

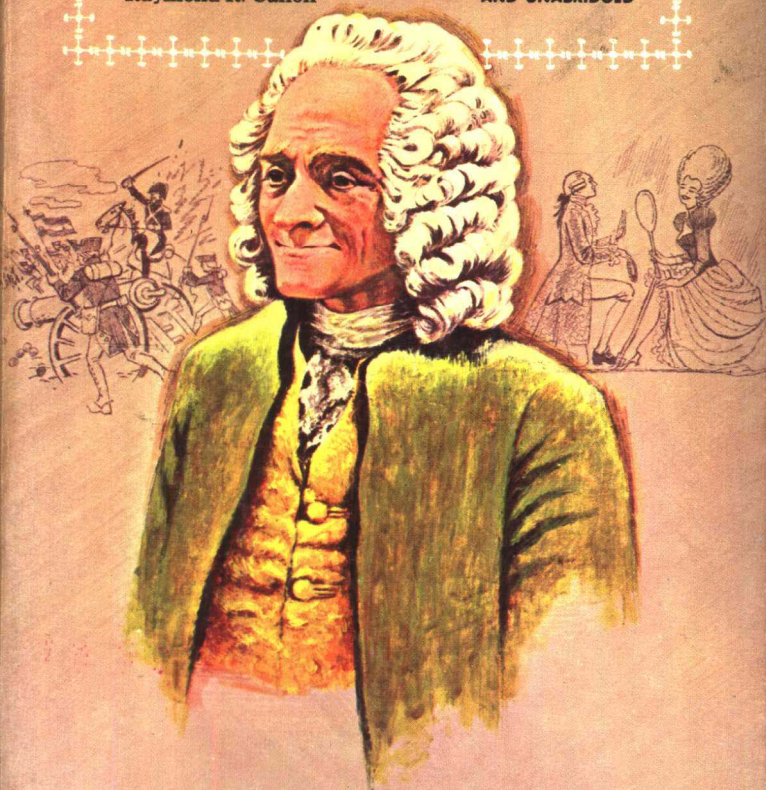
VOLTAIRE

CANDIDE

and ZADIG

Introduction by
Raymond R. Canon

**COMPLETE
AND UNABRIDGED**



CANLIDE

AND

ZADIG



VOLTAIRE



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CANDIDE AND ZADIG



VOLTAIRE

Introduction

In the British parliamentary system of the twentieth century, Voltaire would have made an admirable leader of the opposition. Few and far between would be any governmental irregularities that would escape his critical eye, and many a cabinet minister would squirm under his biting wit. But if Voltaire would be at home in our century, he is nonetheless the author who best epitomizes the eighteenth century. This century, which rightly begins with the death of Louis XIV in 1715 and terminates with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, was one of skepticism, reason, and close analysis—a definite trend away from the dogmatism of the previous hundred years.

Into this era of Louis XIV was born, in 1694, Francois-Marie Arouet. His parents were well-to-do middle-class people who saw to it that their son was given an education in one of the most fashionable schools, where, of course, his instruction was along definite classical lines. While he was still young, Francois-Marie started to turn out verses which were admired by his peers for their wit and satire. His father, being an eminent lawyer, would have preferred to see his son follow in his footsteps, but young Arouet would have none of this, and any law he studied was his father's wish and not his own. He continued with his writing, and associated to such an extent with freethinkers and other such undesirable people of the time that his father, in desperation, packed him off to Holland. In his father's eyes, he managed to disgrace himself there as well, and so the young boy was brought

back to Paris. He promptly got into trouble for allegedly writing some verses which discussed satirically the evils of the state. This led to temporary exile from the city, but no sooner was he back than he was forced to spend a year in the Bastille for writing, again satirically, against the Regent of France.

At this point, it should have been evident to everyone, and especially to the French authorities, that this young upstart was not going to be brought into line very easily. However, perhaps the authorities' senses were dulled by the fact that Arouet, on his release from the Bastille, plunged for the first time into more serious writing, and his first play—"Oedipus"—produced in 1718, was a great success. It is in the dedication of this play that he first signed his name as "Voltaire," a name which remained with him from then on.

It may be that some of the more stuffy aristocrats resented the figure Voltaire was cutting in society, but it was not long before there was trouble again. Voltaire was sentenced once more to the Bastille. Shortly after his release, he was forced to leave the country. He chose England as his land of exile, and it was during his three years there that he gained a deep admiration for the country. This admiration stayed with him for the rest of his life, but the initial result of this exile were the Philosophical Letters of 1734. In these, he expressed a pronounced preference for English laws, science, and freedom. In doing so, he exposed what he considered to be profound weaknesses in the French system. Small wonder that the book was condemned by the French Government and publicly burned by the authorities. Needless to say, Voltaire was forced to leave the city at once.

It was shortly before this departure that he made the acquaintance of Mme. du Châtelet. This well-educated woman, twelve years younger than Voltaire, took up the study of philosophy and science with him. When Voltaire was banished, she became his mistress, and invited him to come and live with her and her husband at their castle in Lorraine. This may have shocked conventional morality, but it provided Voltaire with one of the calmest periods of his life. He was able to carry out further scholarly studies, and, what was more important, avoid his penchant for controversy. It was while he was here that he was appointed Royal Historiographer in 1745, and the following year was elected to the Académie Française. Both these appointments are a good indication of the fame which had become his during the prolonged absence from Paris. It was, significantly, also during this time that he developed a special interest in the philosophy of Pope and Leibnitz; an interest, as we shall see, that played such an important role in the writing of *Candide*.

In 1749, Mme. du Châtelet died bearing the illegitimate child of a rival of Voltaire. Fortunately, he was helped through his period of grief by an invitation which came from one of his ad-

mirers—Frederick the Great of Prussia. Voltaire set out for Potsdam at once, and for a while the two men got along extremely well. Gradually, however, Voltaire discerned what he considered to be a definite misuse of power on the part of Frederick, and he aimed his biting satire at this abuse. The two men fell to quarreling, and Voltaire left Potsdam in anger. He set up an estate in Geneva, Switzerland, but the Genevese authorities proved to be just as disenchanted with Voltaire as their Parisian counterparts had been earlier. In 1759, he left the city and settled at Ferney, just across the border from Switzerland. It was about this time that he had *Candide* published.

Candide and an earlier work, *Zadig*, are two of the "Contes philosophiques" which are essentially a product of the eighteenth century—a narrative form which often utilizes an imaginary trip, or an Oriental theme. Many of these contes, which were used to criticize or satirize abuses of the time, are without merit, but in the hands of writers such as Voltaire, they became a potent weapon.

Zadig, while not enjoying the fame of *Candide*, is nevertheless the best of Voltaire's earlier efforts in this field. *Zadig* examines the mystery of human happiness and finds it all too ephemeral to his liking. For *Zadig* we can usually substitute the name of his creator, for like Voltaire, *Zadig* tries to live according to the precepts of rationalism, and like Voltaire, often reaps a harvest of thorns and brambles. Foremost among the banes of *Zadig*'s existence are, of course, the theologians, and Voltaire made the most of his opportunities in lampooning them, in particular, the Bishop of Mirepoix. It is in the passages that hold these theologians up to ridicule that we see Voltaire at his cutting best, and which was to be repeated with such great success at a later date in *Candide*.

This latter work is a real masterpiece, although it seems to have been written in great haste. On the surface it appears to be a simple story, but all manner of wit, irony, and inference lurks underneath.

To understand *Candide* we have to turn to one of the main philosophical viewpoints of the eighteenth century—that of optimism. The two principal exponents of this outlook were the English writer Pope and the German philosopher Leibnitz. Voltaire had the opportunity of meeting the former during his stay in England, and studied the latter's works together with Mme. du Châtelet. Two salient features of this philosophy were Pope's statement in his "Essay on Man" that "Whatever is, is right," and Leibnitz's affirmation that God was good, and so he created the best of all possible worlds.

What perhaps contributed to Voltaire's turning against the philosophy was the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, which, together with the resulting tidal wave and fire, killed over

30,000 people and caused damage estimated at over one hundred million dollars. In a letter which Voltaire wrote shortly after receiving news of this disaster, he remarked that exponents of this optimistic philosophy would be hard put to explain the disaster as being part of the best of all possible worlds.

To be true, there are other factors which enter into the writing of *Candide*, but the disaster had provided the seed for the story, and anything which came along later was secondary. When we finally do meet the hero of the story, we find him to be a good-natured but exceedingly naïve person. One can readily imagine the gist of his adventures when we see that almost without exception the men he meets are rogues and cheats—outstanding pictures of what eighteenth-century con men must have been like. The optimism of Leibnitz and Pope is reflected in the personage of Dr. Pangloss—an excellent picture of Voltaire's knife-like wit. What gradually comes out in the story is that while Voltaire is definitely opposed to the philosophic implications of optimism, he is no less averse to a world where "tout est mal." Throughout the story, he seems to be treading a narrow path between the two worlds, as if to say that good is counter-balanced by evil.

But the conclusion to be drawn from all this is one that has intrigued critics ever since it was written. No less a poet than Wordsworth called the book "a dull product of a scoffer's pen," while his contemporary Hazlett called it "a masterpiece of wit." And so it goes. But perhaps man himself in his peregrinations through life is following the narrow path suggested by Voltaire. Good on one side, bad on the other, each pulling with its Lorelei-like tones. And what can man do but act on *Candide's* closing words that "il faut cultiver notre jardin"? All of which seems to suggest that we should accept those things we cannot change, and change those things we can. No man can do more.

Voltaire spent about twenty years at Ferney, where he developed a small community and wrote, advised, cajoled, satirized, and advocated continuously. Many of his admonitions ended with the phrase, "Ecrasez l'infâme"—the infamy which encouraged intolerance, superstition, and bigotry. He was visited by a stream of famous people from all over Europe, and he went on writing, writing, writing. . . . Finally, in 1778, he made a triumphant return to Paris, where he died shortly afterward. *Le dix-huitième siècle, c'est vraiment Voltaire.*

RAYMOND R. CANON

CANDIDE

1—How Candide was brought up in a fine castle, and how he was expelled from thence

There lived in Westphalia, in the castle of my Lord the Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, a young man, on whom nature had bestowed the most agreeable manners. His face was the index to his mind. He had an upright heart, with an easy frankness; which, I believe, was the reason he got the name of *Candide*. He was suspected, by the old servants of the family, to be the son of my Lord the Baron's sister, by a very honest gentleman of the neighborhood, whom the young lady declined to marry, because he could only produce seventy-one armorial quarterings; the rest of his genealogical tree having been destroyed through the injuries of time.

The Baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia; his castle had both a gate and windows; and his great hall was even adorned with tapestry. The dogs of his outer yard composed his hunting pack upon occasion, his grooms were his huntsmen, and the vicar of the parish was his chief almoner. He was called My Lord by everybody, and everyone laughed when he told his stories.

My Lady the Baroness, who weighed about three hundred and fifty pounds, attracted, by that means, very great attention, and did the honors of the house with a dignity that rendered her still more respectable. Her daughter Cunegonde, aged about seventeen years, was of a ruddy complexion, fresh, plump, and well calculated to excite the passions. The Baron's son appeared to be in every respect worthy of his father. The preceptor, Pangloss, was the oracle of the house, and little Candide listened to

his lectures with all the simplicity that was suitable to his age and character.

Pangloss taught metaphysico-theologo-cosmolonigology. He proved most admirably, that there could not be an effect without a cause; that, in this best of possible worlds, my Lord the Baron's castle was the most magnificent of castles, and my Lady the best of Baronesses that possibly could be.

"It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than they are: for all things having been made for some end, they must necessarily be for the best end. Observe well, that the nose has been made for carrying spectacles; therefore we have spectacles. The legs are visibly designed for stockings, and therefore we have stockings. Stones have been formed to be hewn, and make castles; therefore my Lord has a very fine castle; the greatest baron of the province ought to be the best accommodated. Swine were made to be eaten; therefore we eat pork all the year round: consequently, those who have merely asserted that all is good have said a very foolish thing; they should have said all is the best possible."

Candide listened attentively, and believed implicitly; for he thought Miss Cunegonde extremely handsome, though he never had the courage to tell her so. He concluded, that next to the good fortune of being Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, the second degree of happiness was that of being Miss Cunegonde, the third to see her every day, and the fourth to listen to the teachings of Master Pangloss, the greater philosopher of the province, and consequently of the whole world.

One day Cunegonde having taken a walk in the environs of the castle, in a little wood, which they called a park, espied Doctor Pangloss giving a lesson in experimental philosophy to her mother's chambermaid; a little brown wench, very handsome, and very docile. As Miss Cunegonde had a strong inclination for the sciences, she observed, without making any noise, the reiterated experiments that were going on before her eyes; she saw very clearly the sufficient reason of the Doctor, the effects and the causes; and she returned greatly flurried, quite pensive, and full of desire to be learned; imagining that she might be a sufficient reason for young Candide, who also, might be the same to her.

On her return to the castle, she met Candide, and blushed; Candide also blushed; she wished him good morrow with a faltering voice, and Candide answered her, hardly knowing what he said. The next day, after dinner, as they arose from table, Cunegonde and Candide happened to get behind the screen. Cune-

gonde dropped her handkerchief, and Candide picked it up; she, not thinking any harm, took hold of his hand; and the young man, not thinking any harm either, kissed the hand of the young lady, with an eagerness, a sensibility, and grace, very particular; their lips met, their eyes sparkled, their knees trembled, their hands strayed.— The Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh happening to pass close by the screen, and observing this cause and effect, thrust Candide out of the castle, with lusty kicks. Cune-gonde fell into a swoon and as soon as she came to herself, was heartily cuffed on the ears by my Lady the Baroness. Thus all was thrown into confusion in the finest and most agreeable castle possible.

2—What became of Candide among the Bulgarians

Candide being expelled the terrestrial paradise, rambled a long while without knowing where, weeping, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, and sometimes turning them towards the finest of castles, which contained the handsomest of baronesses. He laid himself down, without his supper, in the open fields, between two furrows, while the snow fell in great flakes. Candide, almost frozen to death, crawled next morning to the neighboring village, which was called Walber-ghoff-trarbk-dikdorff. Having no money, and almost dying with hunger and fatigue, he stopped in a directed posture before the gate of an inn. Two men, dressed in blue, observing him in such a situation, "Brother," says one of them to the other, "there is a young fellow well built, and of a proper height." They accosted Candide, and invited him very civilly to dinner.

"Gentlemen," replied Candide, with an agreeable modesty, "you do me much honor, but I have no money to pay my shot."

"O sir," said one of the blues, "persons of your appearance and merit never pay anything; are you not five feet inches high?"

"Yes, gentlemen, that is my height," returned he, making a bow.

"Come, sir, sit down at table; we will not only treat you, but we will never let such a man as you want money; men are made to assist one another."

"You are in the right," said Candide; "that is what Pangloss always told me, and I see plainly that everything is for the best."

They entreated him to take a few crowns, which he accepted, and would have given them his note; but they refused it, and sat down to table.

"Do not you tenderly love——?"

"O yes," replied he, "I tenderly love Miss Cunegonde."

"No," said one of the gentlemen; "we ask you if you do tenderly love the King of the Bulgarians?"

"Not at all," said he, "for I never saw him."

"How! he is the most charming of kings, and you must drink his health."

"O, with all my heart, gentlemen," and drinks.

"That is enough," said they to him; "you are now the bulwark, the support, the defender, the hero of the Bulgarians; your fortune is made, and you are certain of glory." Instantly they put him in irons, and carried him to the regiment. They made him turn to the right, to the left, draw the rammer, return the rammer, present, fire, step double; and they gave him thirty blows with a cudgel. The next day, he performed his exercises not quite so badly, and received but twenty blows; the third day the blows were restricted to ten, and he was looked upon by his fellow-soldiers as a kind of prodigy.

Candide, quite stupefied, could not well conceive how he had become a hero. One fine Spring day he took it into his head to walk out, going straight forward, imagining that the human, as well as the animal species, were entitled to make whatever use they pleased of their limbs. He had not travelled two leagues, when four other heroes, six feet high, came up to him, bound him, and put him into a dungeon. He is asked by a Court-martial, whether he chooses to be whipped six and thirty times through the whole regiment, or receive at once twelve bullets through the forehead? He in vain argued that the will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other; he was obliged to make a choice; he therefore resolved, in virtue of God's gift called *free-will*, to run the gauntlet six and thirty times. He underwent this discipline twice. The regiment being composed of two thousand men, he received four thousand lashes, which laid open all his muscles and nerves, from the nape of the neck to the back.

As they were proceeding to a third course, Candide, being quite spent, begged as a favor that they would be so kind as to shoot him; he obtained his request; they hoodwinked him, and made him kneel; the King of the Bulgarians, passing by, inquired into the crime of the delinquent; and as this prince was a person of great penetration, he discovered from what he heard of Candide, that he was a young metaphysician, entirely ignorant of the things of this world; and he granted him his pardon, with a clemency which will be extolled in all histories, and throughout all ages. An experienced surgeon cured Candide in three weeks, with emollients prescribed by no less master than Dioscorides. His skin had already begun to grow again, and he was able to walk, when the King of the Bulgarians gave battle to the King of the Abares.

3—How Candide made his escape from the Bulgarians, and what afterwards befell him

Nothing could be so fine, so neat, so brilliant, so well ordered, as the two armies. The trumpets, fifes, hautboys, drums, and cannon, formed an harmony superior to what hell itself could invent. The cannon swept off at first about six thousand men on each side; afterwards, the musketry carried away from the best of worlds, about nine or ten thousand rascals that infected its surface. The bayonet was likewise the sufficient reason of the death of some thousands of men. The whole number might amount to about thirty thousand souls. Candide, who trembled like a philosopher, hid himself as well as he could, during this heroic butchery.

At last, while each of the two kings were causing *Te Deum*—glory to God—to be sung in their respective camps, he resolved to go somewhere else, to reason upon the effects and causes. He walked over heaps of the dead and dying; he came at first to a

neighboring village belonging to the Abares, but found it in ashes; for it had been burnt by the Bulgarians, according to the law of nations. Here were to be seen old men full of wounds, casting their eyes on their murdered wives, who were holding their infants to their bloody breasts. You might see in another place virgins outraged after they had satisfied the natural desires of some of those heroes, whilst breathing out their last sighs. Others, half-burnt, praying earnestly for instant death. The whole field was covered with brains, and with legs and arms lopped off.

Candide betook himself with all speed to another village. It belonged to the Bulgarians, and had met with the same treatment from the Abarian heroes. Candide, walking still forward over quivering limbs, or through rubbish of houses, got at last out of the theatre of war, having some small quantity of provisions in his knapsack, and never forgetting Miss Cunegonde. His provisions failed him when he arrived in Holland; but having heard that every one was rich in that country, and that they were Christians, he did not doubt but he should be as well treated there as he had been in my Lord the Baron's castle, before he had been expelled thence on account of Miss Cunegonde's sparkling eyes.

He asked alms from several grave looking persons, who all replied, that if he continued that trade, they would confine him in a house of correction, where he should learn to earn his bread.

He replied afterwards to a man, who for a whole hour had been discoursing on the subject of charity, before a large assembly. This orator, looking at him askance, said to him:

"What are you doing here? Are you for the good cause?"

"There is no effect without a cause," replied Candide, modestly; "all is necessarily linked, and ordered for the best. A necessity banished me from Miss Cunegonde; a necessity forced me to run the gauntlet; another necessity makes me beg my bread, till I can get into some business by which to earn it. All this could not be otherwise."

"My friend," said the orator to him, "do you believe that the Anti-Christ is alive?"

"I never heard whether he is or not," replied Candide; "but whether he is, or is not, I want bread!"

"You do not deserve to eat any," said the other; "get you gone, you rogue; get you gone, you wretch; never in thy life come near me again!"

The orator's wife, having popped her head out of the chamber window, and seeing a man who doubted whether Anti-Christ was