it. A major reason was the "significant body of evidence" which has emerged from "a series of dramatic developments in science, medicine, and other fields" in the last twenty years that "has radically changed the existence-of-God debate."

Gerald Schroeder, an Israeli physicist, has followed a similar path. He writes: "As a scientist trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I was convinced I had the evidence to exclude [God] from the grand scheme of life." But "with each step forward" he took in his understanding of science, "something kept shining through."

One may be tempted to object that "The Evidence," as the title of Glynn's book calls it, goes back a lot longer than twenty years. St. Paul knew nothing of modern science and yet felt justified in asserting in his Epistle to the Romans that God's "eternal power and deity," though invisible, are "manifest in the

things that He has made." Faith does not need to wait upon the latest research. Nevertheless, Glynn and Schroeder are right that something important has happened in the world of science.

What has happened is that the great

God: The Evidence: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World, by Patrick Glynn (Prima Publishing, 221 pp., \$22)

The Science of God: The Convergence of Scientific and Biblical Wisdom, by Gerald L. Schroeder (Free Press, 226 pp., \$25)

scientific discoveries which seemed to many thoughtful people to provide reasons for skepticism and even atheism have been shown to be either misleading or mistaken. To borrow a phrase from Ben Wattenberg, the good news is that the bad news is wrong.

The bad news is old and well known. Copernicus showed that we humans are not at the center of the universe—though, as Schroeder points out, the Bible never actually said we were. And Darwin—supposedly—showed that we are merely the products of chance mutations. Glynn quotes Bertrand Russell's dismal conclusion: the human race is just "a curious accident in a backwater."

Galileo, besides embarrassing the Roman Catholic Church, helped bring about the triumph of mechanism over teleology, which, as Glynn notes, "went hand in hand with the decline of religious faith among the intellectual elite." It was no longer scientifically respectable to look for purpose in Nature.

What has put these discoveries in a different light is more recent developments in the very same branches of science. From physics and cosmology have come the "anthropic coincidences." This term refers to the fact, now widely appreciated by physicists, that many features of the laws of nature seem arranged so as to make possible the emergence of life. For example, if certain parameters of the "Standard Model" of particle physics were even slightly different from what they are measured to be, either stars would never have formed or biochemistry would not be possible. Many of these anthropic coincidences are striking indeed, and have led at least a few scientists to reconsider their atheistic prejudices.

Glynn discusses anthropic coincidences at much greater length than does Schroeder. He observes that there are two ways out for the faithful atheist. One of them is to argue that the features of nature's laws which the deist and theist think were arranged may actually be inflexibly determined by some deep underlying principles. While this is very likely to be true, it hardly resolves the issue, since the structure of physical law did not have to be based upon those particular principles. The other way out is to posit the existence

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