

# THE SAFE SIDE

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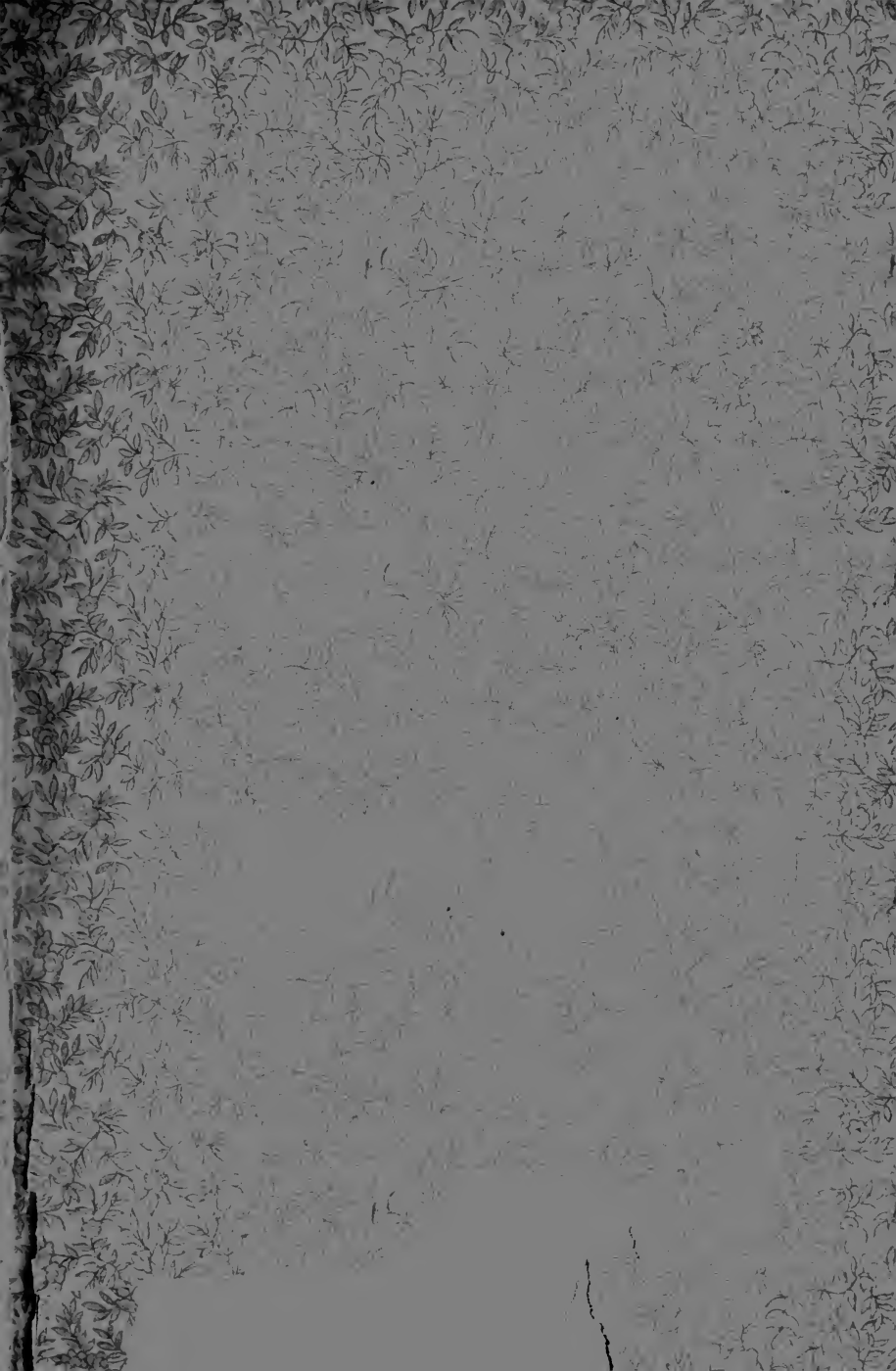
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THE  
SAFE SIDE

A THEISTIC REFUTATION OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

BY

RICHARD M. MITCHELL

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*If any man can convince me and bring home to me that I do not think or act aright, gladly will I change; for I search after truth, by which man never yet was harmed. But he is harmed who abideth on still in his deception and ignorance.—MARCUS AURELIUS*

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## PREFACE.

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COMPLICATED questions in politics or religion are generally such only through the great interests that grow up under long accepted ideas and become too powerful to be suppressed when time has demonstrated that those ideas were founded in error. The questions themselves are usually simple enough; in fact there is generally no question except as to how to act on new ideas in spite of the opposition of those interested in customs established by old ones. Hence our natural assumption that the opposition to religious or political reform is at all times a vicious and ignorant one, is not true. The opponents are often influential, intelligent, and prosperous. Even then, however, it would not be difficult to overcome them if the evil to be corrected were made conspicuous by isolation; but erroneous ideas are associated with so much that is true that the mind is misled and their separation becomes a difficult task.

Bad principles are formidable only when they

are but relatively few as compared with the good principles of prominent men. Though the truth may predominate, the ultimate result of error is as serious as it would be if unmixed with truth. The slight thread of poison in the food will eventually kill, the slight deviation of the ship from the true course will guide it to the rocks, and so in the principles governing our actions, a slight smothering of doubt on the part of some, a slight suppression of small items of fact on the part of others, and a slight fostering of personal interest on the part of still others will result in the underlying principles becoming wholly corrupt, even though employed by a body of men whose intelligence and social positions are most exalted.

The mind is so constructed that erroneous governing ideas will sooner or later work themselves to the front and become a bar to further progress until they are corrected.

The Christian religion supplies many illustrations of this. The belief that Christ was the Son of God involved the affirmation of certain virtues and sins that are such only within the Christian system. Those false virtues alone are harmless, but they work most serious injury in the loss of that which they intercept, and it may be shown that just so far as they control the public mind

they are a bar to much needed social and political reform.

But the source whence those pretended virtues emanate has been denominated "the truth," and unquestioning belief is demanded without investigation. This is done by the bitterness of censure of those who presume to question those so-called truths and who demand from the Bible the same responsibility that is attached to other books. It is true a few leading churchmen are alive to the confession of weakness which this position presents and pretend to challenge investigation upon both sides of the question. Mr. Beecher said of Christianity that "what can be swept away ought to be swept away;" but the great body of believers have been taught and still believe that works inimical to the divinity of Christ must not be read at all. Though claiming so much for the Bible and Christ, Christians, as a rule, pride themselves on their exclusion of all knowledge of those facts that tend to disprove the inspiration of the one and the divinity of the other.

If the Bible be the word of God, it is an insult to Him to demand intellectual concessions in reading it that would not in other works be conceded to a child. That spirit which we are directed to employ when *searching the Scriptures* should follow,

not precede, its reading. If that spirit can be possessed before reading the Bible then we are not indebted to the Bible for it and it becomes our obvious duty to inquire into the circumstances which caused that book and its inseparable system to be attached to the natural religious feelings. The desired effect is produced only by that spirit, and to discover its source and proper exercise is a truly religious study.

So very much has been claimed for Christianity that many believe its overthrow would be a misfortune even though its doctrines be not true. But those many wide claims compose an important part of its system, and its support in our day is largely derived through mistaken ideas as to its supposed virtues. As the believer's mind becomes awake to the actual truth he will the more clearly discover the evil effects that have attended that religion. Its name is given a wider meaning than naturally belongs to it, so that large numbers do not realize that God and religion can be and are quite distinct from the question of the divinity of Christ and of the doctrines appertaining thereto. Christianity has reference only to the latter, though falsely assumed to be the sole representative of the former. Christians are so thoroughly imbued with ideas of this nature that few of them can



realize that the entire Christian system may be swept away and yet a pure religion and profound veneration for God remain.

The attention of Christians ought to be arrested by the solemn fact that the first step in worshipping Christ consists in defaming God. It cannot be shown how Christ is a savior without representing God to have made a partial failure. The united voice of christendom throughout the Christian era proclaiming that God was circumvented by an independent and inferior power, constitutes the greatest insult that man has ever offered to his Creator, and that insult has borne its natural fruit and been the greatest misfortune that mankind has ever known.

It is human nature to promptly protect our interests. We do so involuntarily. This natural disposition has necessarily been an element in defense of Christianity and undesignedly its worldly interests rather than its dogmas have been the base of Christian exertions. The church has been wavering in its rules for salvation, but in its earthly interest it has been constant, consistent, and prosperous. Only therein has it been successful. The immensity of that success has filled the eye and obscured any opinion we might otherwise have had as to the usefulness of that religion.

Belief in the system is what is wanted rather than especial devotion to Christ and the Bible. The church promptly sets aside the wishes of Christ when they conflict with its interest. His two most distinct commands are utterly ignored, and if those commands were as the word of God there is probably not a true Christian in the world.

Among the earliest exhibitions of mechanical ingenuity in the Middle Ages were certain inventions of Christians used to torture other Christians for not believing that to be true which all now know to be false. A knowledge of the truth would have prevented those cruelties and did at last suppress them. The rule here, as everywhere, has held good, that truth and happiness go hand in hand, even though the truth demolishes Christian dogmas. The progress of the church since has been marked, not by an augmentation of its creeds, but by a curtailment of them. "Its new truths have been but discoveries of its old falsehoods," and the prominence of its leaders in our day is measured by the extent of their widening disbelief.

The church has always combated whatever conflicted with the Bible, regardless of all other considerations, and in so doing its influence has often been given on the side of ignorance. As yet hu-

man progress has been the work of but a few minds as compared to the whole population. In astronomy, for instance, the number of those to whom we are indebted for what is now known in that science is very small as compared to the people living in their times, far less than 1 per cent. But the church has done much to hold back that study. It at one time made it dangerous for a man to say that the world was round—a fact we first learned through that science—and, though that truth has in time over-ridden the so-called truth it disproved, it does not follow that the church did not retard that science by its opposition. We do not nor cannot know what valuable truths and what progress mankind might have reached but for the power of the church in suppressing investigation in that which conflicted with its own support.

Wonderful discoveries have of late been made in exploring the works of God, many of which directly contradict statements in the so-called word of God, and the conflict is increasing yearly and has caused a divergence too wide for reconciliation. Both cannot be true. If the Bible were the word of God the developments of time would the more and more have confirmed such to be the fact, nor could its history be traced through the natural

working of the minds of those who originated present ideas as to its sacredness. But time is disclosing its errors, and in a knowledge of human nature nearly every step and sentiment that actuated those originators and leaders may be accounted for, even to the causes that led to the prediction of the coming of the Messiah at that particular time and the circumstances that led to proclaiming Christ to be that Messiah. Nor were the relations between the various characters mentioned in the New Testament such as have been represented.

The New Testament discloses why it is that, after the gospels, just two-thirds of that book is taken up with records of the sentiments and movements of a man who, if he ever saw Christ, saw him with the eyes of an enemy, who looked on approvingly when Stephen was stoned to death, and who quarreled with Peter, James, and other Apostles, while but one-ninth of that space is devoted to the sayings of Christ's chief apostle and his successor after the crucifixion, and whose suppressed gospel was virtually the original New Testament and must have been the foundation for church doctrines for more than a hundred years. Also the natural succession of circumstances that led to the production of the Gospel of John may

be clearly traced. Every step in the formation of the Christian religion may be accounted for in the natural operation of the human mind.

Christianity surpasses any nation in power and number of officers, and it costs vast sums, which are an idle waste if its doctrines are erroneous, and it continues to cause political trouble wherever it exists. If, therefore, Christ was not the Son of God and if all the doctrines founded on that supposition be false, it is as important to discover those facts as it is to know the contrary if they be true. The exact truth is what is wanted and to obtain it the first step is to refuse to give to the Bible the deference that can be felt only by its most confirmed believers. The spirit with which we are required to search the Scriptures is not the spirit we should employ in searching for the truth. We should be as intent upon exposing its errors as its truth and should demand of it greater accuracy instead of less than is demanded of other books.

It is a theory within the Christian system that their doctrines have grown up under eighteen hundred years of constant contention and that they have demolished a world of opposition by the overpowering evidence of their truth. But this is a deception growing out of the vast amount of contention among themselves. They have mistaken

much of their own loud noise for that of enemies who did not exist. Their frail defenses have stood, not because they were impregnable, but because comparatively no effort was made to destroy them. But little has been written against the whole system and most of that the church has successfully suppressed.

Nevertheless, its weakness is being fast exposed, not by the efforts of concerted opponents, but by the widening difference between the ideas of God as drawn out by His works and the ideas of God as set forth by the writers of the Bible. There have been few as yet to tell of the many evils of that system, though they are most serious, and it is time that they be investigated, not with a spirit of superstitious fear, but with a confidence in our own judgment and that in accepting each little item of fact which may be found there is no danger, for God is on the side of truth.

# THE SAFE SIDE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GUIDING NATURE OF THE MENTAL FACULTIES.

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John Stuart Mill says: "A true psychology is the indispensable scientific basis of morals, of politics, of the science and art of education; the difficulties of metaphysics lie at the root of all science; those difficulties can only be quieted by being resolved, and until they are resolved, positively if possible, but at any rate negatively, we are never assured that any human knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundation."

**P**RELIMINARY to the work in contemplation, I desire to call attention to the confining and guiding nature of the various mental faculties. Our thoughts flow seemingly at our own will, but those various faculties confine them in certain channels, and the acts they impel us to perform are, therefore, of a nature that our Creator intended we should perform. Our free agency, though wide, is nevertheless confined to well-defined limits, within which alone happiness can be secured. We do not notice the loss of liberty

caused by some of the mental faculties, simply because our ease of mind is obtained only through following their dictation. We act as our hopes and feelings dictate, but why those hopes and feelings were brought into existence is a question to which special attention is here invited.

The varying theories of metaphysicians as to the number and functions of those faculties need not be dwelt upon. Sir William Hamilton refers to the different classifications by different philosophers as being numerous and contradictory, and no classification is directly given in his published lectures, though he refers to many and possibly all of the faculties into which he believed the mind to be divided. He was regarded at the time of his death, thirty years ago, as the most learned metaphysician of his time, and hence those lectures, coupled with John Stuart Mill's examination of them, will necessarily give the most advanced, though opposing, ideas on this subject.

The evolution theory is directly connected with this science, and necessarily all writers upon that subject have much to say of the mind; but, while the writings of metaphysicians are more particularly with reference to its phenomena, the latter class of writers deal with its development, and in either case they are outside of and above the scope of this work. So far as I have anything to say of the mind, it will be of its workings, what thoughts certain faculties lead us to, and how in some instances we attribute acts to faculties that



took little or no part in them. It is human nature as it now is, and not a question as to how that nature was developed, nor as to how the mystery of thought can be accounted for.

Darwin directly and Hamilton and others indirectly admit that no classification of the mental faculties has been agreed upon, and writers usually refer to but the few faculties necessary to illustrate their ideas and sustain their theories. I feel licensed by this to mention a few not named by those distinguished writers, particularly as the presence of such faculties seems to be quite generally conceded. Even if it shall eventually prove true that the partial division herein given is not wholly correct, it still will not invalidate the ideas offered. It is enough that it is admitted that the mind is divided into numerous faculties and that there is no question as to the existence of those most referred to.

The affections are the most conspicuous illustration of the guiding nature of those faculties. A careful analysis of our love for our children, for instance, will show that our feelings have been made especially sensitive to their needs, and the power that holds us to our duties to them is measured by the degree of their helplessness. Even the mother's caresses are necessary, because the infant needs that outward demonstration of affection to realize the existence of that affection, and the child also needs the confidence and mental rest that love secures to it. By just the degree

that our children are able to take care of themselves are we released from care and anxiety for them.

The Creator has so ordered it that some of the lower order of animals have no other care for their young than to properly deposit their eggs; higher orders of animals care for their young but a short time; and we also are released from anxiety regarding children not our own, our care for them being required only in rare instances, and then through a different faculty of the mind. We also could have been created without especial love for our own children, and could in such cases abandon them without disturbing our peace of mind. We would have been just as happy and our liberties would have been greater.

It was not, therefore, for our own good, but for the necessities of the young, that we are made to suffer mental agony by and in proportion to any neglect of our duties to them. That faculty is often too weak in individuals and in some instances is almost if not entirely absent. Such persons can abandon their children without mental suffering, and in other countries again marry and have children, whom they also abandon. However despicable they may be, the fact remains that their liberties are greater and their burdens less. In the absence of those faculties, such people are mental monstrosities, and there are instances when, like physical monstrosities—if the truth could be known—they should be put to death as soon as they are born.

The mental faculty of honor also restricts our liberties. We do not so regard it, because those who, through its deficiency, are enabled to exercise those liberties are looked upon with contempt by all others. That faculty has far more to do in regulating the daily affairs of life than laws have. It can be employed only in our dealings with others, and its general cultivation is necessarily of the greatest importance. An interesting feature connected with it consists in this: that the by-laws of any association are made by people who at the time are under no temptation to violate that faculty, and consequently those by-laws exhibit a higher degree of honor than is always manifested in the average dealings of those who made them. It is, therefore, to the public interest that all men belong to some association and be subject to its discipline, rather than that each individual should be left too much to his own less competent and biased interpretations as to his duty.

The confining and guiding nature of honor will be the more readily realized by observing that whenever that faculty is called up in our intercourse with our fellow-men it is because that which it demands of us to do is that which our inclinations otherwise would prevent us from doing.

Respect for public opinion also fills a very important duty and is clearly owing to a faculty given for that purpose. The public interest is often protected by it, as against officers and others who otherwise would violate public rights. Like all

the mental faculties, its power is not felt until attempts are made to cross the limits it is intended to prescribe.

These and other indispensable duties could not be left for us to discover and discharge by education. On the contrary, our schooling and discipline is stimulated by those faculties. They are with us from birth and form as much a part of our creation as our limbs, or eyes, or ears, or other organs. Certain duties must be performed and certain branches of knowledge promptly obtained; and faculties are given that insure the performance of those duties and the acquisition of that knowledge, and hence an understanding of the duties they lead to will throw light upon our Creator's designs regarding our daily life.

Inasmuch as it is admitted that the mind is divided into numerous faculties, the question arises as to what natural feelings are owing to a faculty and what to other causes. If the functions of each were as well defined as those just mentioned, it would be a simple task to discover the whole, but certain characteristics attend certain apparent faculties that greatly embarrass this question. Memory, for instance, has peculiarities very different from simple mental powers, like honor, or caution, or mathematics. If a man is a good mathematician he will be equally so in all branches of mathematics to which he gives his attention. So with honor, a man will have the same average of that power according to his understanding.

Such variation as those faculties exhibit is of slow growth and is owing to their cultivation or to changes in their relative power caused by the cultivation of others.

But memory is never equally strong upon all subjects in any individual. There will be varying degrees of power in remembering words, faces, colors, etc. There will also be a difference in recollecting facts, according to the nature of the subject. The service of memory is in constant demand, and its importance and peculiarities are so great as to have first drawn the attention of metaphysicians from Aristotle to the present time. Nevertheless, in the sense that we have a faculty of honor, or caution, or love of our children, there is, I contend, no faculty of memory.

Memory is simply the action of the faculties themselves, and will be good or bad in an individual according as he may be deficient or superior in any one of them. There is the same difference between other mental faculties and memory that there is between muscle and strength or between the storage capacity of a room and the articles stored within it. Thus, a man who remembers figures well, but does not remember names (or words), is one who is good in mathematics and poor in language. Or memory of faces or localities will be according to the faculties of form, locality, etc.

Recollection of facts is a branch of memory that may be better or worse than recollection of figures

or words. We remember best that which interests us most and our interest is measured by the extent of the faculty called into action by the subject. It is great and possibly useless labor to try to perfect ourselves in that for which the required mental power is largely wanting. No interest will be felt in a topic that calls up such absent power and what is then learned will soon be forgotten. But great interest will be taken in that which calls into action the powers in which we excel and the facts then learned will be remembered.

The ability to distinguish color supplies a fair illustration of this, for that power is dependent upon a mental faculty, a fact which seems too frequently to be overlooked. More than a hundred years ago, Hume wrote:

Were I not afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should remind my readers of the famous doctrines supposed to be fully proven in modern times, "that taste and colors and all other sensible qualities lie not in the bodies, but merely in the senses." The case is the same with beauty and deformity, virtue and vice.

The mental faculty of color is so well developed in some that they can match any shade of color from memory, and the extent of that faculty in any individual may be measured by his powers of memory in that respect. With some persons this deficiency is so great that they can remember no colors whatever and are consequently *color blind*.

Color blindness has no connection with the organs of vision, it being simply a deficiency in the mental faculty of color.

Sudden loss of memory in some directions, while it remains good in others, but indicates a weakening or possible paralysis of a faculty. Very old people remember that which occurred in their vigor, but are less able to hold in their weakening minds the events of their old age. Memory, therefore, is only the action of the faculties themselves and will be good or bad according to the degree of their varying powers. An individual, consequently, can judge as to the extent of any one of his faculties by noting the tendency of his mind to dwell upon the subject appertaining to that faculty, and his memory therein.

Courage, also, is a mental power having characteristics peculiar to itself alone. We certainly have the very important faculty of caution, and to neutralize it with one of an opposite tenor would be equivalent to dispensing with both. Nevertheless, both are found in high degree in the same person. Headley, in his *Life of Napoleon*, represents the Emperor, whose courage is unquestioned, to have been one of the most cautious of generals, and records many illustrations in support of his assertion. Courage, like memory, is not a mental faculty in the sense referred to; it is derived through a combination of some of the most desirable mental powers, and, as it has caution to contend against, its display has necessarily always

been looked upon with admiration. The combination that creates courage varies necessarily in different individuals, some being quite deficient in part of the required powers. (When a woman's affections, for instance, form part of the combination, she will often exhibit courage to an unsurpassed degree.) Such persons will be irregular in their courage, displaying it under certain conditions and showing a want of it in others. There is a false courage, caused by deficiency in caution. Such a person will be *foolhardy* and unnecessarily expose himself to danger.

Those attributes of the mind derived through the action of several faculties are usually more conspicuous than those gained through any one faculty and have received correspondingly more attention. The combinations and single faculties have all been treated alike, to the great confusion of this important science. It is as though we had regarded the muscles of the arm, the arm itself, and its strength as three separate things, all standing upon equal footing and each capable of exertion without the others. Too much attention cannot be given to those combinations, but they should be recognized as such. They are quite numerous, also, and include memory, courage, imagination, conscience, and others.

The varying degrees of power of the various faculties in different individuals cause combinations peculiar to each, and in those varying powers and combinations lie all the different intellectual



abilities exhibited not only in man, but in animals. The range of such intelligence as animals possess is necessarily narrow because their faculties are less in number; but they have widely varying degrees of intelligence, a fact that has come under the observation of most people in their experience with horses, dogs, etc. Darwin refers to the diversity of mental faculties in animals, and says that "all who have had charge of menageries admit this fact and we see it plainly in our dogs and other domestic animals."

Men are distinguished or are especially competent in their occupation by a fortunate combination of well-developed mental faculties, or rather by not having one or more deficiencies that destroy such combination. No knowledge an individual can possess is so valuable to himself as a knowledge of his own mental powers and deficiencies, a knowledge of the latter being much the more difficult to obtain. We may go through life lamentably crippled by the want of a certain mental power and never have the least suspicion of that fact. We can more readily find out those in which we excel, though there, too, one may be misled.

It is important when constructing an engine to have every part not unnecessarily strong and yet strong enough to sustain the work. But the mind by comparison is often out of proportion in this respect, some faculties being too strong in proportion to others. This does not conflict with the fact

that all mental faculties are good; the trouble even in such cases is the inability of one faculty to fully meet the undue requirements of another. There is also a broad distinction between such evils as an unsupported excelling quality produces and those caused by deficiencies. The evils in the first condition fall only upon the possessor and possibly those dependent upon him, but the evils caused by the latter are felt by others. Some of the mental powers cannot be too strong, while others, such as caution, love of property, selfishness, etc., can be so disproportionally large as to be a fault.

These two last-mentioned qualities are very necessary, and their effects, in some respects, are the exact opposite of those usually attributed to them. Particularly is this the case with the love of money. It is a faculty more frequently partially wanting than found in excess. It fills quite the same duty as to property that caution does as to life. Those deficient in it too easily feel themselves rich, their energies slacken with slight prosperity and they will indulge in expenses they cannot afford, and are often thus kept in poverty. Very ignorant people in some instances carry this so far that they will not work when they have a few dollars. Having little reason they look but little into the future and only find incentive to labor by their immediate pressing wants. The love of money fills the same duty that all the other faculties do in their respective fields. It is

especial wisdom that cannot be left to discovery alone. It takes the place of forethought in providing for future wants by stimulating to further exertion after all immediate wants are supplied. It does not insure wealth to the possessor, nor does its deficiency always beget poverty. Its absence leads to shiftlessness and want of enterprise through lessened incentive to further efforts.

On the other hand, men whose other deficiencies were such as to have made them criminals have been made comparatively respectable citizens by this mental characteristic, as fear of losing their property restrains them from many criminal acts. With accumulation of property a feeling of responsibility is awakened, together with an interest in local government. Criminals will be guilty of pecuniary crimes in proportion to the extent of their wants; consequently the sooner they are out of money the sooner will their temptations come. The absence of a natural love of property will bring about this condition frequently, and hence they will be the greater criminals by adding it to their other deficiencies. Too slight an appreciation of the value of money is the root of more evil than the opposite extreme. There are more people who should be taught to have more care and love of property than there are of those who should be warned against avarice.

But those who have this faculty in excess will find that it overreaches and deprives them of the very object for which money is desirable. When

it pains the mind more to part with the money that will supply a certain convenience than there is pleasure experienced in the possession of that convenience, such a person will deny himself the convenience and retain his money. In this he does not differ from a man who endures the same deprivation through poverty. In the one instance it is an absence of money, in the other it is the absence of the power to part with it. The effect is the same as poverty. Through weak digestive organs a man may starve to death though surrounded with food. So with the love of money, when too strong or unsupported by other faculties, it condemns a man to all the effects of a life of poverty, regardless of the wealth he may attain.

The origin of money has long been an unsolved enigma. Within itself gold is of but little value, and to have elevated it to its present usages implies a degree of intelligence above the capacity of those living in the age in which money originated, for in the most remote historical period it is seen that public ideas regarding gold as a circulating medium were quite the same as they are at the present time. Who could have devised so wise a scheme and how were the people brought to general acceptance of it? The latter would be by far the more difficult problem of the two. Even in our time, if money were still unknown, it would be an advanced idea to originate such a system and it would be impossible to introduce it into general practice. People would not be induced to part

with their property for a trifling quantity of that which they had previously known as of little value, even though they fully appreciated the great advantages of the proposed change.

Dr. Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, devotes a chapter to the origin of money, but he simply adopts the common supposition that at some time in the past it was conceived in the interest of commerce and brought into practice by common consent. But our ideas of the value of gold are stamped upon the mind with far greater power than could be done through resolution alone. Those ideas have two features that could not possibly be suddenly introduced in this or any other age: One is that we regard gold itself as the choicest of property, and this we could not do of our own volition; the other is that it is so prized universally—even by the most ignorant—throughout the civilized world.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the wisdom did not exist that could invent money and as even if invented it could in no age have been brought into general use, it follows that ideas of the value of gold must be as old as any ideas of private property. The conclusion is unavoidable that gold has been regarded as the most valuable property as long as there has been any private ownership whatever. This necessarily takes us back, not only to the prehistoric period, but to a time when man was but slightly above the highest order of lower animals, and hence the question as to the origin of

money is narrowed to the simple question as to what turned those savages' attention to gold and gave it value in their eyes.

Buckle<sup>1</sup> has shown how invariably all apparently inexplicable phenomena have acted upon and cultivated superstition, and he lays it down, as one of four propositions which he has established, "that the progress of mankind depends upon the success with which the laws of phenomena are investigated and on the extent to which a knowledge of those laws is diffused." This does not conflict with the fact that in the remote past there was a time when even a low degree of superstition marked the highest degree of human advancement. The conditions through which we have been developed are like varying heights which we first labor to attain and then labor to leave behind.

Superstition and religion differ only in this, that one is an ignorant, the other a wise use of the same faculty; consequently as long as there has been superstition there have been a religious faculty and ideas of a supernatural power. There is no evidence that any particular faculty was given us only for use in some far distant age in the future; the guiding nature of our faculties is important in all ages and each must necessarily be instrumental in human advancement. Originally the religious faculty could produce but a low degree of superstition, and whatever service it then

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<sup>1</sup> History of Civilization in England.

rendered must have been accomplished through such superstition. When a ship goes to sea the pilot is at first governed in his course by objects on land. He does not expect or wish to reach these objects, but simply employs them in defining his proper course. We have been guided by the religious faculty in the same way. Through superstition men's minds have been made to dwell upon that which they otherwise would not have thought of, and this in turn has led to results that would have been reached in no other way.

In ancient times gold was necessarily found upon the surface of the ground in a few places, and in certain rare instances a boulder of many pounds weight would be found. To those savages the enormous weight of such boulder as compared to its size would cause it to seem to be pinned to the earth with supernatural power, and this, coupled with its bright color, would promptly attract their attention and excite their astonishment and superstition. The rarity of gold would prevent those savages from becoming too familiar with its weight, which at all times would seem supernatural, while at the same time it would cause them to preserve and treasure whatever particles of it they might find. This familiarized them with gold and led in time to their working it into ornaments and it probably constituted quite their first articles of personal property. Thus it was that through superstition gold probably took first rank in the human mind as to value and it thus became

a convenient article of barter, and this led in many ages to its being traded in by weight and finally, with advancing civilization, to its being coined into money. Silver at the same time would be undergoing the same changes, its relative value being measured by its greater abundance and less astonishing weight. When America was discovered gold had advanced with the Indians to the second stage.

A writer, whose name and work I cannot now recall, has lately shown that it was probably through superstition that men were first familiarized with fire and taught its many advantages and uses. In the lightning it would seem at times to have come direct from God, and they would worship and preserve it accordingly, a practice that was only extinguished with Christianity. Indeed, the practice cannot be said to have yet died out, while the sanctuary lamp still burns continually before the altars of our churches.



## CHAPTER II.

### NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

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**E**VEN though we are guided by our mental faculties, there are, nevertheless, natural liars, thieves, murderers, and criminals of every sort. In rare instances there will be found one capable of committing murder every day of his life. Some who have been reared with tender care will abandon comfortable homes and loving parents and seek the vilest companions and sink to the lowest depths of degradation. Some can commit these acts without provocation, others with but slight provocation, while still others can be guilty of them only under considerable temptation. They take their downward course, often, under the same circumstances and instructions that elevate others. They seem to be led in their evil course by as natural mental tendencies as those whose lives are faultless.

This depraved tendency of some has, from the earliest ages, been an element of superstition. There seemed no explanation for it except in attributing those characteristics to evil spirits. Many have erroneously classified those evil-disposed people and those who are deranged under

one head and supposed that the different degrees of evil disposition, from petty offenses to the most violent derangement, simply indicated the different degrees of control that the devil or devils had over the individual. It is even probable that the idea of good and evil spirits was suggested by this wonderful phenomenon.

But this seeming mystery is clearly accounted for by the simple explanation that men are bad only from the absence of mental faculties they ought to possess. They are not bad because of bad faculties, for there are none such; the faculties are all good and all wanted, and deficiency in any of them is always a misfortune, sometimes most disastrously so. The opposite wheels under a locomotive are dependent upon each other for their position upon the rails; if one should be inefficient, they would be as great a power to run it to destruction as they would be, if properly constructed, to run it on its true course. So with the mind, the absence or partial absence of certain mental faculties is the sole cause of all evil dispositions and of all crime.

To realize this, let the reader in his imagination violate some one of those natural human feelings. Let the parent, for instance, consider abandoning his young children. He knows they will be a source of expense and trouble to him, and this, too, through many years. Let him, therefore, consider turning them into the street and ordering them to keep away, or let him take them to some

distant place and abandon them. The power of a mental faculty is well illustrated when it is realized how utterly impossible it is to commit this act. No laws that man can make, nor walls that he can build, can so surely confine us to certain acts and to certain limits as the mental faculties do. It is impossible for most people to desert their families or commit robbery or murder or other crimes, and yet many are guilty of those acts, and the power to do so lies in the partial or total absence of those faculties and consequent feelings that make those crimes impossible with others.

Ignorance so generally accompanies crime that some have attributed all crime to it. But good though ignorant men have been more numerous than criminals. Ignorance most certainly is the base of crime. An individual deficient in any faculty will be dull in all instances where that faculty is required. He cannot be educated upon that branch; he is not only ignorant therein, but is constitutionally so, though in other branches he may excel and be otherwise well informed. A person may also possess in only a moderate degree faculties that would keep him from crime if educated, but nevertheless his liability to crime lies in this moderate deficiency. Most crimes are committed by people of this class, and would be prevented by education. When the necessary faculties are not wanting, the individual will not commit crime, even though densely ignorant.

Color blindness will illustrate the effect of deficiency in any one faculty. The greater the deficiency the less is the individual capable of making fine distinctions upon any thing calling forth that faculty, until in rare instances a total absence leaves him incapable of any sense appertaining to the absent faculty.

Conscience, like memory, is an attribute of the mind dependent upon other faculties for its action. In the rare instances of a total absence of the faculty that should have prevented the crime, there will be no conscience. As a rule the criminal will not be wholly devoid of the faculty violated, and his conscience will trouble him correspondingly. This is applicable to the minor as well as greater offenses and to any faculty that is *known* to have not done its work. The mortification that a man feels because of some unintelligent act he may have inadvertently committed is the working of the same law, which, in the more serious violation of certain other faculties, we call *conscience*.

This leads us to another law of the mind, which, combined with conscience, causes greater misery to the guilty than they anticipate; a law that, correctly understood, would do much to prevent crime. Experience shows that no one faculty can be constantly employed. Each must have rest, without which most serious consequences will follow. Ordinarily we can divert our thoughts to other subjects when necessary, but, if this is neglected and our thoughts are permitted to dwell

too long upon one subject, a condition is produced which is to the mind what inflammation is to the body. In such instances we lose the power to divert our mind either by turning it upon other subjects or by sleep. Such a condition is dangerous, but it is one that the proper discharge of the affairs of this life need never call for.

Temptation is a conflict between two mental faculties and is possible only when the weakness of one of them admits of the thought of its violation. For the time being it pains the mind to think of this, but it is then in the individual's power to dismiss those thoughts by resisting the temptation. But if the faculty is too weak, and therefore does not occupy his mind as fully as those other faculties whose gratification produced the temptation, he will yield and thus violate the faculty that should have restrained him from so doing. But that which was but a temporary incitement to mental pain under temptation becomes a permanent one after yielding to it. The guilty person will then find he has partly and in some instances wholly lost the power to dismiss those painful thoughts which the violation engendered. When the offense is not too serious, this enforced exercise of the weak faculty is beneficial, as it cultivates and increases its power of resistance in the future. In this, nature employs the same law for the mind that is used for the body: The evil stimulates action that effects its cure. In extreme cases the body may be too weak to sustain the ef-

fort, and it is equally so with the mind; in which case death on the one hand or derangement on the other ensues.

It is better, of course, that the man should have the natural power to resist temptation, but when such is not the case the operation of conscience is to cultivate that power. It is true that we see middle-aged and older men guilty of that of which they would not have been guilty when younger. But that is not because they have grown worse. Men seldom feel the full weight of the cares and trials of life until middle age or later, and then more fully realize wished-for advantages and suffer temptation that less experience had not drawn out. Criminals are usually young men, and their crimes and excesses make the average length of their lives short. They are constitutional criminals through mental deficiencies from birth, which fact is soon exposed when they begin to act for themselves.

The power to divert thoughts from the violated faculty is not necessarily lost after yielding to temptation, and by persistently turning the thoughts to other subjects the individual will lose the cultivating effect of conscience and weaken his power to resist temptation. John Mason, in his work upon Self Knowledge, gave an excellent rule bearing upon this point. It was to the effect that, when a person is disposed to turn his thoughts away from the consequences of some contemplated act, instead of so doing he should give that sub-

ject full and careful consideration. By this course the act will usually be seen to be worse than supposed and the temptation will be resisted.

Conscience, therefore, is the stimulated exercise of a faculty caused by its failure to sustain its natural guiding, limiting power.

Gold could never have been the circulating medium it is if it were not that it carries with it a simple evidence of its purity, that all the ingenuity of man has never been able to counterfeit. No more plentiful and cheaper metal is so heavy, and hence its weight, as compared to bulk, will always testify to its genuineness. It is the same with truth. It has a characteristic that testifies to its purity as surely as weight does to gold. *The truth is ever simple and clear.* Just so far as we have the unalloyed truth we have that which is easily understood. A large number of new facts brought to the mind may temporarily seem to be complicated, but each little item that makes up the whole will stamp it with its trade-mark of simplicity and clearness.

The casuistic explanation just given for such depravity as exists is a simple, self-evident fact, which, coupled with what is now known of the various mental faculties, should carry conviction with it. And so it would but for one great unfortunate circumstance that has long been a bar to advancement in mental science. Christianity had long been established and Christ long known as a savior before a higher degree of intelligence and

a slight change in circumstances made it necessary to show how it was that Christ was a savior. The explanation then adopted cannot necessarily be regarded as simply an explanation. On the contrary, the church was obliged to make it the foundation of some of its most prominent doctrines, and hence that which was only an enforced explanation became the source, in part, of Christian ethics. Within that explanation lies the assertion that all men are naturally depraved. Through many long ages the church has pointed to the few whose natural deficiencies seemed to indicate natural depravity and has claimed that all contrary conditions were secured only through faith in Christ.

When, therefore, a better understanding of the human mind exposed facts in conflict with this explanation, numerous Christian writers took it upon themselves to publish works which, while they pretended to teach mental science, were in fact but their own complicated theories, arranged to fit their doctrine of natural depravity. The true intent of those authors was to defend Christian dogmas, rather than to increase our knowledge of the mind. Their works were theological rather than metaphysical. They were not like the rails that guide the cars on the way, but like the switches by which those cars are side-tracked and stopped. The very same idiosyncrasies that prompted those authors to write those books wholly unfitted them for the task.



Autology, by Rev. D. H. Hamilton, D.D., is one of the latest and most pretentious of this class of works. The author states in his preface that "All who begin with nature must of necessity end in nature and in atheism." This quotation is not given for the purpose of stating that the author does not know that entering upon any particular course will end in atheism, but to show that he presumes to dictate to truth whither it shall lead.

That with which we are not to begin is either true or false. If the latter, it can be shown to be so and the investigation will be harmless; but, if it is the former, we want to know it. The supposition that studying nature will lead to atheism is offered as a sufficient reason for not doing so, even though that study is upon the works of God. This quotation exposes the involuntary tendency of the author to fit everything to his religious ideas. It is his admission that facts conflicting with them will not be tolerated.

But the truth is the only thing we are seeking. All experience shows how we have suffered when falsehood has been mistaken for it, and shows that governing truths are indeed treasures wherever found and also that the ends they lead to are above and beyond human capacities to discern at the time. Not only is it safe to follow the truth, but there is no safety except in following it. It will require all our skill to be sure we are guided wholly by it, and it will be enough to know that,

without attempting the impossible task of knowing the future to which it leads. It is the truth that is wanted, and in seeking it we need not trouble ourselves as to whether it leads to atheism, theism, polytheism, pantheism, or christianity; whither it leads, God leads, and we may follow with confidence.

Throughout the 700 pages of the work in question, in that which the author calls mental science, he labors to weave a system that admits of natural depravity. It is clear that he was intent upon that idea from the first. It underlies the whole work, and consequently his labors were devoted to that end and not to advancing our knowledge of the mind. He says (page 255) that—

There are none in whom all the states of the heart are as bad as they can be, none in whom they are all good; yet, since it is a fact that evil and selfish states of the affections do exist in all, it follows that all are depraved; and while all are not as bad as they can be, yet all are depraved, selfish, and fallen, so that there is none good; no, not one. The man is fallen and depraved.

Autology is a type of a large number of works purporting to be scientific, but which were written exclusively to sustain Christian doctrines, to which all things must bend; and this is the reason why, in metaphysics in particular, so little progress has been made in late years. Kant, who died a century ago, is still referred to more than any other writer, and even Sir William Hamilton was said to have followed his system. Geology, also,

has been dwarfed and retarded by Christian writers; it has demolished the Mosaic account of the creation and they either combat or ignore it in consequence. The vast age of the world, however, can no longer be denied, and hence the Mosaic account has, as is usual in such cases, been reduced to an allegory; something churchmen were the more ready to do as it was supposed there had been a special creation for each species of animal, including man. They fitted a complicated and inconsistent meaning to the plain words of the Bible and contended that geology and its contributions to natural history quite sustained the story of the creation of man through Adam and Eve.

But now even that concession is made useless to them, for the facts presented by Dr. Darwin in his work *The Descent of Man* do not admit of a reasonable doubt that we have been evolved from a very low degree and that this evolution has been so gradual as to make it impossible to know when we ceased to be animals and became human beings. The Darwinian theory is more than a mere hypothesis; it is stamped with the trade-mark of truth. The array of facts he presents carry with them irresistible conviction, and the quite general acceptance of that theory by those most capable of judging gives it all the weight of an established fact. Chauncy Wright<sup>1</sup> says of Darwin's theory that—

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<sup>1</sup> Philosophical Discussions.

It seems likely that we shall witness the unparalleled spectacle of an all but universal reception by the scientific world of a revolutionary doctrine in the lifetime of its author.

Prof. Huxley, also, credits Darwin with the same success. Hence the reading, thinking public have, within thirty years, become convinced of the truth of that which takes from Christianity the foundation of its doctrine of natural depravity. There were no first parents, and therefore no fall of man. Upon the subject of special creation Herbert Spencer<sup>1</sup> says:

The analogy, suggesting as it does how the hypothesis of special creation is merely a formula for our ignorance, raises the question What reason have we to assume special creation of species, but not of individuals, unless it be that in the case of individuals we directly know the process to be otherwise, but in the case of species do we not directly know it to be otherwise? Have we any grounds for concluding that species were especially created, except the ground that we have no immediate knowledge of their origin? And does our ignorance of the manner in which they arose warrant us in asserting that they were by special creation? Another question is suggested by this analogy. Those who, in the absence of immediate evidence of the way in which species arose, assert that they arose not in any way analogous to that in which individuals arise, but in a totally distinct way, think that by this supposition they honor the Unknown Cause of things; and they oppose any antagonistic doctrine as amounting to an exclusion of divine power from the world. But if divine

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<sup>1</sup> Principles of Biology, Vol. 2.

power is demonstrated by the separate creation of each species, would it not have been still better demonstrated by the separate creation of each individual? Why should there exist this process of natural genesis? Why should not omnipotence have been proven by the supernatural production of plants and animals everywhere throughout the world from hour to hour? Is it replied that the Creator was able to make individuals arise from one another in a natural succession, but not to make species thus arise? This is to assign a limit to power instead of magnifying it. Is it replied that this occasional miraculous origination of a species was practicable, but that the perpetual miraculous origination of countless individuals was impracticable? This also is a derogation. Either it was possible or it was not possible to create species and individuals after the same general method. To say that it was not possible is suicidal to those who use the argument; and if it is possible it is required to say what end is served by the special creation of species that would not have been better served by the special creation of individuals. Again, what is to be thought of the fact that the great majority of those supposed special creations took place before mankind existed? Those who think that divine power is demonstrated by special creation have to answer the question To whom demonstrated? Tacitly or avowedly, they regard the demonstration as being for the benefit of mankind. But, if so, to what purpose were the millions of those demonstrations which took place on earth when there were no intelligent beings to contemplate them? Did the Unknowable thus demonstrate his power to himself? Few will have the hardihood to say that any such demonstration was needful. There is no choice but to regard them either as superfluous exercise of power, which is a derogatory supposition, or as exercises of power that were necessary

because species could not be otherwise produced, which is also a derogatory supposition.

The evolution theory is particularly embarrassing to the church. The story of Adam and Eve cannot be treated as allegorical, as was done with the Mosaic account of the creation; neither can Bishop Colenso's ideas be adopted and the Pentateuch discarded from the Bible; for in either case there would be no basis for the natural depravity doctrine, and consequently no explanation as to how Christ is a savior and no apparent reason for his coming.

The fact that an Episcopal bishop can advocate such a step is a phenomenon of the mind growing out of the dual character of Christians. Men are often misled as to the particular faculties that govern certain acts and speech. Sir John Lubbock<sup>1</sup> says:

In the very same individual two contradictory systems may often be seen side by side in incongruous association. Thus the Christian code and the ordinary code of honor seem to be opposed in some respects, yet the great majority of men hold, or suppose they hold, them both.

Through the intolerance of Christians in the last century, many were obliged to pretend to believe such doctrines as were dictated to them, whether they did believe or not. This begat a habit of professing one thing and acting another, to which we have become blinded by familiarity.

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<sup>1</sup> Origin of Civilization

For instance, men will call themselves "miserable sinners" in church or make pretensions of humility, etc., who would not tolerate the least assumption from others as to the truth of their affected confession. Within the system all inconsistencies are piously overlooked and its many needed explanations ignored.

There being some whose deficiencies are such as to make them depraved, the question arises as to what proportion they bear to the whole. The further question as to what disposition to make of them is not pertinent to this work, but I shall have some suggestions to offer regarding public responsibility in evolving them; for, while we are not so responsible in some quarters as heretofore supposed, we are more so in others. When we look over the past and see how many discomforts and evils of former ages have been overcome through increased knowledge, we may reasonably infer that every trouble of this life is under our control and may be suppressed. Every evil and every wrong is nature's red flag of danger, and, if we will but carefully study the cause or the remedy, or both, we shall sooner or later discover an improvement that more than corrects the fault that prompted the effort.

Elsewhere it will be shown how it is that some people are driven to low resorts and bad habits whose natural tendencies would not have led them there. Care should be taken, also, not to mistake ill-manners and coarse speech for depravity, for

these may be but the misfortune of ignorance, which often accompanies those whose natural abilities are excellent.

Crime is a disturbing element; hence criminals are always conspicuous in inverse proportion to their numbers. "Peace has no history," and the law-abiding citizens, in their steady, everyday life, are heard of but little as compared to the criminal class, whose depredations keep them constantly before the public. They are mentally deformed and in number are probably in about the same proportion as those who are physically deformed. If, for instance, a stranger in a village of five hundred inhabitants should meet as many as five persons who had been born with limbs so infirm that they were obliged to use crutches, that number would attract his attention as being unusually large. It is doubtful if physical deformities of every nature amount to 1 per cent. of the population. It is reasonable to suppose that the percentage of those who have some serious mental deficiency is no greater. All mental deficiencies are not moral defects. It is the absence or partial absence of only a certain few important faculties that makes crime possible. Fifty burglars are enough to cause a city to seem to be overrun with them. The number of imprisoned criminals are few as compared to the whole people, and the number of those, therefore, who are seriously mentally deformed bear but a small proportion to the whole population.



It is not true that we are naturally depraved. We are pure at birth, and one of the most common and most beautiful things in human nature is that we turn naturally to that which is good and right. It is our nature to improve without instruction. *Loving kindness is the most conspicuous mental characteristic of all living things.* The very animals exhibit it in high degree. If mankind were all like the very few whose mental deficiencies are such as to make them depraved, this world would be a pandemonium and would soon become depopulated.

This fact is as applicable to barbarism as to civilization, otherwise there never could have been the latter condition, for the human race would have been destroyed in the former. An erroneous impression usually prevails regarding the natural disposition of savages. They have not been judged of justly, through not realizing that they continue to be governed by the natural laws governing animals, under the operation of which their numbers are kept down to the limits of their support. Their cruelties are owing to those laws; otherwise they are kind and honest. Of course they have their varying degrees of mental power, but civilization has not developed improvement in those qualities. Mr. Tylor<sup>1</sup> says:

In the West Indian islands, where Columbus first landed, lived tribes who have been called the most gentle and benevolent of the human race. Schomburgk, the traveler, who knew the warlike

<sup>1</sup> Anthropology, by Edward B. Tylor, D.C.L., F.R.S.

Caribs well in their home life, draws a paradise-like picture of their ways, where they have not been corrupted by the vices of the white men; he saw among them peace and cheerfulness and simple family affection, unvarnished friendship, and gratitude not less true for not being spoken in sounding words; the civilized world, he says, has not to teach them morality, for, though they do not talk about it, they live in it. At the other side of the world, in New Guinea, Kops, the Dutch explorer, gives much the same account of the Papuans of Dora, who live in houses built on piles in the water, like the old lake men of Switzerland. He speaks of their mild disposition, their inclination to right and justice, their strong moral principles, their respect for the aged and love for their children, their living without fastenings to their houses, for theft is considered by them a grave offense and rarely occurs. Among the rude non-Hindu tribes of India, English officials have often recorded with wonder the kindness and cheerfulness of the rude men of the mountains and the jungle, and their utter honesty in word and deed. Thus Sir Walter Elliot mentions a low, poor tribe of South India, whom the farmers employ to guard their fields, well knowing that they would starve rather than steal the grain in their charge; and they are so truthful that their word is taken at once in disputes even with their richer neighbors, for people say, "A Kurubar always speaks the truth."

Dr. Wallace,<sup>1</sup> also, says:

I have lived with communities of savages in South America and in the East, who have no laws or law courts but the public opinion of the village freely expressed. Each man scrupulously respects

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<sup>1</sup> Malay Archipelago, by Alfred Russel Wallace, LL.D., F.L.S.

the rights of his fellow, and any infraction of their rights rarely or never takes place. In such a community all are nearly equal. There are none of those wide distinctions, of education and ignorance, wealth and poverty, master and servant, which are the product of civilization; there is none of that widespread division of labor which, while it increases wealth, produces also conflicting interests; there is not that severe competition and struggle for existence, or of wealth, which the dense population of civilized countries inevitably creates. All incitement to great crimes is thus wanting, and petty ones are repressed, partly by the influence of public opinion, but chiefly by the natural sense of justice and of his neighbor's rights, which seems to be, in some degree, inherent in every race of men.

The first sight which we obtain of man in history, so to speak, shows him to have been exceedingly laborious. The grandeur and vast extent of his works were such as to fill the mind with wonder and astonishment. There seemed to be no limits to the magnitude of works undertaken for the most trifling purposes. On the other hand, those who have not seen our western Indians can hardly appreciate their lofty disdain of labor. They look upon work as degrading, and will not do even as much as to carry their heavy game home, provided they have a squaw to send after it. Their women are made to carry their burdens and do all their work, while the men regard war and hunting as the only occupations worthy of them, which, as shown by Sir J. Lubbock, is common to all savages.

Necessarily there was once a time when the most

advanced of our race were such as these Indians now are, and a knowledge of their habits and customs will answer the same purpose as a knowledge of the races preceding civilization. Tylor<sup>1</sup> says:

So far as the evidence goes, it seems that civilization has actually grown up in the world through these three stages [savage, barbaric, and civilized], so that to look at a savage of the Brazilian forest, a barbarous New Zealander, or Dahoman, and a civilized European, may be the student's best guide to understanding the progress of civilization, only he must be cautioned that the comparison is but a guide, not a full explanation.

Many of the probable steps by which civilization was slowly developed have been satisfactorily accounted for, but no acceptable theory has been advanced to account for the great transformation in ideas of labor that preceded and accompanied it. Further progress was impossible without labor, and prehistoric men had neither the work to be done in their simple mode of life, nor ideas that admitted of doing it. But they had become too advanced for animals, and to be civilized they must work. It was not possible for any one of them to see this and point out the advantages of labor. There never existed a human being whose intellectual capacities were so greatly in advance of his times as such a man's would have been. To then discern the advantages of labor would have required power to foresee the improvements of

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<sup>1</sup> Anthropology.

many hundreds of years and to describe the changed habits, the inventions, and the educated wants that labor would produce.

There must, then, have been some powerful cause for this great change from idleness to labor, that took place between barbarism and the most remote historical period. The manner in which that transformation was undoubtedly brought about, supplies an illustration of how our faults are made instruments for their own punishment and correction; and it also illustrates the fact that in overcoming the difficulties of this life we reach greater improvements than the mere surmounting of those difficulties. It illustrates how we are guided by our natural mental tendencies and how civilization was evolved by their exercise. The illustration is none the less appropriate because it is in part hypothetical. A knowledge of human nature insures its accuracy in part, and the later steps in that transformation are historical.

One instrument was chiefly employed in driving those men to work, to abandon their nomadic mode of life, to reflect upon personal rights, and to love liberty. One instrument predominated over all others in accomplishing that all-important result and bridging the wide gap between barbarism and civilization, and that instrument was *slavery*.

But even to devise slavery was also far above the intellectual capacity of any man of those times. Slavery itself was of slow growth and, considering their ideas regarding labor and the immeasurable

value of labor, every step that developed slavery was a step toward civilization. With the lordly notions those savages had of their own sex and their contempt for women, even the idea of making their captives do such little work as they had would not have been thought of if circumstances had not repeatedly enforced it. There would be times when there was more than the women could carry, which suggested the idea of making the captives do that work. This would not prevent those captives from being put to death as soon as the urgency was over. This seems inhuman in the light of the present day, but their doing so was both necessary and natural. In their treatment of captives those men were still governed by their animal instincts, and it was necessary it should be so as long as they depended for food upon game only. It was an incident in their struggle for existence, by which the strongest and best survived and the population was kept down to the capacity of the country to support it. Only under a long experience of the short service of captives would the time of that service be slowly extended, until eventually the idea of sparing their lives for the purpose of labor would penetrate the minds of the most advanced men of the times.

At first the labor of those captives would be for the whole tribe in common, but the convenience of this would in time lead the chiefs to appropriate to their own use the service of some of them. This begat the idea of property in the captives,

which would soon be participated in by each individual of the tribe and culminate in their being bartered in as slaves. During the ages that this had been growing to be the custom, the work to be done would have increased. It would have increased because there had been captives to do it.

Their greater works would have expanded their minds and given them educated wants. When slavery was finally established they would have greatly advanced from the incipient state whence it was evolved. In this way two great improvements would be in progress, the people would become familiarized with labor and their educated wants would be increasing with it. Although the labor would be by slaves, the whole people would take part therein, for, during the long time those steps were in progress, there would be revolutions of their petty governments, whereby slaves would become masters and masters would become slaves.

During this time, and probably before captives were universally bought and sold, the establishment of those tribes would have become more troublesome in moving, and the necessity for doing so become less, as the captives or slaves could be made to build huts and gather grass and feed for the animals. In this way their nomadic habits were gradually abandoned and cultivation of the soil was gradually introduced. Civilization, like a falling body, progresses in an ever increasing ratio. The higher the intelligence the greater the power for further advancement. There would be

some country where its local peculiarities would enable or cause these various steps to be taken with more rapidity than in other countries, and this would soon give them a superiority over neighboring tribes or nations. This superiority would also be greater because of the larger population which cultivation of the soil would give them, for those who live on game require many acres per man for their support (about fifty). The strongest tribes or nations would conquer their weaker neighbors; their disposition to do so would be increased by the fact that the captives of those neighboring nations, being equally inured to labor, would be more valuable as slaves than the more distant tribes, where slavery and labor had not progressed so far. Thus a line between barbarism and a more advanced class would be established which would rapidly widen under the operations of the causes stated.

The greater wants that slavery beget and the hardships of slaves set both masters and slaves to thinking: the first as to how to get more out of their slaves, the latter as to the rights of man and the love of liberty. Everything desirable in life would seem to those slaves to be embraced in that one word, *liberty*. Their liberty and human rights would grow to be their governing idea, and when from time to time old governments would be overthrown and new ones established liberty on the part of slaves and fear of slavery on the part of masters would be the incentive to valor, and



human rights would begin to have a place in the affairs of men.

This hypothesis in no way conflicts with the progressive steps pointed out by ethnologists. Without labor those steps could not have been taken. Tylor<sup>1</sup> states:

We live in days when the last remains of slavery are disappearing from the higher nations; but, though the civilized world has outgrown the ancient institution, the benefits which early society gained from it still remain. It was through slave labor that agriculture and industry increased, that wealth accumulated, and leisure was given priests, scribes, poets, philosophers, to rise to the level of men's minds.

Leisure was the one thing with which savages were too abundantly supplied before. Mr. Tylor underrates the effects produced by slavery. He says<sup>2</sup>: "His [man's] essays afford no sufficient foundation for a definite theory for the rise and progress of human civilization in early times." This admission need not have been made if he had recognized the fact that slavery had taken the place of that mysterious intellectual development which was so necessary for the introduction of labor. It was the only source of energy in early times and the only means by which educated wants were increased. It was equivalent to supernatural wisdom for the time being and explains the one greatest mystery connected with the development of civilization.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthropology.

<sup>2</sup> Early History of Mankind.

Thus it was that man's lordly determination not to labor was turned to an enforcement of that labor. Laziness was then and it is now an instrument to cultivate energy; slavery, an instrument to cultivate liberty; and abuse of human rights, an instrument to cultivate a knowledge of those rights. However odious slavery may be to us now, it was the whip that drove us to civilization from an idle, savage state. Out of the remote past we can see our approach from a low degree—not of wickedness—but of ignorance. Only from that ignorance do we need salvation, and our only savior is the enlightened exercise of our own mental powers.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE REASONING AND RELIGIOUS FACULTIES.

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THE nature of reason is such that it cannot be employed without experience. It needs opinions or facts to work upon as much as a carpenter needs materials with which to build. If we could know all the ends and aims of life—could know our Creator's designs—we possibly would require no other faculty than reason. It is clearly of the highest order intellectually and hence it is most pleasing to us to suppose we are governed by it. But there is an exaggerated idea as to the part it takes in governing our conduct. We have feelings called up by most of the especial faculties, but no feeling stimulates the action of reason, and hence it has but little power when opposed to one of those faculties. A close analysis of the governing motives of very large numbers of men shows that they use but little reason and that it is probably deficient to a greater extent than any other faculty. It is because of this that "no sense is so uncommon as common sense."

So well arranged are the various mental tendencies for all the duties of this life that an individual quite deficient in reason may still, through other

powers of the mind, be an educated, respected, and influential citizen; but he will be dependent upon the ideas of others upon which to expend his natural powers. He may load his mind with more of other people's ideas than any one of the originators possessed and he may be able to set them forth in better language. If, on the other hand, such an individual be reared among thieves, he will possess the ideas of thieves and, like them, will regard the better class of people as the natural enemies of the narrow world he knows. If such a person should be naturally honorable, the form that quality would take in him would be to make him honorable with his associates and yet be none the less a thief, for the only ideas he would have of the better class would be those of his companions.

In the absence of experience in our youth we could necessarily make little or no use of reason, and consequently we are made to accept unquestioned the reasonings and conclusions of our elders. Our minds are even more powerfully impressed by them than they can be later in life through our own reasoning. The consequence is that when we begin to act for ourselves we start with such ideas and opinions as have been taught us. The power of parental instruction is very great and holds us to parental opinions long after we are able to judge for ourselves. The ideas of one generation are thus inherited by the generation following, and the mind is consequently never open

to freely accept ideas in conflict with them. Such facts as would do this must necessarily be very convincing, for, before they can make their new impressions upon the mind, they have the greater task of effacing the old ones.

Darwin<sup>1</sup> says:

The wishes and opinions of the members of the same community, expressed at first orally, but later by writing also, either form the sole guides of our conduct or greatly reënforce the social instinct; such opinions, however, have sometimes a tendency directly opposed to those instincts. This latter fact is well exemplified by the *law of honor*, that is, the law of the opinion of our equals and not of all of our countrymen. The breach of this law, even when the breach is known to be strictly accordant with true morality, has caused many a man more agony than a real crime. We recognize the same influence in the burning sense of shame which most of us have felt, even after the interval of years, when calling to mind some accidental breach of a trifling, though fixed, rule of etiquette. The judgment of the community will generally be guided by some rude experience of what is best in the long run for all the members; but this judgment will not rarely err from ignorance and weak powers of reasoning. Hence the strangest customs and superstitions, in complete opposition to the true welfare and happiness of mankind, have become all-powerful throughout the world. We see this in the horror felt by a Hindoo who breaks his caste and in many other cases. It would be difficult to distinguish between the remorse felt by a Hindoo who has yielded to the temptation of eating unclean food, and that felt after committing a theft; but the former would probably be the most severe.

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<sup>1</sup> Descent of Man.

How so many absurd rules of conduct, as well as so many absurd religious beliefs, have originated, we do not know; nor how it is that they have become, in all quarters of the world, so deeply impressed upon the mind of men; but it is worthy of remark that a belief constantly inculcated during the early years of life, whilst the brain is impressible, appears to acquire almost the nature of an instinct; and the very essence of an instinct is that it is followed independently of reason.

The fact that such eminent naturalists as Darwin and Huxley differ as to whether animals do or do not have reason shows that at least the evidence favoring such a supposition is slight. The several illustrations given by Darwin are not convincing. It is probable that, with animals as well as men, certain acts have been attributed to reason that were instigated by other faculties. One of those illustrations was of this nature. It must be remembered that where there is no special faculty there are no interest and no memory. Reason might take the place, but reason requires time and experience; consequently that knowledge which must be acquired early is insured by a faculty devoted especially to it. Observation is one of these. Without it, man and animals alike would neither note nor remember their surroundings and would be unable to return to any given place.

Darwin says:

Houzeau relates that, whilst crossing a wide and arid plain in Texas, his two dogs suffered greatly from thirst and that between thirty and

forty times they rushed down the hollows to search for water. These hollows were not valleys and there were no trees in them or any other difference in vegetation, and as they were absolutely dry there could have been no smell of damp earth. The dogs behaved as if they knew that a dip in the ground offered them the best chance of finding water, and Houzeau has often witnessed the same behavior in other animals.

Observation would have taught the dogs to look for water where they did. That power of the mind that enables a man to reason out facts wholly new to him is of a different nature from any of those illustrations referred to. Prof. Proctor adds examples to those of Darwin, but in every instance that which was offered as evidence of reason may be accounted for in other faculties.

Instead of being born with especial mental faculties leading the mind in certain channels, why were we not born with the necessary knowledge at once? Can it be that this life is but a test for the mind and that our everyday use of it may be of more importance than we have any conception of? In a small way animals have knowledge at birth. They know where and how to obtain their food and understand the meaning of certain signs or sounds made by their progenitors. Darwin says that "A beaver can make its dam or canal, and a bird its nest, as well, or nearly as well, and a spider its wonderful web quite as well, the first time it tries, as when old and experienced." He also refers for further "evidence on

this head to Mr. J. Traherne Moggridge's most interesting work, *Harvesting Ants and Trap-Door Spiders.*"

Such knowledge as this is greatly different from that derived through a mental faculty, for it is absolute knowledge itself, not dependent upon experience or reason. The animal is born with certain items of knowledge, rather than with a mental tendency to acquire them.

Undoubtedly, therefore, we could have been born with the knowledge which our labors and discipline will finally give, and our not being so born indicates that it is desirable we should have the trials of this life. Our experience is the object of, and not merely incidental to, this existence. We are turned loose upon this earth with minds so constituted that we will have exactly the varied experience we do have, and in it all no one thing is more conspicuous than the seeming test as to the qualities of mind of each individual.

The evil consequences following an improper use of any of our faculties show that we are held responsible for a correct discharge of the duties they lead us to. The religious faculty is no exception; in fact, its violation has caused more misery than the ignorant use of any other. Of this faculty Max Müller<sup>1</sup> says:

If we say that it is religion which distinguishes man from animals, we do not mean the Christian

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<sup>1</sup> *Science of Religion.* Max Müller, M.A.



or Jewish religion only; we do not mean any special religion; but we mean a mental faculty, that faculty which, independent of, nay, in spite of, sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under varying disguises.

The natural religious disposition is a mental faculty having peculiarities similar to those of the faculty of honor and caution, in this, that its service is not so well defined as is the case with some of the others, and consequently it requires the assistance of reason correspondingly more. It is a quality distinct from honor, as is evidenced by its frequent presence in individuals who are deficient in the latter. When any faculty is wanting the individual is not only unconscious of that fact, but is also unable to understand the feeling that other people have upon that subject. The presence of honor in one person and its absence in another produce this difference: that certain acts will give mental pain to the first that will not be felt by the other. The latter will be dull or mentally blind or insensible to the feelings his act ought to produce; and, if his self-esteem is not small, he will feel as much contempt for what seems to him to be the silly sentiment of the man of honor as the latter will feel for him. Such a person will be dishonest and unconscious of it.

The religious faculty does not insure a correct knowledge of right and wrong, nor does it insure an intelligent religion. It will not make a good man of one who is too deficient otherwise, and it is

not unfrequently found well developed in the lowest class of criminals. Sir Walter Scott says that "The banditti of the Appenines have among them persons acting as monks and priests, by whom they are confessed and who perform mass before them." The following, recently published in the Chicago Tribune, gives an illustration of this mental combination:

#### A REMARKABLE FRENCH MURDER.

PARIS, Nov. 25.—A trial has just terminated at Caen which, as a revelation of the cold-blooded cruelty and tenacity in criminal purpose which a human being is capable of, is only second in interest to the Fenayron case. In the latter the victim was a lover; in this it is the husband. The circumstances were as follows:

The victim and his wife, by name Aveline, were domestics in the service of an old maiden lady, 82 years of age, in Paris. Aveline, a man verging on 50, had inherited a little money and bought some land in Normandy, and his pleasure in life was to spend a few days shooting the game that he reared for this purpose on his land. He was only waiting for the death of the old lady to retire to his little estate and there pass the rest of his days. In the same house in Paris resided a French General, with his orderly, by name of Garnier, a young man of 25. Garnier, in course of time, became the intimate friend of the Avelines and, about a year ago, the lover of the wife, who, judging by her letters, appears to have been tortured by a thirst for excitement. She contracted a violent affection for Garnier, whose senior she was by twelve years. When Garnier left Paris with his master an effusive correspondence ensued between the lovers, from which it is seen that they

had determined on the "suppression" of Aveline and that their object was to marry and live on the wife's money, for she, too, appears to have saved no small sum.

It was arranged between Garnier and the woman that they should proceed to the murder of Aveline in September, and henceforth the letters exchanged refer to the scheme as if it were one of the most virtuous of human resolves. Thus the 19th of March Garnier writes: "When we are united we shall have but one prayer, namely, that God may preserve us thus for centuries." In a subsequent letter he says: "I shall go to mass to-morrow and pray Heaven to aid us in the accomplishment of the object we have so long been fighting for." The woman wrote in the same strain the 25th of May: "I went this week to Notre Dame des Victoires, where I had a taper burned for the realization of our project." She wrote on another occasion of Aveline: "He says he is ill." (She had already begun operations.) "Ah! if God would take pity on me! When he complains I praise God in my heart." As regards her relations with her husband, she had nothing, as she confesses, to complain of. "I would," she writes, "I could blame Aveline for something, but there is nothing." She made several abortive attempts to poison her husband, and at length it was resolved that the only way to get rid of the poor man was to shoot him during the shooting season, when in Normandy.

Garnier came down, and he and the wife concerted the measures to be taken. She placed him herself in ambush. On the first occasion he lacked the courage to fire, but the second time he shot Aveline dead.

Garnier sought to cast the blame on his mistress, whose behests he blindly carried out. The woman did not retaliate, and during the trial wrote a consoling letter to her lover, in which she looked forward to their meeting and yet marrying in New

Caledonia. She was not aware that women are not sent to New Caledonia, but expiate their crimes in France. The jury found both guilty, but Garnier with extenuating circumstances. The woman was therefore sentenced to death and Garnier to penal servitude for life.

The extraordinary feature in this strange trial is the thorough and yet almost unconscious depravity of both parties, but especially of the woman, the character of whose moral perversity is almost unique in the annals of sane criminals.

On the other hand, the religious faculty may be wanting and the individual be an excellent and virtuous man. The faculty alone does not perform such necessary service as some others; at least its partial omission under some combinations is not so serious as would be the omission of certain others. The service of this faculty is, as stated, similar to that of honor. We cannot accurately prepare detailed directions for either. It is not possible for man to anticipate every combination of circumstances under which individuals may be placed and arrange a written code of honor for each emergency. Any attempt to do so would retard instead of increasing the action of that faculty. People would constantly find themselves in positions not provided for in the code and would assume they were therein licensed to act without honor. So with the affections, the everyday affairs of husband and wife or parents and children can only be regulated by their natural love, without which there will be trouble against which all the wisdom of man has never been able to guard.

Religion is of the same nature; it is the disposition that is wanted rather than rules and regulations. As soon as attempts are made to arrange the latter, the various peculiarities of the makers of those regulations—their interests and deficiencies—become an element in them which in time supersedes the original intentions. In each instance where honor is required, that quality will assert itself in those who have it; the same with love; the same, too, with religion. The individual is not to be governed by articles, rules, or ceremonies, but by the sentiments which the disposition prompts, tempered by reason.

Even though a man be ignorant he is of course a better man for having this faculty; but with ignorance it has never failed to have a superstitious accompaniment, in which fear invariably takes part. Fears are raised by any thing supernatural and which is associated with religion. Those fears have always been measured by ignorance, and to this day a good indication of a man's want of intelligence will be found in noting the degree of terror he has attached to his religion.

The ignorance and fears of the religiously disposed have always built up a complicated superstitious system, which in time becomes to new generations inherited doctrines that have long since seemingly been proven true. Those later generations seldom hear discussions upon the truth of the system itself, but only on certain unimportant points. It is common with lawyers to raise a

false issue in cases where they are weak on the true one. Discussion will be raised upon some slight wing of the question, a settlement of which will be mistaken for a settlement of the whole. False issues are so common that in most discussions people will soon run off from the question first raised and argue upon points often unconnected with it. False issues have been conspicuous in political discussions and religion has seldom had any other.

Religion is progressive and should be fully up to the intelligence of the times in its theories, and when such is the case it is sufficiently for the time the true religion. When, for instance, we look back to that far distant time when men first awoke to the mystery of the great weight of a boulder of gold and bowed down to it in fear of its seemingly supernatural power, we see in such acts only degradation, ignorance, and superstition; but that is because of the contrast with men of later development instead of with those who had preceded them. If we should think of what those men had previously been, that devotion, low as it was, would still be interesting as an exhibition of the dawn of intellectual and religious development. It was a step towards civilization, and hence the true religion then, and became superstition only when, through further knowledge, it was beneath the intelligence of the times.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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IN no other question is such stress set upon that which exists only in the mind as is done in the Christian religion. In other matters the acts of men are accepted as sufficient evidence of the condition of mind that governed them. But Christianity demands that there shall exist in the mind a certain belief, even though the individual's acts shall be unobjectionable. But if this requirement is complied with there must be a cause for so doing, for belief is an impression upon the mind which can only be produced through some external cause; no man possesses power to stamp such an impression of his own volition. Such power would be equivalent to obtaining knowledge without either study, observation, or experience. It would be even a greater power, for at times its exercise would involve effacing other impressions from the mind. Belief and certain knowledge of a fact are both acquired in the same way and equally control us; the only difference between the two consists in the doubt that may attend the first.

Christian faith is inherited. It is belief that is

impressed upon the mind in youth, and, though the power of such impression may be very great, it constitutes no proof of its truth. We cannot competently judge of that until we understand the evidence that convinced the original believers and also the circumstances that caused that belief to be handed down from generation to generation.

When circumstances have caused great events to rest upon the belief of others, it becomes of more importance to know how they came to have that belief than merely to know the fact of their having it. If the immediate followers of Christ had not believed in him there would never have been any Christian believers. The faith of the apostles led all subsequent christendom. It is only through them that we have the Christian religion. If those men had been delegated by the Almighty to proclaim their belief to the world, the mere announcement of their faith would have been sufficient. But they published the evidence that convinced them, and in so doing virtually admitted that their belief was obtained only through that evidence, and that it was not obtained in a supernatural manner. If, further, the rise and progress of Christianity may be traced through the natural workings of the mind, there will remain nothing supernatural to explain.

Those apostles did not agree, which also shows that their belief was purely the result of what they saw. In giving their testimony they would naturally give that which impressed them most, and



hence the events related in the New Testament were the most convincing the writers could present and should be the only evidence upon which to base our opinions.

In investigating the truth of the Christian religion the first question is as to the divinity of Christ, and if that is settled in the negative there does not remain a question for consideration in the whole system. Believing there is a God is not dependent upon the Bible, nor upon any part of the Christian system. It does not follow that because there is a God the Bible is true or that Christ is the Son of God. On the other hand, *the truth of the Bible and every doctrine dependent upon it are but logical conclusions and necessities following belief in the divinity of Christ.* Those doctrines are inseparable from that belief, and it will be shown that some matter in the New Testament was inserted at a late date to support them.

If Christ was what was claimed for him, then every word of his was sacred, and particularly must his own religion be the law with his followers. He was a Jew, possessing to the fullest extent the religious ideas of that people, and therefore the church was obliged to incorporate the Jewish books into the Bible and make certain Jewish ideas a part of the Christian system. The books of the Old Testament were important only because of the references made to them by Christ, and their supposed sacred character and continuance to our time are owing to that fact.

Attention will be called elsewhere to the circumstances that led Christ to put forth his divine pretensions (or that caused them to be put forth) and his natural desire to be believed therein. The gospels represent him to have made that belief the one chief virtue in his followers, and therefore Christianity has been obliged to elevate that belief into a virtue of the highest order, and also to find a reason for his appearance upon earth coupled with this demand to be believed. Why was he sent into the world? Why was he so urgent in his demand to be believed? How is he a savior? How was it that he was a God and yet born of a woman? How can there be but one God and yet three? How can some of his directions—such as eating of his body and drinking of his blood—be complied with?

The answers created for these questions begat other questions, and those still others, the answers to all of which the Church from necessity had to unite upon and promulgate as its doctrines. Those doctrines were explanations wholly. They did not originate in human wants, nor was the welfare of mankind a consideration in their promulgation. Time drew out a demand for those explanations, and from necessity they could only be met by enlarging the history of Christ, and unavoidably they became an element in Christian ethics. The natural religious feeling has naturally attached itself to Christianity and throughout the Christian era has borne much good fruit;

but that good has been more than offset by the far greater evils superinduced by the ruinous theories of those explanatory doctrines. Although the Christian religion is very old, the standard of intelligence within it averaged quite the same throughout the largest part of its career, and not until recently has there come an extended knowledge of the unintelligent character of those doctrines. They now constitute the church's greatest difficulty. It is natural that curiosity should have raised those questions, but even if Christ was equal with God they still have no bearing upon any questions of ethical culture. Nevertheless the Church, throughout its eighteen hundred years of existence, has filled the Christian world with its contentions upon those questions, the settlement of which either way would not in the least add to our store of useful knowledge, or stimulate our mental power to resist temptation, or throw light upon any question of morality; nor do they even remotely touch upon the all-important faculty of honor, to the cultivation of which religion should be chiefly directed. They are simply enigmas raised by the assertion that Jesus Christ was the son of God.

Vast numbers of church attendants, however, are still kept in darkness regarding these difficulties. It is common to represent to them that certain objectionable features are no longer sustained, while others have been supposedly learnedly explained through theological ratiocinations too deep

for the inquirer. But the truth of the system is simplicity itself. Its complications consist in efforts to fit a code of morals to the enforced explanations attending Christ's appearance and in fitting the ideas of its originators to the enlightenment of the present day.

The gospels and the subsequent fable of the atonement have obliged Christianity to build up an enormous power in Satan at the expense of the Almighty. Rather than not believe that Christ was the son of God, Christians partly disbelieve in God himself, by crediting the Devil with the possession of such a large percentage of His power as to partly intercept and annul His works. . Having made one false statement, all others are but an accumulation of false statements necessary to sustain the first, and they all hang upon that one item of faith: the divinity of Christ.

The Jews also probably owe to Christ the continuance of their religion to the present time. Christianity brought them into prominence and sustained them and held them united by the more intense feelings which opposition engendered. The blood of martyrs is the seed of any church. Though not believing in Christ, the Jews are an accompaniment of the Christian system and are as much indebted to him for their distinct organization in our day as is any denomination within it.

The question, therefore, is Was Jesus Christ the son of God? and the evidence *pro* or *con* is contained in the accounts in the New Testament.

The reverence which its believers demand shall accompany its examination is a bar to a clear understanding of this evidence. People in a Christian country grow up in the faith. As a rule they make no special distinction between "God the Father" and "God the Son," and consequently Christianity has this advantage, that those whose studies and experience have raised doubts as to the truth of the Bible will, through early associations, stand in some degree of awe of those accounts upon which it is founded.

The testimony as to the divinity of Christ lies wholly within the New Testament. Outside of that book and its accompanying uncanonical gospels he was not mentioned by any writer until long after his death. The many "Lives of Christ" and of the different apostles have led many into an erroneous supposition that various items relating to them were to be found in other works of their time. But such is not the case. Outside of the New Testament there is a gap of more than a hundred years in which there is no further account of the rise and progress of Christianity.

But even the different books of the New Testament were written at various dates after the death of Christ, and after various interests and difficulties had arisen which would influence the writers if they were but natural men, and become the cause of doctrines not thought of by Christ. Testimony of this nature is even more important than any direct statement in the book. It is more

important because from it we learn the causes that led to some of their teachings, and in just the degree that they show themselves governed by the same passions and influences that govern other men do they betray the absence of any sacredness of character. Particularly is this the case when it is apparent that those men both misrepresented Christ and ignored some of his sayings. Nothing in the New Testament is worthy of such scrutiny as that testimony which its unknown writers inadvertently furnished.

Each mental faculty has the power of occupying the mind to the exclusion of all others and for the time becoming responsible for our acts and speech. Like the annunciator in a hotel, the same bell is rung from many different rooms and from widely different motives. It is important to take this fact into consideration when the acts and thoughts of others are set forth in support of certain ideas. Particularly is this necessary in Christianity, for that religion, from Christ to the present time, is full of acts and speech that have been attributed to religion and to the love of Christ, but wherein religion had not the least part and where there was no special love of Christ.

For a pretense so great, exceedingly limited accounts of Christ are recorded, and necessarily judgment of his character and of the events related of him must be based upon the few details of those limited accounts. Christians must permit those who differ with them to hold up the disclosures of

those records as equally important even though based upon but little. Those disclosures are as broad as the isolated events related of Christ and broader than the basis of some important doctrines. One of the most remarkable events asserted of Christ is based upon three short sentences in Acts of the Apostles partially supported by two in the four gospels.

But, while the sacredness of the Bible and of every dogma of Christianity is dependent upon the divinity of Jesus Christ, the strength of the Christian position lies in the *exaltation of credulity*. Faith is a virtue only within the Christian system. Upon all other questions blind, unreasoning belief is a fault. That false virtue fills a very important part in that system. This grows out of the fact before mentioned that people in a Christian country grow up in its belief and with it have been taught that the more confiding and unquestioning is their belief the higher will be their own purity and piety. This false virtue consequently subserves a double purpose in this, that it prevents investigation and that doubt conflicts with the believer's self-esteem. This latter is all the greater because the supposed virtue can be very cheaply retained. It came without effort and only requires to be left undisturbed. The consequence is that, instead of investigating, many believers will take credit to themselves for their pious rejection of anything that might take from them the self-satisfaction they derive in their supposed virtue. Be-

lievers often credit religion with feelings that are based only upon their vanity.

There must be no deviation on the part of the Christian from anything where Christianity assumes to have pointed out the way and the remedy. Its wisdom must never be questioned. If history shows through all its career that its remedies never cured, its followers must deny this, and equally through all time must claim the effect that its supposed sacred character should have produced. The faith of the Christian must thus extend to unbelief in anything that conflicts with it. He must reject history and the evidence of his own eyes if necessary. The same authority that says Jesus was the Son of God instructs, also, that a confiding, "lively faith" in the truth of this statement will regenerate and purify the believer so that he will lead a better life; and if experience proves that this is not true it equally proves the uselessness of that belief and its improbability. Hence Christianity is obliged to fit everything to that pretense. In sustaining its truth, history and experience are being constantly falsified so as to force an agreement with it.

It is important also to take into consideration the channel through which the Bible and all documents bearing upon it have reached us. A requirement of the early Christians was that all property should be held in common. This, however, was not a hardship, as they were daily looking for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. This require-



ment necessitated officers possessing defined authority and therefore enforced an organization. Converts were at first among the poor, but unitedly there would soon be considerable property, with increasing influence on the part of the officers. In this way the Church very soon supplied to its leaders more agreeable occupations than they had probably ever had before. This at once gave a personal interest in the movement, outside of their religion, that grew to be enormous in the second century and was then sufficient to cause many to make any statement that would help to sustain them in their offices.

People who are relieved from all fears of not obtaining at least a moderately comfortable support do not sufficiently realize the great hardship of those who can obtain only the coarsest subsistence by the most severe labor. Most such people have no higher ambition than that they may be able to secure a living by some easy occupation, and when they do have experience of such an existence they will naturally resort to great extremes to avoid returning to that labor which has become still more objectionable, and when such efforts are attributed to religion the interest that actuates them will be very great. Experience of this kind has been reproduced in the Mormon church. Its leaders from the first, though unknown and regarded with contempt outside of their church, filled more important and agreeable positions within it than they would have occupied in other fields.

The great personal interest in sustaining the church grew rapidly and soon became the most powerful element in its support. During a large part of the Christian era it supplied more numerous and more desirable offices than the civil governments. Under such circumstances vast numbers of corrupt men have, in all ages, filled many of its most important offices and influenced its government. All documents bearing upon the early history of the church were thus for centuries under the care of those who would not hesitate at any act of interpolation and suppression in perpetuation of that which supported and magnified their office. Many, also, would do this through superstitious zeal.

The church, from the first, claimed that the apostles and leaders generally possessed some of the divine powers attributed to Christ, holding that they also could speak with heavenly authority. It was long after the death of Christ, and when their personal interest was great, before they awoke to the necessity of collecting such writings as they could bearing upon that subject. It would be perfectly consistent for such men, with such views, to revise and force an agreement, not only on the part of the apostles upon the issues of their times, but also an agreement with their own peculiar wishes as well.

The noted forgery of Jesus Christ, inserted in the works of Josephus, is an illustration of what they could and would do. Among other acts of

this kind, it is probable that manuscripts have been made to appear to be older than they were. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles were attached to the New Testament at a later date than the four gospels, and though, through incompetency, much is exposed which the church would have concealed, it has undoubtedly successfully concealed much more.

We would naturally suppose that the Gospel of Peter would be one that, above all others, the church would have preserved with most zealous care. Peter is shown to have been second to Christ before the crucifixion and first among the apostles thereafter. His gospel is one of the oldest Christian writings and was in extensive use in the churches before the four gospels were known. It was virtually the original New Testament. The disappearance of such a gospel, following such general use, can be explained only through intentional suppression, particularly as the reason for so doing is exposed in the New Testament. But in this important instance we have positive evidence that the church did so destroy it, for there are accounts of at least one bishop being busily engaged in that very work. In his act we see the church laboring to destroy the "inspired" writings of him whom it claims to have been its first bishop.

In the year 190 a large number of the Gospels of Peter were found in use by the Church of Rhossus, in Cilicia; and so much were the Christians of that church attached to them that it be-

came necessary for Serapion, one of the bishops, to suppress them.

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Credner thinks the gospel [of Peter] was one of the oldest writings of the church and the source from which Justin [martyr] drew many of his quotations.<sup>1</sup>

Next to the Gospel of Peter, we would suppose the Gospel of James would have been preserved, but it is numbered with the lost, together with the Gospel of Paul, Oracles of Christ, and very many other gospels and writings, for an extended account of which the reader is referred to the history just quoted.

Necessarily we cannot know the extent of the damaging evidence the church hid from us in the suppression of those works, but the New Testament does expose why we are not permitted to read the Gospel of Peter and why it presents us with so much of the writings of Paul. This will be further referred to in its proper place.

Three hundred years after St. Paul's time and long after the church contained rich and highly desirable offices, the New Testament still did not contain all the parts it now does. Those full directions to bishops, for instance, must have been inserted by bishops, for the church could not have advanced in Paul's time to the variety of offices mentioned in the works attributed to him. Some idea of the power the church had acquired at an

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<sup>1</sup>History of the Christian Religion, by Charles B. Waite, A.M.

early day and of the kind of men who virtually could make holy manuscripts is shown in Gibbon's account of another Paul who filled the metropolitan see of Antioch two hundred years after the time of St. Paul:

The wealth of that prelate was a sufficient evidence of his guilt, since it was neither derived from the inheritance of his father, nor acquired by the arts of honest industry. But Paul considered the service of the church as a very lucrative profession. His ecclesiastical jurisdiction was venal and rapacious; he extorted frequent contributions from the most opulent of the faithful, and converted to his own use a considerable part of the public revenue. By his pride and luxury the Christian religion was rendered odious in the eyes of the Gentiles. His council chamber and his throne, the splendor with which he appeared in public, the supplicant crowd who solicited his attention, the multitude of letters and petitions to which he dictated his answers, and the perpetual hurry of business in which he was involved were circumstances much better suited to the state of a civil magistrate than to the humility of a primitive bishop. When he harangued his people from the pulpit, Paul affected the figurative style and the theatrical gestures of an Asiatic sophist, while the cathedral resounded with the loudest and most extravagant exclamations in the praise of his divine eloquence. Against those who resisted his power or refused to flatter his vanity, the prelate of Antioch was arrogant, rigid, and inexorable; but he relaxed the discipline and lavished the treasures of the church on his dependent clergy, who were permitted to imitate their master in the gratification of their sensual appetite; for Paul indulged himself very freely in the pleasures of the table and he had received into his episcopal palace

two young and beautiful women as the constant companions of his leisure moments.

Notwithstanding these scandalous vices, if Paul of Samosata had preserved the purity of the orthodox faith, his reign over the capital of Syria would have ended only with his life, and, had reasonable persecution intervened, an effort of courage might perhaps have placed him in the ranks of saints and martyrs.

This bishop may or may not have been a fair type of his class, but his holding such an office at all indicates a low standard, which is further evidenced by the difficulty of removing him. Those men lived in the beginning of the compilation of the Bible, and through two or three hundred years it was such as they who passed upon the admission of some and the rejection of others of the parts of the Old and New Testaments. During many centuries thereafter the officers of the church had the power to reach and control all historical records, and could interpolate and suppress as their interest or superstition dictated. All literature was in manuscript and duplicating copies was a great labor. This work soon fell into the hands of monks almost exclusively, particularly as Greek and Latin became dead languages and were confined mostly to church service. Therefore, the lost gospels and other works having a bearing upon this question have undoubtedly been suppressed by the church itself, and the disposition to do this is in full force even in our day.

When we judge of the workmanship of some

grand structure we are too apt to be impressed only with that which we see. We do not realize that before any work was done it existed only in the mind of the architect and that the skillful construction of the building was dependent upon the correctness of the ideas which he then employed. The all-important work was that which was done when the building was but a phantom in the minds of its originators. It is the same with a system of government. The laws we know are important and the constitution still more important, but under all that there are governing ideas of right and wrong existing in the minds of those who framed the laws, and if their ideas were erroneous the entire system will be at fault, to the sorrow and misfortune of those who are ruled by them. Our most far-reaching errors are those wherein we adopt falsehoods as the quintessence of truth.

With the decline of the Christian religion history will have to be rewritten. At the present time there is no study more instructive, none more valuable to us all, than a study of the enormous injury which the false governing ideas of that religion have wrought in every branch of knowledge. Andrew Dixon White, LL. D., L. H. D., ex-president of Cornell University, in a series of articles published in the *Popular Science Monthly*, has pointed out how it operated to retard progress in various branches of science, his last article, at the present writing, being a history of the ruinous

part its errors took in retarding a knowledge of the science of medicine. Buckle's History of Civilization in England is also a highly interesting and instructive illustration of the rich experience we may gain when our minds become disconnected from governing ideas the most ruinous our race has ever known.

An erroneous opinion is quite general regarding the number and age of old manuscripts. There are manuscripts, no doubt, over a thousand years old, though none can be traced back more than a few hundred years, and the oldest, if genuine, was written in an age quite as remote from the time of Christ as we are from the time of Columbus. Prof. C. E. Stowe, in his work *The Origin and History of the Books of the Bible*, has given an enumeration of old Bible manuscripts and their supposed age. He says:

Of the volume containing the gospels we have at least 426 different manuscripts, of which 27 are uncials, or more than one thousand years old; of the volume containing Paul's epistles, 255 manuscripts, of which 9 are uncials; of the volume of Acts and the Catholic Epistles, 200, of which 8 are uncials; and of the Apocalypse, or Revelation, 91, of which 3 are uncials.

Prof. Stowe then gives a history, as far as known, of five manuscripts believed to be the oldest, one of which is supposed to have been written as early as the fourth century. The following is part of his account of the manuscript which he seems to prize the highest, before reading which



let me remind the reader of the great pecuniary value set upon old Bible manuscripts in these times and the corresponding temptation to imitate and create an appearance of having unearthed such.

In 1844 Dr. Tischendorf, while traveling under the patronage of the king of Saxony for research in biblical science, was at the convent of St. Catharine, on Mount Sinai. From a basket of rubbish intended to kindle his fire he picked out forty-three beautiful parchment leaves belonging to a manuscript of the Septuagint hitherto unknown. These on his return to Europe he published. On the 4th of Feb'y, 1859, he was at the same convent for the third time, and one of the monks brought to him the other leaves of that same manuscript loosely tied in a napkin. To his inexpressible delight he found here not only the remaining portions of the Septuagint, but also the entire New Testament, with the epistle of Barnabas and portions of the Shepherd of Hermas, the most complete, the most ancient, the best manuscript copy of the entire New Testament that has yet been known.

Within the Christian era probably no country has been so often fought over and desolated by contending armies as Judea. In the first and last four or five centuries of that time it has been visited by thousands who were searching for relics, manuscripts, etc., and in the crusade wars it was governed for nearly a hundred years by highly devout Christians. During all of this time the Sinai manuscript remained undiscovered, and by a most astonishing coincidence it now turns up as kindling for a fire at the exact moment when a

person arrives whose only business it was to find just such a manuscript. This account also implies that those monks, though devoting their whole lives to the Christian religion, were ignorant of the interest and value attached to ancient manuscripts of the New Testament.

The date of all very old manuscripts is conjectural. In no instance can they be traced back to within hundreds of years of their supposed date. One of the oldest referred to can be traced back only to the year 1450. The next longest known manuscript is entitled the Beza and can be traced back to the year 1552; but it contains matter not found in the others and not strictly in harmony with *the truth* as understood by Prof. Stowe, and therefore he promptly repudiates it to that extent. He states that "we must here remark that the Beza is the least reliable of the five manuscripts."

The childlike credulity with which the author accepts Dr. Tischendorf's transparent fraud and his skepticism of the assuredly old Beza manuscript are illustrations of the controlling power of inherited ideas and the slight effect which later evidence usually has upon them.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE WITNESSES AND IMAGINATION.

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ONE of the several causes that sustain the Bible in our day is that such a large proportion of intelligent people do not read that book at all. Those who do read it do so as an act of devotion and their mingled feelings of reverence and fear utterly unfit them for an unbiased examination of it. Even the most intelligent of the latter class are driven to partial unbelief, as shown in their inconsistent rejection of part of the system. The more studious such readers are the more liberal they become, even to the extent, with a constantly increasing number, of rejecting it altogether. The bulk of even educated people leave all Bible questions to theologians and accept without question their supposed conclusions. This seemingly confiding acceptance misleads many professors and deters them from frankly admitting the doubts which their studies have raised. Two quite large parties are thus deceiving one another into supporting that which a little research on the one part and a little honesty on the other would show that neither believed.

The accounts of Jesus were traditional for a generation or two. The temporary nature of his followers' expectations did not admit of the thought that writing his history would be necessary, as the kingdom of heaven was daily expected. Christianity is consequently dependent upon the judgment of those men who verbally during many years repeated accounts of those events that convinced them. It is necessarily important to know the degree of their intelligence and capacity to judge for us, for Christianity knows Christ only through their understanding. The acts and every word of the exceedingly limited testimony of those men have been commented upon over and over again by Christian writers until there are vast libraries of their works. But these are all the devout speculations of those who believed and who were blinded by belief to the pointlessness of their comments from the standpoint of unbelief.

But little reference can be made to those writers in an examination of the question of the divinity of Christ, because they wrote only upon the assumption that upon that point there was *no* question. With this conceded, there was occasion to fill libraries with their books in efforts to reconcile that concession and the logical conclusions it engenders with reason; but, as a study of the truth of the assertion that Christ was the Son of God, those works are worthless. For proof of the divinity of Christ Christians refer to the Bible; for

proof of the divine authority of the Bible they refer to Christ; but for the truth of both they have nothing to offer. That is simply a question of credulity.

But it is consistent that it should be so, for that was the marked characteristic of the only witnesses who saw and directly testified of Jesus. Only the most credulous even then believed in him. Not only the better classes in his own time, but even those who knew him best, repudiated his divine pretensions. A being so far above all others would without effort have naturally deeply impressed the people of his own home. But Matthew (xiii, 57, 58) says that he was without honor there "and did not many [any] mighty works, because of their unbelief."

Even at as late a date as the appearance of the Gospel of John, credulity was still a leading characteristic in the Church, as is shown by the ideas of its author. The incident of the woman at Jacob's well is an illustration of what they then considered impressive evidence. The account is in the fourth chapter. Jesus had been talking with the woman alone at the well, after which she went into the city (Chap. iv):

28 \* \* \* and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

\* \* \* \* \*

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city be-

lieved on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

Reference to the account will show that all Jesus told the woman of herself was that she had had five husbands. His further statement that he with whom she was then living was not her husband was but repeating what the woman had in part just told him.

Nathanael's conversion, as set forth in the first chapter of John, was, if true, but a childish exhibition of credulity on his part. If not true, it is an equal exhibition on the part of those who, at a late date, composed such a story in the interest of the Church:

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou are the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Some of the accounts indicate that the Apostles, part of them at least, were but boys, as illustrated in the following:

## MATTHEW XX.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

\* \* \* \* \*

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

## MARK IX.

33 And he [Jesus] came to Capernaum: and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

The remarkable credulity and simplicity of Christ's followers are conspicuous throughout the New Testament. If some of the events therein described were possible, their performance would have produced a widespread sensation far greater than is represented. (The resurrection of Lazarus as an instance.) But that book admits the adverse testimony of the class most capable of judging of this question and the evidence, and it shows that only those believed whose opinions were worthy of the least notice.

In ancient times the universe was supposed to be of but trifling extent as compared to what we now know it to be. In giving his idea of the distance of the stars, Homer said it would take a brazen anvil nine days to fall from them to the

earth. Even Milton, who by comparison was quite within our own time, gave nine days in falling from heaven down to hell as sufficient to represent immensity of space. But, astronomically speaking, a body would fall but an insignificant distance in nine days, particularly as the increasing ratio of speed of falling bodies was probably not taken into consideration in either instance.<sup>1</sup> The ancient ideas of God were even more limited, for, in addition to the supposed narrow extent of creation, they had divided His power among so many as to have reduced, in their imagination, the powers of a God to those but slightly superior to man's. They were familiar with the idea of gods taking the form of men and mingling with them and they often attributed divine power to the most distinguished men of their times. With their ideas it was comparatively a simple matter to believe that Christ was the Son of God, in doing which they exhibited far less credulity than those who believe that assertion in the light of the present day.

The exceedingly short account of Christ is not a source of weakness, but is one of strength. The very little that is known of him has left full play for the imagination of devout followers to color according to their intelligence and the circum-

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<sup>1</sup>The earth would be  $64\frac{1}{2}$  days in reaching the sun, while light would traverse the distance in eight minutes and it would require three years to reach the nearest fixed star.



stances of the times. Any politician knows how careful prominent statesmen must be in expressing opinions or in taking sides upon any new political question that may be put forth. Such men often use great ingenuity to avoid committing themselves to measures until necessity compels. Reticence is very necessary in those holding important political positions. The very slight knowledge we have of Christ serves the same purpose and is the one chief circumstance that has as yet enabled that religion to be "fitted to any people and any age."

If the daily habits, manners, and speech of Christ were known and his sayings during a length of time recorded, he would have made very many statements and committed many acts that would have made an extended belief in his pretensions an impossibility. As it now is, a man believing that he was a God will have an undefined dream of his acts and sayings in which he will be pictured as all that a God should be, untrammelled with a commonplace history to the contrary. In the incident of the woman at Jacob's well, for instance, it is the imagination only that impresses the mind with anything therein divine. A believer would say that all that was said there was not reported and he would credit Christ with language and picture scenes to the widest extent of his ability, and necessarily far superior to those represented in the account.

If the various events were not fully reported,

why was that service omitted? If "the half has never been told," why was it never told? If it was necessary to send Christ here to save the world, it was equally necessary that the acts that were to save it should be accurately recorded for the benefit of all time. Or, if the world could be saved without a record of the acts of the one sent to save it, then why do we have the New Testament at all? Between the imagination and allegory, nothing substantial has been left in the Christian system to combat. It has "withstood the test of time," not because it is like a rock, but because it is like a vapor.

We have ocular evidence of a small fraction of what the imagination does for Christianity in the thousands of magnificent paintings and engravings intended to represent Bible scenes. The imagination of the artist in most such pictures is vastly superior to the ideas of the author of that upon which they were founded.

The writers of the gospels themselves drew frequently upon the imagination of their readers. Matthew says, iv, 24: "And his fame went throughout all Syria."

But he records nothing to justify such fame; and, if true, we should have heard of it in the histories of those times.

A similar assertion is made in John vii, 46, where it is said of Jesus that "Never man spake like this man." The author of that gospel brought to bear all the skill he was capable of in his efforts

to exhibit Jesus as the Son of God; but, recognizing his own inability to put into the mouth of Christ utterances consistent with the divine character given him, he drew upon the imagination of his readers with this simple, unsupported assertion. It is one that detracts as much from the intelligence of the Almighty as it adds to that of Jesus. He sent His Son to accomplish a certain object, involving greater wisdom than was possessed by ordinary mortals, and then failed to secure the least record of such superior wisdom. Jesus came to teach that which would naturally involve speaking as never man spake, but left not one recorded sentence or idea that indicated the possession of such power. Any ignorant man could make the simple assertion that he had so spoken, but to prove it by illustrations requires the power of speaking as never man spake; and, as the gospel writer did not possess that power and there had been no such wise words uttered whence examples could be drawn, no examples could be given.

The last verse of the last chapter of that gospel is an immense draft upon the imagination and is also an exhibition of the powers of imagination of its author. He wrote:

And there are also many other things, which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

The part the imagination takes in Christianity is not confined to the supposed sayings of Christ

that have never been recorded, but it is also brought into active service in those that have been. As given in the New Testament those sayings are of such an exceedingly low order of superstition that unless believers took great liberties they would overthrow any moderately intelligent system that could be built upon them. The more intelligent the Christian is the less does he care for the ideas Christ's words directly convey and the more does he draw upon his imagination for a deep, hidden, spiritual meaning, foreign to the words themselves. In doing this each individual of them assumes for himself to fit any theory or any key separately to each incident. They do not, like Swedenborg, honestly fit a key to the whole Bible, but each for himself gives full play to the imagination separately for every event. They only agree in this, that the simple ideas conveyed by the words alone are to be partly or wholly ignored.

All the Lives of Christ and of the Apostles furnish ample illustration of this in the license, if not dishonesty, of their authors in the immensity of their drafts upon the imagination. No matter how ignorant, no matter how intelligent, each and all will picture and theorize according to their capacity and substitute the same for the records themselves.

Language bears the same relation to ideas that dress does to the person. Those who have excellent taste and skill can do much to make an ill-

formed person present a moderately graceful appearance. It is the same with ideas. Those possessing good command of language can so dress out ideas of a low order as to give them respectability and even a semblance of wisdom. One of Henry Ward Beecher's most distinguishing characteristics consisted in his great command of language, and when exercising that power, coupled with his imagination, he at times dressed out the low ideas of the New Testament so artistically that the originators themselves would not know them. A man with his ability must necessarily have devoted all his skill to his imagined meaning of the words rather than the actual. In his *Life of Christ* he precedes his comments upon this conversation between Christ and the woman at Jacob's well by, for the second time, asserting that there was this double meaning, without which all such men as he would be unable to comment upon the words of Christ at all. He says:

We see in this conversation again the very same subtle play of thought between the material and its spiritual counterpart which was shown in the conversation with Nicodemus and with the questioners in the Temple. He recognized the qualities and the substance of this world as they appeared to his followers, while their outcome and value and meaning in the spiritual life was his real and inner interpretation of them.

Mr. Beecher then takes it upon himself to give authoritatively and at great length the thoughts of Christ, representing them to be greatly different

from what would be inferred by the words themselves, taking care, no doubt, that those thoughts do not conflict with his own doctrines. It is interesting, however, to note that the idea in one answer was too low for his elevated standard. It was too narrow to admit of any "subtile play of thought between the material and its spiritual counterpart," and he was therefore obliged to bring Christ down to a lower level in order to answer it. Mr. Beecher's position necessarily required that Christ's words should be for all the world and for all time. But, in answering a question of the woman, Christ denied her religion, which differed from his only in having a different temple, and said to her, "Salvation is of the Jews."

Even Mr. Beecher's imagination fails him here. A few pretty words was the best he could do in admitting that Christ's idea was not above the woman's upon this *theological* question. He therefore isolates it from the others by stating that Christ "for the moment restrained his imperial views to sustain the truth as taught at Mount Zion, as compared to the truth taught at Gerizim."

The Jews and Samaritans had made an important advance in religion by worshipping but one God and worshipping Him as a spirit. That was the only improvement they had made, their religion otherwise being the same as those of neighboring pagan nations, all of whose ideas and customs they retained. They built altars and temples for the same uses as did the pagans and offered sacrifices

of animals under the same superstitious notions, and like the pagans they built their temples on the top of some hill, which was recognized thereafter as a sacred mountain. It is evident that rivalry between the Jews and Samaritans caused each to deny the sanctifying effect of the temple of the other. It was upon this narrow local question that Jesus "restrained his imperial views" to certify to the efficacy of the temple of his countrymen as against the temple of a neighboring and rival nation.

Neander and De Pressensé have each written a Life of Christ, and they are each equally authoritative readers of his secret thoughts, but they saw no restraining of imperial views in this answer. The conversation is all treated as equally important by them. The reason given why the woman asked the question was that she had just discovered that Christ was a prophet and promptly availed herself of the opportunity offered to settle in her mind this question as to the sanctity of the temple at Gerizim.

Dr. Lange in his Life of Christ states that in his answer Christ "intended to humble the proud Samaritan in her." But pride was what the poor woman most needed. With more self-respect she would have been virtuous. The doctor finds a deep meaning in the request to "Go call thy husband." It was not, he writes, wholly "as a pretext in order to lead her to a confession of her criminal course of life," but it was also because

she showed a disposition to become a disciple of Jesus, and therefore her husband should be present.

In other words Jesus, who knew she had no husband, told her to call her husband so that she should not believe without his consent. And if, also, a husband should refuse his consent, the inference is that the wife would not be justified in being saved.

St. Augustine, more than fourteen hundred years ago, in his comments upon this passage, saw a connection between the five husbands and the five senses. His imagination was equally pious and equally supplied the intellectual requirements of his time. It answered the same purpose then, in fitting Christianity to his age, that the imagination of Mr. Beecher or Dr. Lange does now.

The first chapter of the New Testament is very inconsistent with other teachings of Christianity. The superstition of its author is promptly exposed in showing the unimportant coincidence of the succession of fourteen generations. The believer's faith also is confronted with one of two genealogies that are entirely different, and therefore both cannot be true. Even in our time, with nearly everybody possessing the ability to write, few keep a genealogy of their family, and among those of a corresponding class with Joseph there are none.

The second great virtue peculiar only to the Christian system is humility. Much is made of the humble birth of Jesus: that he was born in a manger; that he was meek and lowly; that his disciples and daily life were among the poor, so



much so that by example and precept the rich were quite excluded from his fold. With such sentiments nothing whatever would be allowed for birth. If any distinction was made it should have been against those claiming it rather than the contrary. Genealogies are begot of pride only.

The genealogy of Christ must have been inserted at a late date and was probably intended to add importance to him, in part, by representing Joseph to have been a descendant of David and possibly, also, to account for the followers of Christ having called him King of the Jews. But, even if either one of the genealogies were true, he would still have had no right to be called King of the Jews while Joseph was alive.

Those confiding church attendants who leave all these enigmas to theologians, never doubting that they long since have been met and explained, will be interested in noting how an ancient pillar of the church settled this difficulty for all time. St. Augustine drew upon that inexhaustible source of Christian mental wealth—the imagination—and said: “Joseph might have had an adopted father, and that the two genealogies were of those two men respectively.” Having stated that such might have been the case, St. Augustine, from that time forth, leaves the reader to infer that his thoughts were a saintly revelation and treats this supposition as an absolute fact. It would be a surprising coincidence, also, that both men should have been direct descendants from David.

The story of the birth of Jesus, including the three wise men of the East and the star of Bethlehem, is said to be similar to the accounts found in most of the ancient religions. We are possibly expected here to modify this account and understand that the star was but a light looking like a star. But the writers did not so intend; they meant just what they stated. The universe—earth, sun, moon, and stars—in their imagination probably occupied less space than the moon's orbit alone. To those writers the stars were quite as small as they looked, and that one of them could be brought down and put to the service described was in keeping with their ideas of what ought to be done at the birth of a god. But even a light no higher than a boy's kite would still be too high to show the house it was over, particularly in ancient times, when buildings were huddled closer together than now.

We are also expected to take Joseph's interpretations of dreams as the commands of God. But in this the authors were imitating those of the Old Testament. Although Joseph is represented here as having a knowledge of the divinity of Jesus, he seems to have forgotten it a few years later, at which time Jesus was found in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. In answer to the questions asked by his parents as to why he left them, he said: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my father's

business? And they understood not the sayings which he spake unto them." (Luke ii, 50.)

The disciples of Christ were particularly interested by parables and supposed they, to some extent, proved that which they illustrated, not realizing that any idea may be expressed in that manner. Very ignorant people, in our time, take more interest in that which is represented in riddles than in any other way. The parallel seems to such people to be more ingenious than it really is. They remember better the ideas conveyed because of the wonderful puzzle that illustrated them.

The disciples seemed displeased with him for having related the parable of the Sower and the Seed to the multitude. The spirit of their comments was jealousy, and Jesus yielded to it by representing, in effect, that in his address just given he had intentionally deceived his hearers, "Lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mark iv, 12.) According to this they were not a part of the world he had come to save, and he therefore put them off with blind remarks which he did not intend they should understand. This was immediately after addressing them, and necessarily too soon to have learned anything of them he did not know before. Seemingly he deliberately deceived them, but in fact he simply found his disciples jealous of his having given to the multitude what was to them a deep parable, and he appeased them by indirect flattery. This is a favorable explanation of a dark passage.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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THOSE who can free their minds from the bias of early training and consequently from inherited ideas and can read the New Testament in the light of their own judgment, will find it indeed a revelation, but a revelation of a nature opposite to that which is claimed for it. Even if true, it does not show the motives and relations of its characters to have been as represented. It is not believing the Bible that is so much demanded as believing sacerdotal interpretations of it.

One very important example is in relation to John the Baptist. That book discloses enough to show that he was the originator and founder of that which became Christianity; that he never took a subordinate position to Jesus; that he did not admit Jesus was the one whose coming he proclaimed; that he was indignant at that pretense; that long after the crucifixion there were followers of John who did not believe in Jesus; and that probably even the word "Christian" was first used to distinguish the followers of Christ from the disciples of John.

John was acting upon the common Jewish belief in the coming of the Messiah, the subsequent belief that Jesus was that Messiah being a result of circumstances foreign to his efforts or intentions; but years afterwards, the Christian religion having been widely extended and therefore new and important interests being enlisted in its support, it became indispensable that the records should represent John as admitting that Jesus was the one coming after him, "the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose."

Jesus was baptized by John and his career began after that date. The Gospels of Mark and Luke contain *not one word* showing an admission on the part of John himself that Jesus was the one whose coming he proclaimed, and Matthew mentions but *one instance only* (iii, 14), and a later event shows that that one could not have been true. In relating the baptism of Jesus by John, Matthew offsets the secondary position of Jesus by stating that John at first protested, saying:

I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

But later, when John was in prison, Matthew tells us he heard of the works of Christ and sent two of his (John's) disciples and said unto him:

Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (xi, 3.)

Such a message as this could not have come from John if the events previously related as having

taken place at the baptism of Jesus were true. On the contrary, John's language is of a censuring, protesting nature. It will be seen also that he at the time had disciples distinct from Jesus, as was the case long after. The subsequent verses show that Jesus was endeavoring to win over and appease John by statements that would have been unnecessary if their relations to one another were as represented. The closing of his answer, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me," indicates the offense John had taken and the desire of Jesus to placate him.

This message and its answer clearly disclose that neither John nor Jesus knew of the alleged descending of the spirit like a dove and the voice from heaven; and most certainly John could not have said "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Neither Mark nor Luke has this passage, though both assert the descending of the spirit like a dove.

John the Baptist was widely known and popular. His imprisonment and execution show that he must have been a man of importance, heading a movement that led to extreme measures on the part of the authorities. Herod would certainly have been indifferent to the mere assertion of a citizen, "That it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife." John had evidently become a power in the land, and the true reason for his execution is not given in the Gospels. He would hardly have used such an expression of himself as

“One mightier than I” if his position had not been one of distinction. Throughout the New Testament his importance and popularity are manifested. It is given in two instances as complimentary to Jesus that he was supposed to be John. Jesus refers to him, and after his death they dated from the *time of John*. (See Acts i, 22; x, 37; xiii, 24, 25; Luke xiv, 16.) The four gospels begin with accounts of him. In those times it was common to connect some supernatural event with the birth of distinguished men. Luke has such an account at the birth of John, to which he devotes his first and greatest attention, to the exclusion of the nativity of Jesus, about which he has less to say. They all state that the people went out from Jerusalem and the country about and were baptized by him in Jordan.

Herod did not hear of Jesus until he had caused John to be beheaded, and then he said of him:

This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and *therefore* mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. (Matt. xiv, 2.)

Jesus himself only a short time before his crucifixion, while in Jerusalem, again took a secondary position to John by asking a question based upon John's acknowledged greater fame. Jesus had been asked: “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” He avoided the question by asking in return: “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of man?” If they answered, “Of men,

they feared the people: for all held John as a prophet." (Matt. xxi, 23-26.) This question indicates a desire on the part of Jesus to couple himself with John and avail himself of his popularity and reputation as a prophet, and probably also to secure the same toleration for himself that they had given to John.

Luke said of John the Baptist that: "All men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not." (iii, 15.)

The Prophet Elias was to appear before the coming of Christ. In Matt. xvii, 10, Jesus is reminded of this and answered that "Elias is come already and they knew him not," and "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

This shows that his disciples had not previously so understood it, and Jesus only saying so by implication indicates that their relative positions were such as to make that assertion a bold one. Upon another earlier occasion, however, when John was in prison, he did assert directly that John was Elias. He said: "And if ye will receive it [believe it], this is Elias which was for to come." (Matt. xi, 14.)

Josephus records the reason why Herod caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. The gospel-writers could not give the true reason, for it would make too conspicuous his superior position. The assumption that John foretold the coming of Jesus made it desirable to present him in a favorable



light, but not sufficiently so as to eclipse Jesus, which would have been the case were the whole truth given. John's popularity was so great that Herod was jealous of it and put him to death through fear of the power he was acquiring. The greater distinction of John is further exemplified in this, that, while Josephus gives this account of John's importance, he shows no knowledge of Christ. Josephus' says:

Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly as a judgment for what he did against John that was called the Baptist, for Herod slew him, who was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins, but for the purification of the body, supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when others came in crowds about him—for they were greatly moved by hearing his words—Herod, also fearing lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's superstitious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the de-

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<sup>1</sup> Antiquities of the Jews, xviii, 5.

struction of this army was as a punishment to Herod and a mark of God's displeasure to him.

Much excitement evidently attended the execution of John, an account of which is given in the sixth chapter of Mark, that gospel stating that:

29 And when his [John's] disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

30 And the Apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

\* \* \* \* \*

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

The 30th and 34th verses give an appearance of there having been a consultation as to a successor to the Baptist and that a delegation had tendered that position to Jesus. "They told him what they had done and what they had taught." This is the reverse of what it should have been had Jesus been the master. It was for him to instruct as to what to teach, and subsequent obedience would not require such a report, while disobedience would not be reported at all. On the other hand, if those men were soliciting Jesus to assume the leadership of John's proselytes, it would have been

natural to point out what had been done and what had been taught.

“They were as sheep not having a shepherd.” In that case John had not taught them that Jesus was the Messiah, their shepherd, their Lord and master. Jesus had evidently been no rival to the Baptist, and it is probable that it was by the latter’s death that he was brought into prominence with those people, and his ambition may not at first have been above being John’s successor.

John the Baptist practiced great self-denial and was temperate. Jesus said of him (Luke vii):

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold! a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

John’s temperance is mentioned in several places, and in this at least shows superiority over the people of his time; but Jesus is represented as turning water into wine at a feast. The difference between the two in this respect was so marked as to attract the attention of the disciples, who asked, seemingly reprovingly, why there was such difference.

And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? (Luke v, 33.)

Temperance was not a feature of the followers of Jesus. In Acts ii, 15, Peter defends the disci-

ples upon a seemingly natural charge of drunkenness by saying:

For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

The implication conveyed in this defense is at least not indicative of temperance on the part of those men.

According to Luke, the Lord's prayer was taught to the disciples in answer to a request from them to teach them to pray as John also taught his disciples. (Luke xi, 1.) Luke also says:

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. (xvi, 16.)

There are other allusions to John the Baptist in the synoptic gospels, but nowhere is it shown that he himself ever acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah or that he took a secondary position to him, the one solitary instance given being plainly untrue.

But the Gospel of John gives repeated instances in which John the Baptist is represented as giving his personal acknowledgment that Jesus was the one whose coming he foretold. That gospel rushes to the opposite extreme and exposes a desire to cover that point in the haste with which a number of disconnected, improbable, and, under the circumstances, ridiculous admissions by John are stated to have been made. But even that gospel exposes the untruthfulness of those state-

ments, which will be further confirmed when we consider that it was written nearly two hundred years after the birth of Christ, nearly one hundred and sixty years after the crucifixion.

When reading ancient history we are apt to look too lightly upon a period of fifty or a hundred years. It lies in such remote perspective and we pass over events so rapidly that we undervalue the lapse of time and do not make just allowance for the great changes which must have taken place. We associate the people of one generation too closely with those of one or two generations later, not realizing that the names of the former "have been carved for many a year on the tomb," nor that the entire population of the globe has been changed, involving, often, widely different circumstances, and therefore widely different motives attending their actions. We also assume that the men of a later generation possessed more knowledge of the men and of the motives of those who had preceded them a generation or two than they actually did. The absence of a knowledge of printing and the slow and comparatively expensive means of transportation for travelers, wares, and letters confined far more than now the knowledge of everyday events to the section and the generation in which they occurred.

The impression of far distant time left upon the mind in looking back a number of centuries varies with individuals, but in no instance does such an impression bear just proportion to the

actual difference in time between certain events. After the two or three centuries next to our own time, the duration of each century impresses the mind less and less, until a century two thousand years ago seems but a trifling period. Most of the canvas of a painting will be occupied with the foreground, while the many miles of the distant view will occupy but a narrow strip. So with the mind, it is doubtful if the impression of time long past differs greatly with the majority in looking back four hundred years from that of looking back two thousand. The time of Columbus seems as distant to many as does the time of Christ.

The Christian writers of the third or fourth century appear to us to have lived so near to Christ that we naturally give greater weight to their testimony and views, for they seem to be almost witnesses; while on their part Christ already seemed to have lived in a time quite as remote as it appears to us. They looked upon Christianity even then as *venerable with age and sanctified by time*. When the Fourth Gospel was written, more than a century had passed over the graves of those who had walked with Christ. An investigator then in Judea would have deemed it a curiosity to find an old man who, in his youth, had heard his great grandfather say that he, in his youth, remembered having seen Christ. One hundred and fifty years then took the followers of Christ nearly as far away from his time as we are to-day, so far as any ability to obtain new evidence was concerned.

Such as had previously been written was all there could be. It was not in their power to then find personal reminiscences of Jesus previously unknown. . Necessarily, there were more sources of information in the way of old manuscripts, but the church, directly or indirectly, suppressed those that were objectionable. It is reasonable to suppose that the lost gospels and other writings furnished evidence in refutation of those doctrines and assertions which the Fourth Gospel was intended to confirm. The truth need never fear investigation. Suppressed evidence is always in conflict with that which it is desirable to prove.

The circumstances under which that gospel was written were such as to call especial attention to everything wherein it differs from the others, for it was written at too late a date to be of any value, so far as additional testimony is concerned. Each difference is like a red signal, that points out a weakness which time has developed and which it is attempted to remedy.

When a person, either by word or act, attempts to make an event seem different from what it really was, he is attempting a work of art, and, though he may be skillful, he is quite sure to fail in some particular and thus betray that, for some purpose, he is seeking to make that which is not true seem to be true. This species of art is often resorted to in crime, and it is interesting to observe how difficult it has been to make even a simple, everyday act, which had not been done,

appear to have been done. The criminal invariably makes mistakes in which those who afterwards investigate are able to see exactly what he did, including his efforts to deceive. Many little details will be overlooked that become so many witnesses for the truth as against his carefully arranged system to establish a falsehood.

It is the same in the case of any false testimony. The mind is then so much occupied with the results that it is desired to bring about that it is incapable of imitating the disinterestedness and simplicity of truth. It is through this that such witnesses most frequently fail. They usually reach that which they wish to prove *too soon*; their anxiety is at once made manifest and they will affirm or deny before it is necessary. The most common fault with actors is to overdo their parts, and false witnesses fall into the same error.

In Acts of the Apostles it is disclosed that, long after the death of Christ, there were followers of John the Baptist, and it is evident that when the Fourth Gospel was written there was still such a body, or, at least, there were those who asserted that John did not acknowledge Jesus. The church was in great need of testimony to counteract this important fact, for it would not do to have it seen that the Baptist was antagonistic to Jesus. It was indispensable to the success of the church that the Baptist and his acts be absorbed into and made a part of its system. The Fourth Gospel exhibits a studied effort to cover this point, but overdoes the



work and through excess of zeal furnishes evidence of untrustworthiness. In every instance in which its author mentions John, the latter is represented, if it is possible, as giving this very testimony, which was so conspicuously absent from the synoptic gospels; while, on the other hand, he omits all the instances mentioned in those gospels in which Jesus is represented in an inferior position to John. He does not even mention the baptism of Jesus by John, and this omission is the more marked because he does mention the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, which was represented as occurring upon that occasion.

That gospel begins immediately upon this point. In the fifteenth verse of the first chapter the Baptist is made to say "This was he of whom I spake," meaning Jesus of course, though he was not pointed out or his name mentioned; that first appears in the seventeenth verse. Disciples of the Baptist would naturally assert that, if the Christ had come, it was John rather than Jesus. In refuting this, it would be natural that the mythical witnesses should be first made to represent John as denying that, he was the Christ. He is made to make such a denial in the following verses:

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou

Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you whom ye know not:

27 He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

The mind of the author of those verses was too much occupied with the opposition he was combating to suspect how unnatural and inconsistent his account would appear to those who knew nothing of such opposition. What was there to confess? What to not deny? Why so much emphasis on the word *confess*? and why such a word at all? Why was it necessary to assert that he was not the Christ?

This language is exactly in keeping with the end the author had in view, but as unlike as it well could be to such as John would have used had he really acknowledged Jesus. If Jesus had been all that his disciples said he was and John's relations to him had been as they represented, then it would have been his (John's) glory and pleasure

to both acknowledge and point him out with pride, nor would there have been any act of John's that would have made it even possible for any to mistake him for the Christ. Such a suspicion would not "come so near as to have to be denied."

There would be no occasion where he would have been more likely to proclaim Jesus as the Christ than when those priests and Levites were sent to question him. His previous reference to Jesus Christ shows that, according to that gospel, he then knew Jesus to be the Christ. John was baptizing beyond Jordan at the time, and his large following and the attending excitement would naturally beget just such an examination as this delegation of Pharisees is represented to have made; and it was probably known to those whom that gospel-writer was then addressing, for he puts ambiguous language into the mouth of John, not venturing to assert that he then designated Jesus, for it was probably too well known to the contrary. Their questions were upon this very point, and not to have then designated who it was that he asserted to be the Christ was equivalent to denying that it was Jesus. He then could have made the announcement with some degree of dignity, instead of first making it as set forth in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses.

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh

a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me.

This is the first instance in the New Testament in which John the Baptist is represented as directly admitting Jesus to be the one whose coming he foretold. According to Luke, John and Jesus were second cousins and of the same age, and they confined themselves to the same small section of country. Under such circumstances, this would have been a ridiculous *dénouement* following the excitement John had raised for him, its distinguished and popular leader, to thus point out a member of his own family, and one of his own followers, as the Christ. Nor would it have been true that he had come before, for Jesus must have been about and known to those people all his life as his cousin. The author takes occasion to have this much-desired testimony as full as possible by extending the announcement through the subsequent four verses, but in which mention of the baptism of Jesus by John is carefully avoided.

35 Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

From the time this was written until the present day, it has been read almost exclusively by those who believed that reading the Bible was an act of devotion and doubting any of it a wickedness that threatened them with hell fire. Under such circumstances, few would stop to picture to them-

selves the absurdity of these announcements, though it is clear that, had they been made as stated, they would have excited the ridicule of John's disciples, lost him much of his following, and destroyed the effect of his preaching.

But in one of the incidents related in the Fourth Gospel the writer weakened what he intended to strengthen. He discloses what was plain rivalry between John the Baptist and Jesus. The account is in the third chapter, commencing at the 22nd verse. Jesus and his disciples had come "into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized."

23 And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized.

\* \* \* \* \*

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

The gospel-writer could not state between some of John's disciples and the disciples of Jesus, for that would have surrendered the very point he was trying to cover. His writing "the Jews" instead shows especial thought and care on this point, for they were all Jews. Evidently this dispute was an assertion on the part of John's disciples that only his baptism would purify.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

Such a statement as this to John would have

been uncalled for if he had been setting forth Jesus as the Messiah; nor could there have been questions about purifying; nor would John have answered in the blind way of the subsequent verses. John's answer, even as given by the gospel-writer, does not show him as acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah, though it was so intended to be understood.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

“All believed in John as a prophet” and therefore that his inspiration came from heaven. The spirit of the 28th verse is that even he, with his experience and popularity, had not presumed to assert such a claim as had been made by this quite generally unknown man. The spirit of the 27th verse is that he knew nothing of Jesus having received any authority to baptize from heaven. At that time the relative positions of John and Jesus were the reverse of the positions given them now. It was John who was widely and favorably known, while Jesus had as yet attracted but few followers. After all the success that had evidently attended the ministration of John, he would not have spoken in riddles of Jesus had he been his Lord and Master, nor would he have had his own separate disciples and been holding separate camps in the same neighborhood.

This dispute about purification was natural, as

well as confirmatory of the theory that the temperance habits and doctrines of John were superior to those of Jesus. The latter asked but one condition of his followers, and that was to believe in him, in consideration of which he relieved them from the rigor of John's religion and from the Jewish superstition as well. He was censured for eating with publicans and sinners and for violating the Jewish Sabbath and customs; while in this instance his worthiness to baptize is disputed.

The Fourth Gospel also conflicts with the one only instance in the synoptic gospels wherein the Baptist is represented as acknowledging Jesus. Matthew represents John as knowing Jesus to be the Christ when he came to be baptized before entering the water, and protested at that time. But in the Fourth Gospel the Baptist is made to say (i, 33):

And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

According to this, the Baptist should not have known that Jesus was the Christ until the spirit descended like a dove, which is set forth as occurring after the baptism, when coming out of the water.

St. Augustine tries to explain this little oversight on the part of the author of the Fourth Gospel, but in doing so he simply cuts the difficulty in two

and divides it between the two gospel-writers. He says that John only partly knew Jesus when he came to be baptized, but fully knew him when the dove descended. By this he tries to make the statement in each gospel to be half a falsehood instead of one of them being wholly so.

The writer of Acts of the Apostles takes occasion to state that "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (xi, 26.) This little item must have been written long after the death of Christ, for none then expected that his religion would exist any great length of time. The Millerites, of a few years ago, had the same religion, but their fame did not become sufficient to induce any one to trace out their history and show where they were first called Millerites. Not until the Christians had become widely extended and possessed influence and power, would it be an item of interest to state where they were first called Christians.

The New Testament discloses that near where that name originated there were disciples of John the Baptist, between whom and the disciples of Jesus there was a warm controversy. The account is in Acts of the Apostles as follows:

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

24 And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scripture, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake



and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: Whom, when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

1 And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

How much of this account was changed when it was attached to the New Testament more than two hundred years later, we shall never know, but enough is exposed to show that there were then followers of John the Baptist who seemingly had not heard of Jesus. The free allusion to "John's baptism" shows that it was still well known by that name, and it is seen that such baptism was not recognized as a Christian ceremony. The fourth verse exhibits Paul asserting the very point at issue, that is, that Christ Jesus was the one whom John referred to. A faint pretense is made that Apollos was won over to belief in Jesus, but other expressions and attending circumstances show that this was not true, which is more fully confirmed in certain passages in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians.

Aquila, who is only known as a tent-maker with whom Paul boarded, is represented as taking in Apollos, "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, \* \* \* and expounding unto him the way of God more perfectly."

This expounding, which the holy writer passes over so slightly, embraced the whole question of

the divinity of Christ. It covered nearly all the difference that existed between Jews and Christians. The explanation was nothing less than convincing Apollos that the Messiah had already come and gone in the person of a certain unknown man among John's followers. This little statement implies that Apollos, a learned man, a disciple of John the Baptist, and a Jew, was now, several years after the crucifixion, still ignorant of Jesus and of those wonderful events related of him and was being instructed by an inferior of events and doctrines within the body in which he occupied a leading position, but of which events and doctrines he knew nothing.

However, the Christian system demands that wide latitude be given the Bible and we are expected to confidently accept this as a miraculous conversion of Apollos. But subsequent records are not favorable to such a conclusion. When he went to Achaia the brethren wrote, "exhorting the disciples to receive him." It would not have been necessary to *exhort* had he been one of them; but such a request was natural on the part of one who was not a brother member, but agreed with them to this extent, that like them he was a Jew and a believer in the sentiments taught by John the Baptist.

In chapter xviii, 19, it is stated that Paul came to Ephesus, where Apollos came also. But Paul left and Apollos went to other parts. Paul then returned to Ephesus, the writer explaining that

Apollos had then gone to Corinth. It was during this second visit of Paul to Ephesus that he labored with those disciples who knew only John's baptism. This has an appearance of Paul having avoided Apollos and taken advantage of his absence to return and, if possible, win over John's disciples to the Christian church. "After disputing three months he *separated the disciples.*" If this was a separation of the disciples from the Pagans, then why did Paul remain and contend a year and nine months longer? and with whom was he contending? and for what was he contending, if his hearers were only his own party? Paul had been preaching in other places; but here, where there were disciples of John, he finds unusual cause for excitement and long-continued strife. The *separation of the disciples* could only have been the separation of the disciples of Jesus from those of John after a failure to unite.

Long after the word *Christians* originated, the pagan world knew that religion only as the *Jewish superstition*. To have named its adherents *Christians* involved a more intimate knowledge of their origin and internal affairs than those outside of the church were likely to possess. That superstition would attract attention as a body long before the indifferent polytheists would trouble themselves to know its origin or the name of its founder. A little passage by Tertullian shows that at the end of the second century the Romans were still unfamiliar with the word *Christians*. The suprem-

acy of the Church of Rome was established at about that time, and that event would naturally attract somewhat more attention to them. But so little had the Romans heard of Christians that they confounded the name of the man from whom the word was derived with Chrestus, a citizen having an excellent reputation, and they called them *Chrestians*. Tertullian said:

If you call us *Christians*, you bear witness to the name of our master; if you call us *Chrestians*, you testify to the blamelessness of our lives. •

He also, upon another occasion, directly declared that "Not even of the name is there any certain knowledge among you."<sup>1</sup>

The Jews also had a name for them. They were called *Nazarenes* and are so referred to in the New Testament (Acts xxiv, 5,) after the time of its notice of their being called Christians. That name was perfectly natural and would apply to all in the new movement commenced by John. Even Christ himself had been and still is designated as Jesus of Nazareth. It was an appropriate name and one that would not be likely to be changed without cause. The name of *Christians* plainly came from within the body referred to and originated as is usual in all such cases. It was a name given to distinguish the followers of Christ from a similar body that were not his followers. It was not only a natural, but an unavoidable distinction to make between those of John's

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, by Rev. C. Dodgson, M.A.

followers who believed in Christ and those who did not.

Nearly the whole of Paul's two Epistles to the Corinthians are in an exhorting, complaining, soliciting spirit. The church there was evidently following other leaders and Paul was trying to reconcile them to himself. He writes much of Apollos, particularly in the first and third chapters of the first Epistle. He indites quite a philippic against wisdom and learning, as though through them he had encountered some serious difficulty, which is all the more probable as Apollos was there from time to time and he "was an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures." Learning and science were evidently troubling Paul much in those later times when Christianity was beginning to receive some little attention. In his First Epistle to Timothy (vi, 20, 21) he cautions him to avoid "oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing, have erred concerning the faith."

Paul feared the effect upon Timothy of learned men and was unwilling to trust him with them. In the first chapter of I Corinthians Paul says:

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

From this it will be seen that there were some at Corinth who were under the leadership of Apollos, some under Paul, and all not necessarily disciples of Christ, as his followers are designated as though of a separate class. Notice, too, that Paul seems to be defending himself from a charge of having baptized.

As long as there were disciples of John the Baptist, baptizing with water would be a ceremony appertaining more particularly to them, and any practice of it on the part of Christians would be claimed by them as equivalent to an acknowledgment of John's supremacy. His baptism was emblematic of the washing away of sins, and the ceremony would not necessarily involve the use of any name but the one employed in performing it. On such occasions, they would naturally commence with the words I, John, or I, Apollos, or I, Paul, etc. The fact that disciples of Christ practiced baptism with water shows within itself the source of their origin, for John had said that the one to follow after would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Their use of John's baptism, therefore, was inconsistent with

their pretensions and would naturally call out taunts from those of John's disciples who rejected Christ. This would in turn drive the Christians to change this feature of their baptism and consecrate it to Christ by performing the ceremony in his name, or, as it is now done, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, an order to do which has been attached to the end of the Gospel of Matthew. It had evidently been too much identified with them and was too popular to be abandoned.

This change had evidently not been made, but Paul's words were answers to criticisms that in time led to it. His fear of being supposed to have baptized in his own name was simply his defense against a charge of imitating and following John.

The words of Paul, just quoted, and several other passages in the New Testament would have been omitted when that book was issued, except that it was unnecessary, since the existence of the several questions they referred to was then known and the meaning was clear to its readers. But, in the many centuries since, the church has had ample time to suppress all outward evidence of the very existence of those questions. Acts of this nature have long been looked upon as pious. Even in our day, if some evidence should be unearthed showing that John the Baptist did not acknowledge Jesus, our prominent churchmen would deem it their most Christian duty to conceal and suppress accounts of such newly discovered facts.



But, while suppressing this knowledge, the church turned so many eyes upon the New Testament that it was then impossible to wholly erase the passages referring to those suppressed questions, and, consequently, that book contains all the evidence remaining of their existence. But the orthodox Christian must devoutly look for a pious meaning in those passages and must equally ignore the facts they expose. To do this, he has to erect complicated theories and doctrines to account for the unimportant contention and follies of ignorance and superstition.

In the whole of the fourth chapter (I Cor.), Paul is evidently urging his cause as against Apollos, and in the 16th verse he writes: "Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me." His beseeching is very marked in the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle. He reminds them that he had been no expense to them and writes (8th): "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." His expression in the 6th verse—"but though I be rude of speech"—indicates that the *eloquence* of Apollos had created an unfavorable contrast against Paul. Command of language, however, was one of Paul's strongest mental powers. The 4th and 5th verses are as follows:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

The Baptist stood to his disciples in quite the same relation that Christ did to his and if another Christ was preached to the Corinthians it could only have been John. It has been seen that the author of the Fourth Gospel deemed it necessary to represent John as denying that he was the Christ. In those two verses Paul was asserting that he had preached all that John's disciples did, and more. He preached John the Baptist and Jesus also.

In I Cor. xv, Paul repeats the story of the resurrection and was evidently trying to convince them that it was true, which is inconsistent with the supposition that those he was addressing were believers in Christ, for that was a fundamental article of their faith; but it is consistent with those people being followers of John, for to them the resurrection would be one of the most important points at issue and it is perfectly natural that Paul should be asserting it to them and enumerating the witnesses as represented. In the 12th verse he writes, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" an expression that could not have been used to Christians. It shows that this was disputed, as would certainly be the case, by John's disciples.

Other passages in these two epistles show Paul's desire to conciliate the Corinthians and indicate that, though partly with him in sentiment, they

nevertheless had not all accepted his doctrines about Christ.

John the Baptist was, within the system, the most important man among the Christians after Christ, and, if he had taken the position they said he had, it would have been natural for Paul to write much of him, particularly in his Epistles to the Hebrews, among whom John was popular; but Paul makes no allusion to him whatever in that epistle and seldom does anywhere, which is natural when it is considered that he had so much angry contention about him.

The New Testament sets forth perfect harmony between Christ's followers and those of John, and therefore between Paul and Apollos; but that the compilers would under any circumstances be very careful to do. Christ had been baptized by John and had imitated him in preaching that the "Kingdom of heaven is at hand," and had made a record so closely identified with him as to make it imperative that harmonious relations be represented as existing between them. The success of Christianity at an early day must have been dependent upon this, and hence they eliminated and interpolated sufficient to force a seeming agreement. Every word relating to John is intended to indicate perfect harmony with Christ, but those words are constantly found in connection with circumstances which were inconsistent with such pretended harmony.

The whole account of both Jesus and John is

necessarily very meager, but the little we have is, as shown, in favor of John. Sentiments consistent with his habits and not consistent with those of Jesus are credited in the gospels to the latter, though it is probable that part of the best sentiments of the New Testament did not originate even with John, but were obtained from the Essenes, to which sect he may have belonged. After John's death it is evident that Jesus secured many of his proselytes and reaped eventually the fame of his labors. Even the idea of assuming to be the one whose coming John had predicted may have been suggested by that prediction and the opportunity it offered. Like the careers of most men, that of Jesus was the result of circumstances. His relationship to the Baptist or some other cause gave him sufficient prominence among those people to induce him to make the attempt. It is possible he experienced some rivalry in the man Judas mentioned in Acts v, 37. The reasons that suggest this will be given in another chapter. In this connection it is worthy of note that Jesus had a brother Judas (Matt. xiii, 55), who, therefore, would have had the same claim through his relationship to John that Jesus had.

On the other hand John undoubtedly found his incentive for the movement he originated in the recent formation of the vast Roman empire and the absorption of Judea into it. The Jewish religion was founded upon their monstrous conceit that they were God's chosen people, "a royal

priesthood, an holy nation," and that He had them under His special care to the exclusion of all others. They looked upon any event affecting their country as having been brought about by the Almighty solely with reference to themselves. With such views, the subjugation of Judea and occupation of Jerusalem by a power so great would be events second only in importance to the end of the little world they knew.

By a little ingenuity, a few other circumstances of slight importance could be coupled with the great event referred to, by which the superstition of that people could be acted upon and they be made to believe, in accordance with their traditions, that the time had come for the appearance of the Messiah and the coming of the kingdom of heaven. These are plainly the influences that governed the actions of John the Baptist in movements which ultimately culminated in Christianity and account for the so nearly coincident beginning of that religion and the Roman empire.

The divine honors that have since been given Jesus were slowly developed during the subsequent two centuries, and the enormous interest that became dependent upon those honors enforced public acquiescence with a power compared to which his personal efforts would have sunk into insignificance. That interest elevated belief in his divinity into a virtue of the highest magnitude and plagiarized from mythology a reason for so doing.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CAUSE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

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THE New Testament supplies evidence that Christ did not die upon the cross, but was taken down while yet alive. His credulous followers, who had previously believed any simple assertion, would be wholly carried away by seeing him among them after being crucified or by even finding his tomb empty. Such an event would have turned their heads completely. Christianity seems to center around the crucifixion and resurrection, and may, in the latter connection, be founded upon a semblance of fact.

The evidence bearing upon this point grows out of the circumstance that the authorities did not wish to put Jesus to death. The Jews had superstitious ideas regarding the death penalty and wanted the Romans to commit the act. The charge was evidently for permitting himself to be proclaimed King of the Jews and exciting an uprising in support of that pretense. But his standing and following were such as to make that pretension merely ridiculous. For this alone he would not have been crucified. Pilate did not consider him worthy of death and tried to save his life. He

said: "I find no fault with this man" (Luke xxiii, 4), and tried to avoid the responsibility by sending him to Herod. But Herod also saw no occasion for putting him to death and returned him to Pilate. Pilate again said:

## LUKE XXIII.

14 I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man. \* \* \*

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him:

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

\* \* \* \* \*

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

22 And he [Pilate] said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him; I will, therefore, chastise him and let him go.

## JOHN XIX.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar.

## MATTHEW XXVIII.

24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

It will be seen that the Jews threatened to complain of Pilate to the Roman Emperor for re-

fusing to take cognizance of a man with quite a large following, who permitted himself to be proclaimed King of the Jews in defiance of Roman authority. The possibility of this would be likely to have considerable effect upon Pilate. He consequently reluctantly yielded against his better judgment, and was undoubtedly all the more ready to allow Jesus to be taken down from the cross without certainty of death, if indeed he did not arrange to have it done before death.

Joseph of Arimathea is described by Matthew, Mark, and Luke collectively as an honorable counselor, a just, good, and rich man, "who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them." He was just such a man as would be likely to have Pilate's confidence and not to be carried away by popular clamor. He occupied a social position superior to that of the followers of Jesus, and, though for the part he took in this event he is claimed as a disciple, it is not at all probable that he was such. Had it been true, he would have been heard of later. The mockery and abuse that had just been heaped upon Jesus would naturally arouse the sympathies of the better class of citizens, and out of this probably grew all the interest Joseph felt in the matter, unless he had been secretly commissioned by Pilate to do as he did.

Men upon the cross would live twelve hours and sometimes longer, but Jesus was taken down in three or (by one account) six hours. When Joseph begged the body of Jesus, "Pilate marveled



if he were already dead." (Mark xv, 44.) The soldiers "broke the legs of the two crucified with him, "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs." (John xix, 33.)

If the two were plainly dead, then why was this omitted with Jesus? If they were not dead, then Jesus was taken down at a time when the malefactors, being still alive, were killed by breaking their legs. In these acts the same authorities who opposed putting Jesus to death were doing what they could to prevent the consummation of that deed. They consented to it only to appease the people, and would naturally try to save his life without attracting attention. John says one of the soldiers pierced his side, "and forthwith came thereout *blood* and water," but this is not mentioned in any of the other gospels, and if done at all it could have been done under orders in such a way as to make but a slight wound. Only that gospel has reference to the wound after the resurrection or has a statement of his being dead already. The facts, however, go to show that, wherever that gospel differs from the others, such difference is adverse rather than favorable to the truth of that which it would prove.

The authorities plainly hastened to take Jesus from the cross, which was done evidently after dark, and they retained his body in their own keeping, even to the exclusion of his own relatives. It was a simple matter, also, for them to deceive

the people as to his being deposited in the sepulcher. But that is immaterial. If he appeared afterwards, it was because he was resuscitated; and such an appearance would have produced a more powerful impression upon the minds of his simple followers than could have been effected in any act of his whole life. Even a mysterious disappearance of the body would have seemed to them a supernatural event.

Judge Waite, in his *History of the Christian Religion*, states that—

Jesus was on the cross from three to six hours. Even the latter period was much less than usual. Persons crucified generally linger at least twelve hours and sometimes two or three days. The remarkably short time that he remained upon the cross before being taken down by his disciples has led some writers to adopt the theory of suspended animation, to account for the supposed resurrection of his body.

(The body of Jesus was not taken down by his disciples, but by Joseph of Arimathea, in whose care it remained.)

But whence came this enmity to Christ on the part of the people? If the authorities were indifferent to the claim of his being King of the Jews, then certainly that should not have troubled them. Preaching and baptizing will not account for it, for John the Baptist had been doing the same thing, and both the New Testament and Josephus show that he was popular. And yet the people were extremely bitter against Jesus, so

much so that they gave the preference to Barabbas, a murderer, and had him released while insisting upon the death of Christ.

In those times poverty must have been greater than it is now and the supply of food always a more uncertain question. Poor crops would necessarily reduce thousands to pinching poverty who might be comfortable in other years. A large number of Christ's followers went constantly with him from place to place, and necessarily did nothing in their own support. They had been made to believe that the kingdom of heaven was near at hand, and hence would necessarily be indifferent to their future wants. In our own time we have numerous instances of Second Adventists sacrificing property under the same belief as that of the early Christians. If people possessing moderate intelligence can do such things in these enlightened times, how much more probable it is that there would be large numbers of such among a superstitious people whose narrow idea of the universe would make such an expected event seem much less improbable.

What the effect must be of a large body of idle men with such views traveling about the country with limited or no provision made for their support, must be obvious. The accounts of the miraculous feeding of large numbers and the frequent famines in which hunger figures in the New Testament point to what must have been a constant condition with them.

That book exposes, what must necessarily have been the case, that there were depredations upon other people's property. Such a body also would naturally draw in the vicious class, whose greater depredations would contribute to Christ's unpopularity. But many, if not all, of those followers would look lightly upon the rights of others when the possession of property was to be of short duration. The frequent tirades against the rich in the New Testament indicate the spirit that actuated them.

Observe the incident mentioned in Matthew xii, 1 to 8, where Jesus and his disciples—

Went on the Sabbath-day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

This is something no farmer would submit to, even in our day, when the supply of food is far more sure. That the incident is mentioned at all shows that there were complaints as is stated, and probably of a serious character. The account has, however, been shaped to convey the idea that the complaint was made because the act was done on the Sabbath-day. But, if that was all, the incident of plucking the grain need not have been mentioned. It is not likely that their laws or religious ideas were so rigid as to make this act alone one in conflict with them. Josephus says of the Essenes that "They were stricter than any other Jews in resting from their labor on the seventh day," which shows that there were vary-

ing degrees of veneration and customs for that day.

The answer of Jesus was one of justification for the act and was to the effect that he was Lord and above the law. After citing David and the temple, he said—

But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple; \* \* \* for the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day.

Such an answer as this could not have been otherwise than exasperating to those who felt only contempt for his divine pretensions. To them he was but an obscure and unknown man; but he announced himself to be superior to what they most cherished and under self-asserted divine authority excused his followers in violating their rights. This manner, also, of appeasing their appetite indicates a degree of hunger bordering upon starvation.

The incident of the fig tree is another example of this kind. It is improbable that in that country at that time there were fig trees that were public property. Going to it from afar off implies great hunger, which is all the more marked by the anger and condemnation called forth upon finding the tree barren. The supernatural power, also, that could make it wither ought to have known before going to it that it bore no fruit.

According to Matthew (viii, 34) Jesus and his disciples were besought to depart out of their

coast by the people upon the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee.

In John vi, 26, he is represented to have accused the multitude with having sought him because he fed them. Such an object and such a charge could only have been possible with a vagrant population.

Notice the following as given in the synoptic gospels:

MATTHEW XXI.

1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethpage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

MARK XI.

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

LUKE XIX.

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a

colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

Clearly the owner did not freely surrender the ass. He would naturally be intimidated by the passing "multitude," and dared not make an energetic protest.

Those who have been schooled to look upon Jesus as a God will see nothing objectionable in this manner of obtaining the ass, but it is not such an act as to favorably impress unbelievers. This violation of the tenth commandment does not look like rendering "unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's." Such acts as this always attend the movements of even moderately large bodies of men and are anything but divine. It will be noticed that an account of this incident is omitted from the Fourth Gospel.

Four thousand men were represented to have been miraculously fed at one time, and five thousand at another. The question the Roman officer asked Paul and the allusion to the following of an Egyptian, by Josephus (to which further reference will be made), indicate that the multitude which accompanied Jesus when he entered Jerusalem, and probably during a short time before, was from

four to five thousand men. To those ignorant people the leader of such a body would seem to occupy a position of grandeur and glory, particularly when we consider how small they supposed the universe to be and the vast importance their little country bore to it. The citizens near where such a body of men were miraculously fed would have, in their depleted stocks and damaged property, a double reason for disbelieving those miracles.

And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. (Matt. iv, 25.)

This was *the multitude* that enabled Jesus to take temporary possession of the temple, which, more than any other act of his, was the probable cause of his crucifixion. It was the culmination of a series of exasperating acts and pretensions. The temple was very sacred to the Jews and formed an important part of their religion, and to have it thus violated and taken from them was unendurable. When Paul's life, years afterwards, was endangered by the people, the charges then made show the Jewish sensitiveness upon that point. They said:

This is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further, brought Greeks also into the temple: and hath polluted this holy place. (Acts xxi, 28.)



Jesus was questioned by the chief priests and elders as to his authority in thus taking possession of the temple. (Matt. xxi, 23.)

That Jesus had possession for a time is apparent, because the first day, and by one account the second day also, the chief priests and scribes did not lay hands upon him because they feared the people (Matt. xxi, 46; Luke xxii, 2), which people must at that time have been those who came with him. When authority was restored it was the people (or citizens) who demanded his crucifixion. The betrayal by Judas consisted in letting the Jews know when and where Jesus could be found away from the multitude that attended him.

And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. (Luke xxii, 6.)

In Mark xv, 3, it is stated that the chief priests accused Jesus of many things, which shows that claiming he was King of the Jews was not the only charge, and the popularity of John the Baptist shows that there would have been no charges for acts of a merely religious nature. The depredations attending those movements through the country must have been serious and could not have done otherwise than raise the outcry that existed when they reached Jerusalem. These, with the superadded invasion of the temple, angered the people against Jesus to such a degree that they enforced his crucifixion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST.

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ALTHOUGH the explanatory doctrines of the Christian system are inseparable from belief in the divinity of Christ and a great insult to God is embraced in those explanations, that belief is nevertheless the last article of faith that is abandoned. Liberal Christian writers will show the unreliability of the gospels and prove that those explanatory doctrines, in the light of the present day, no longer explain, but will still admit that Christ in some undefined manner rendered the world invaluable service. But the simple assertion as to the divinity of Christ cannot stand alone; that assertion calls for explanations and the system must stand or fall upon those which it has so long employed. All its great financial and social success throughout the Christian era has been obtained, not by the simple belief that Christ was the Son of God, but by the terrors of those doctrines consequent upon that belief. It is now far too late to substitute new theories; if those old ones are false no reason remains for believing in Christ's divinity, and if there is no known reason why we should believe in Christ, then we should not bur-

den religion with a meaningless belief that stultifies reason and unnecessarily divides the power of God.

But, however inconsistent this may be, as viewed through the faculty of reason, it is natural when other mental powers are considered. I shall endeavor to show elsewhere how it is that the public mind is made to be conservative and reliable in its opinions. Individuals may be flighty, but the mental progress of the public at large is slow and sure, and it is the law that secures this that superinduces the seeming inconsistency referred to. It must be remembered that people are not made to believe in Christian doctrines through any convincing statements in the Bible; that book is incidental to faith, not the cause of it. On the contrary, its statements are now the Christian's greatest stumbling-block, so serious that liberal thinkers are unable to get over them and therefore reject them as false. But, as faith did not come through them, so, with their rejection, faith remains. When faith is once established through the causes elsewhere stated, the imagination becomes the great factor in sustaining the system, and its free action is secured better without than with the Bible. When, therefore, the liberal Christian cuts off as false the basis of those explanatory doctrines, but still clings to faith in Christ, his imagination has a wider instead of a narrower field over which to roam in adulation of him. With such men *the teachings of Christ* remain the one great favorite

theme, not because there are records of those wonderful teachings, but because there are no records of them.

The much lauded moral sentiments of the New Testament are commonplace and, if lost, would be again originated in the minds of thousands. Some of the expressions of Christ, also, are vague and susceptible of various interpretations. He seemed seldom to speak in a direct manner. Even simple questions he would answer by figures that could be adapted to a variety of sentiments, according to the bias and intelligence of the believer. Take as an instance the following, given in John xii, 35, 36. He had been asked if he would live forever, as it was expected Christ would.

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed and did hide himself from them.

This can be fitted to almost anything except the question it was supposed to answer. Its very want of meaning well adapts it for all classes and all times, and for that reason it and other sayings similar to it have been favorite texts from which broad or narrow ideas could be drawn, according to the capacity of the preacher. Nothing is known of Jesus except what is related in the New Testa-

ment. His sayings at most were few, and if his teachings were so wonderful it should be easy to designate the exact lines for which mankind are so much indebted and would not otherwise have known.

When believers are pressed to do this they refer to trifling passages that at best are but partly good. The Sermon on the Mount is chiefly pointed out, but it is no exception. If it was ever delivered as given in Matthew, why did not all the other gospels have it, as it was their most important and obvious duty to record his teachings?

Among the first manifestations of feeling in that sermon is a narrow hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees, together with sentiments the opposite of those of supposed Christianity. He said in effect that, no matter how righteous they might be, they should not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. v, 20.) His exceeding bitterness against this class was of a low order of human nature, instead of being Godlike. It is all the more *unchristianlike* when we consider that they were the better class of his own countrymen and professed the same religion he did, except that they rejected his divine pretensions. But in the 44th verse he rushes to the opposite extreme and says, "Love your enemies," an admonition in direct conflict with the above, and one that has never been peculiar to his followers; nor is it one of nature's laws.

Christianity has expended a vast amount of sen-

timent over this saying of Christ, claiming it to be quite the personification of goodness. But this requirement is not good, desirable, nor possible; and, though the Church has boasted so much over it as a sentiment peculiar to Christianity, the law that governed it through many centuries, judging from its practices, was to *torture and burn your fellow Christian who slightly differs from you on points of doctrine*. There never has existed a body of men in which there was less of the universal brotherhood of mankind than was manifested by these professed Christians during many centuries of the Christian era.

Our likes and dislikes are not wholly at our command. Our enemies do not expect or desire our love. We cannot love our enemies and our families and country at the same time, for our enemies are often such because they would deprive us of the one or the other. This life is a school in which to test the mind, and some of its grandest efforts have been drawn out in contentions and conflicts with enemies. Men often win the great respect of their enemies by the qualities they exhibit in contending with them. If it were universal for the good to love their enemies, the world would be possessed by thieves and robbers, while the good would pass a life of imbecility and poverty.

This admonition to love your enemies and the one similar to it, to "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to

him the other also" (Matt. v, 39), are given as original with Christ and are held up as an embodiment of Christian virtue. Those words, however, give but an exaggerated description of amiability. The spirit is good, but the demanded exhibition of it is carried to an absurd extreme. The good that is implied in the sentiment is sufficient to command commendation, while the actual requirement has been sufficiently impracticable to prevent any disposition to dispute its originality, and it therefore remains Christianity's own. It is true the Essenes expressed and practiced the same sentiments in the same exaggerated manner, but they are all dead, and Christianity alone remains to teach that if a man strikes us on one cheek we must turn to him the other also.

Christians will admit their inability to perfectly follow this law; that, indeed, it was because of their inability, in part, that Christ came to save us and that he alone was perfect. But when we search the Scriptures, when we seek in that source of strange guidance to perfection for illustration and example, when we turn to him whose life was about to be offered a ransom for a sinful world, we find that in that all-important hour the blow came, and Jesus, lo! even Jesus resented it. He did not turn the other cheek, but he indignantly resented it. And his most holy historian, his most treasured friend, upon whose divine utterances the church has built most of its doctrines, that favored apostle, whose life (the church would have us

believe) was prolonged that he might write his gospel, hastens to explain, in parenthesis, that Jesus was bound, which explanation can be for no other reason than to show that Jesus could not resist the blow physically. (John xviii, 23, 24.)

This explanation is the more marked when we take into consideration the fact that the holy writer had already given this information in the 12th verse of the same chapter. The idea conveyed by this 24th verse is perfectly clear. The author particularly desired to impress upon the mind of his readers the fact that Jesus was bound, and, consequently, not censurable for simply verbally resenting a blow he could not return.

I have no means of learning how long it had been customary to print this verse in parenthesis; it is enough that all Bibles were so printed a short time ago and that the curved lines are always omitted now. I have seen those marks in no edition printed since about 1850 and have found them omitted from but one edition printed before (1825). This is probably an act of the American Bible Society. With those lines omitted, the mind of a reader would be less likely to be arrested by the passage and the nature of the gospel-writer's explanation, and the change was undoubtedly made for that reason.

The late revisers of the New Testament were also keenly alive to the importance of correcting this great oversight of the *inspired* writer. They changed the time, but, in so doing, rob the pas-



sage of any necessity for its presence in the book at all. Originally the verse was inserted thus:

24 (Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.)

In the revised edition it is inserted as follows:

24 Annas *therefore sent* him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Reference to the chapter will show that, by this alteration, those revisers aim to make it appear that not until after the blow was Jesus bound and sent to Caiaphas; and, consequently, that the events related between the 12th and 24th verses were in the presence of Annas. In the 12th and 13th verses it is stated that Jesus was bound "And led away to Annas first, (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year)."

But it is plain that the writer intended to be understood as leaving Jesus in the presence of Caiaphas from that verse. Immediately after and throughout the examination, the high priest is constantly referred to; he is represented, in the 19th verse, as asking a question as to his doctrines, and, finally, Jesus was struck for "answering the high priest so." The verse as falsified by the revisers is an unnatural and contradictory repetition, while as originally given its meaning is clear. And, finally, with the 24th verse wholly expunged, as well as the account of Christ's verbal resent-

ment, there still remains a necessity to explain why he did not turn the other cheek.

Much has been said of the great delicacy those revisers employed in their work. All parts were studiously gone over by an American and an English board separately and an agreement reached before any part of the new version was accepted. Their treatment of this most serious difficulty shows that such delicacy as they had was expended only upon points of doctrine within the system; but, as to that which reflected upon the truth of the whole, they were a unit in destroying those records that they claimed were so sacred.

As we see the tracks of a fox around the food it had tried to steal, so do we see in these eliminations and interpolations where the minds of influential Christians have revolved around and dwelt upon this insurmountable obstacle. They have plainly keenly felt this objection, for their belief would not permit them to tamper with the Bible without most serious provocation. The gospel-writers' explanation was human, but they had been representing Jesus as more than human, that he was divine and taught the lofty sentiment to resist not evil, but when smitten upon one cheek to turn the other also; and now to have it shown that, in the great crisis of his life, he failed to illustrate his teachings by an example, is a glaring inconsistency, dangerous to the support of modern Christianity. These men do not come forward and honestly set forth this difficulty and try to ex-

plain it, but they surreptitiously foist upon the public their alterations. They saw it touched Christianity in its most vital point and they sought to hide it from view.

Much of the Sermon on the Mount is found scattered throughout the Gospel of Luke. Sometimes there are six or eight consecutive verses and in other instances but one. The longest is represented as having been given in the same section of the country (near Capernaum) as stated in Matthew, but seemingly upon a different occasion. All the remainder found in Luke gives the parts in different places and at different times. As given in Matthew, it has been much improved, enlarged, and in part *christianized*. In doing this, the original revisers of the Gospel of Matthew left out certain parts that are in Luke, and one important verse, often quoted (Matt. v, 17), is made to give the exactly opposite meaning from the version in Luke. The Lord's prayer is enlarged and made more complete and made to appear as though given voluntarily; but, according to Luke, it was given at the solicitation of the disciples to "Teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples."

In the sixth chapter of Luke, from the 20th to the 49th verses, inclusive, are both the beginning and ending of the sermon, and it is evidently, according to that gospel, all there was of it. The blessings, with which the sermon begins, are fewer in number, and each is reversed by a curse for the opposite of those who were blessed. The

word "now" is left out of Matthew and the words "after righteousness" are substituted. This is an important alteration, for Jesus taught his followers that the events he predicted would take place within the lifetime of those then living. This part of Luke is as follows:

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But wo unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25 Wo unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Wo unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

The 15th verse of the fifth chapter of Matthew is repeated twice in Luke (Chap. viii, 15, 16, 17, and xi, 33). Luke xi, 9 to 13, inclusive, is inserted in the sermon in Matthew. Also, Luke xii, 22 to 35, is mostly inserted, though the 32d verse is omitted. It is:

Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

In the sermon as given in Matthew is the following (v, 17):

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

In Luke, the opposite of this is given in the twelfth chapter:

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.

The 58th and 59th verses are also inserted in the sermon in Matthew; also, the 34th verse of chapter xiv and the 18th verse of chapter xvi, but, in Matthew, an important interpolation was made in the latter. In Luke, it reads:

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.

The words inserted in Matthew (v, 32) indicate the careful revision that gospel received from some source, for human nature demands that adultery be a sufficient cause for divorce.

In Matthew viii, 4, Jesus is represented to have directed a man whom he was said to have miraculously cured of leprosy to practice a deception, if not to state that which was not true. The passage has probably been distorted, but such sense as it yet contains shows that Jesus directed the man to misrepresent the manner of his cure. His words as given are:

And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Jesus is represented in John vii, 8th to 10th verses, to have deceived his disciples by stating that he would not go up to the feast, for his time had not yet full come. But he did go as soon as his disciples left.

If the sentiments of Jesus were so superior to anything before his age as to be conspicuous even now, then the contrast at that time must have been much more marked. But the early Christians did not know of or seek converts through any such pretense. For proof of the divinity of Christ they relied upon the supernatural. Among the ignorant part of the ancients and with savages in all times, sickness was coupled with their superstition. Its coming and going were mysterious to them, and they attributed it to the direct interposition of the gods. Hence all the miracles of Jesus were stated to have been with reference to healing the sick or feeding his starving followers. It was those miracles only that they offered as proof of his divinity.

The miracles said to have been worked by Christ and his apostles were trifling as compared with those said to have been performed by church dignitaries in the first several centuries of the Christian era, and the evidence that they were ever performed is still more trifling. Gibbon states

that intelligent men challenged certain leaders to work, before acceptable witnesses, even one of their boasted miracles, agreeing, if they were successful, to join them. But they could not do so. He further states that those early fathers who were said to work miracles did not know of or make such pretenses for themselves.

Christianity is weakened among intelligent men by this pretense of supernatural evidence, and very many Christians now deny that any miracles were ever performed. The voluminous work entitled *Supernatural Religion* gives a comprehensive review of all the evidence and probabilities bearing upon this subject.

The limited account of Jesus is too short to fully confirm any personal characteristic, though there is some evidence of certain peculiarities, and meekness does not appear to be one of them. He seemed to have a habit of interspersing his remarks with the expression "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." It is found three times in Matthew, twice in one chapter (xi, 15; xiii, 9, 43), and the same, slightly altered, in xv, 10. It is three times repeated in Mark, one instance being on a different occasion from either of those in Matthew. Authors and actors usually exaggerate any known peculiarities of those they are depicting. The author of *Revelation* pretends to have seen Jesus in the spirit and to have received the instructions set forth in the second and third chapters of that book. In doing this he would

endeavor to imitate the style of Jesus so far as known, and would most likely overdo it, as is usual in such cases. In those two chapters this expression is repeated seven times, indicating that the writer understood that form of expression to be characteristic with Jesus.

He used a meaningless expression twice under similar circumstances when speaking blindly (for his hearers) of his divine pretensions. It is, "If you will learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and will not sacrifice." (Matt. ix, 13; xii, 7.)

A more full and distinct expression of moral sentiments was one of the early wants developed by the growing church. With its revision of the gospels it evidently inserted enough to help it out in its creeds and to increase the limited reported sayings of Jesus. But they were incapable of making much improvement. His recorded sentiments are as often the exact opposite of what we now call Christianity as the contrary. This is illustrated in the following:

Matthew x, 34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Luke xvii, 1. It is impossible but that offenses will come; but wo unto him through whom they come.

Luke xi, 37. And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner.



39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

\* \* \* \* \*

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also.

In Matthew xxvi, 23, Christ says: "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish." This exposes a habit that would justify the Pharisee in marveling that he had not washed before dinner.

Matthew xii, 1. At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

Mark iv, 10. And when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable.

(Asked him to explain the meaning of his parable of the sower and the seed.)

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.

12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Matthew xv, 22. And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.

Luke xiv, 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Jesus is represented as consigning people and cities to perdition for very slight reasons. In some places half of a chapter will be of this nature. Those cities that would not accept the doctrines of his disciples were in particular included in his condemnation. He said, "Brothers shall deliver up brothers to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my sake." The twenty-third chapter of Matthew is mostly given up to curses of this nature, seven or eight of the verses beginning with the words, "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Two verses in particular ought to be noticed, as the spirit of them is in even more marked contrast to that which is claimed as the Christian spirit. The men alluded to were of the better class and it seems zealous workers in their religion, which was the same as Christ's except that they neither believed in nor associated with him. He said (Matt. xxiii, 14, 15):

Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

The words *meek and lowly* became attached to Jesus through his own assertion to that effect (Matt. xi, 29); the matter of the New Testament otherwise would not suggest them.

The following I believe to be a complete list of all the expressions of Jesus recorded in the gospels in which there are either blessings or expressions of an opposite nature.

## BLESSINGS.

## DENUNCIATIONS.

## MATTHEW.

V, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,  
 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 44.  
 XI, 28.  
 XIII, 15.  
 XVI, 17.

VIII, 12.  
 X, 15, 34, 35, 36.  
 XI, 21, 22, 23, 24.  
 XIII, 50.  
 XVIII, 6, 7.  
 XXIII, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,  
 19, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33.  
 XXIV, 7, 19.

## MARK.

X, 16.

III, 29.  
 IX, 42.  
 XII, 40.  
 XIII, 8, 12, 17, 19, 20.  
 XIV, 21.  
 XVI, 14. After the res-  
 urrection.

## LUKE.

VI, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28.	VI, 24, 25, 26.
VII, 23.	X, 12, 13, 14, 15.
X, 23.	XI, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 52.
XII, 8, 32, 37.	XII, 5, 9, 49, 51, 52, 53.
XXIV, 30, 51.	XIII, 3, 5, 27, 28.
	XVII, 1, 2.
	XX, 47.
	XXI, 10, 11, 23.
	XXII, 22.

## JOHN.

III, 16, 17.	III, 18.
XIV, 27.	
XV, 12.	

The Gospel of John studiously improves the character of Christ as compared with that exhibited in the synoptic gospels. All but one of his upbraidings and curses were omitted, and that one was inserted for a purpose, as will be shown.

Expressions and sentiments like those just quoted are common enough to indicate a very different spirit in Jesus from that commonly attributed to him, particularly when there is doubt of much of the better sentiments ever having been uttered by him. As before stated, John the Baptist is probably entitled to much of the credit that has been given to Christ. However, the best sentiments of the Bible were never for a moment dependent upon prophets and divines or any favored few. They are self-evident facts, so commonplace as to suggest themselves to anybody of fair understanding.

But Jesus did enjoin one requirement that filled a very important part in the perpetuation of Christianity. In fact, but for it, the system would not have existed any length of time after his death, and it is, therefore, the only thing he materially contributed to hand Christianity down to our time. In a stairway the lower step performs a like service with those farther up and in some respects is even more important than any other, but those ascending may be said to have no further use for it after once passing it.

So with the requirement in question: it was obeyed only by his immediate followers. The church has long since ignored it, as it generally does any of his directions with which it is inconvenient to comply. This demand of Christ was important only in what it necessitated and led to: it filled an indispensable temporary service and made possible what followed, but once passed was not needed again.

This all-important service was rendered by the simple requirement of Jesus that those who joined his followers must give their property to the whole body to be used in common. The New Testament represents him as requiring that the property be given to the poor. But *they were the poor*, and it is shown that immediately after the crucifixion that regulation was in full force, which, coupled with the demand of Jesus to "sell that thou hast, give to the poor and follow me," shows that that regulation was demanded by him.

When a body of men own property in common, some one or more must be agreed upon to hold, distribute, and account for it. This involves an organization and officers, and from that moment those officers have a personal interest foreign to the objects of the association. The severity of this requirement made that interest the largest possible in proportion to the numbers involved. The temporary nature of the superstitious expectations of those men did not admit of the thought of an organization, nor did they possess sufficient intelligence to know the advantage of one. An organization was unavoidable under such a requirement as Jesus made, and it would not have taken place without it.

The New Testament shows the existence of this enforced organization, and an account of its enlargement by the selection of a second and inferior class of officers is given in Acts vi, 2 to 7. This organization, originating in this simple manner, never ceased from that time, and has been its one greatest power in perpetuating Christianity. The polytheists three or four centuries later recognized this great advantage of the Christian church and tried to revive the worship of the gods by a similar organization. But they began too late, their habits and customs had been too long established, and their effort put them in the inferior position of imitators.

Dr. Doellinger, in his *First Ages of Christianity*, devotes a number of pages to the teachings of

Christ, and, in so doing, he supplies a fair illustration of the usual manner of treating this subject. His comments are of an ambiguous nature. He simply writes a pious homily, to which believers will meekly assent as an act of devotion. No writer ever presumes to point out the particular words that convey those wise instructions, for there are no such words. Those teachings, like all that is Godlike in Christ, dwell only in the imagination of his worshipers.

## CHAPTER IX.

JOSEPHUS.

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CHRISTIANS greatly feel the want of accounts of Jesus by contemporary writers other than those among his followers. They recognize the self-evident fact that, if some of the events said to have been connected with him had actually taken place, there would have been other accounts, and more reliable ones, because they would have been by disinterested parties. The total absence of any records of those events by such writers is a loud assertion that those representations were not true. John the Baptist attracted even more attention than is chronicled by the apostles, they having held back a knowledge of his prominence rather than otherwise. The high position given him by Josephus makes the latter's evident ignorance of the existence of Christ all the more significant.

Churchmen have keenly felt this silence. Of all historians, Josephus, in particular, should have heard of Christ. He was a Jew, born probably about seven years before the crucifixion, who spent much of his life in office, not only in Judea, but part of the time holding high authority in Galilee, throughout the very region where Christ



had been some twenty to thirty years before. He wrote of a village called Capernaum and mentions all the Roman and Jewish officers named in the New Testament, with some of whom he was personally acquainted. His official career began while Paul was still on the field of action, and it is even very probable that they were at one time fellow passengers upon the same ship and were shipwrecked together. Both were *en route* to Rome and *the same event* started both on their journey.

Josephus was going to Rome for the purpose of interceding with Nero for the release of some Jews whom Felix had sent there under bonds. He does not state that he went there while Felix was procurator, but that the acts that eventually led him to make that journey were committed by Felix. The probabilities of obtaining the release of those men would be greater when that officer's successor was appointed, while, on the other hand, it might have been dangerous, both to Josephus and to the association of citizens who sent him, to make the effort while Felix was still in office. The appointment of Festus to succeed him was the natural and probable cause of the effort being made, and hence Josephus must have undertaken his journey very soon thereafter. None of those procurators was in office long, as Nero sent at least three (Festus, Albinus, and Gessius Florus) to Judea during the fourteen years in which he was Emperor. Josephus shows that the official term of Festus was short, as the account of his

death is closely coupled with his first appearance as procurator. When Josephus returned to Judea, Albinus was in office and apparently soon afterwards was succeeded by Florus. This allows abundant time for the journey and a long tarry in Rome, dating from the time of Festus.

Paul had been held two years under bonds by Felix, who hoped to be paid a sum of money for his release, but Festus, evidently a better man, started Paul on his long-delayed journey. The same circumstance, therefore, to wit, the commencement of the administration of the Procurator Festus, was the cause of the journey to Rome of both Paul and Josephus. The accounts of each represent that they were shipwrecked, and evidently in quite the same place, and each shows the vessel to have been an unusually large one for those days. This is indicated by the number of people on board, which Paul states to have been 276 (Acts xxvii), while Josephus gives the number as *about* 600. But Paul's count, no doubt, covered only those who got ashore. In the excitement of the night before, numbers could have left such a crowded ship unknown to Paul, while, on the other hand, the round number stated by Josephus shows that he guessed at the number and, as is usual in such cases, placed the figures too high. He wrote, also, fifty years afterwards.

Paul gives many details, while Josephus gives but few. According to Paul, the vessel went ashore on an island, but Josephus's account indi-

cates that the vessel foundered, though that is not clear. He wrote:

About 600 in number swam for our lives all the night; when upon the first appearance of the day, and upon our sight of a ship of Cyrene, I and some others, eighty in all, by God's providence, prevented the rest, and were taken up into other ships.

Paul states that the shipmen tried to flee out of the ship when they let down the boats the night before the vessel went ashore, and it may be that as many as eighty did so abandon the ship in boats and on floats. This is not improbable, according to Paul's account, and satisfactorily meets the account of the wreck as given by Josephus. In the excitement that must have prevailed there would naturally be confusion in their statements. Those, also, who abandon a vessel do so under the supposed certainty that it will go down and would naturally afterwards suppose that it had done so.

If Paul and Josephus were fellow passengers, it would be an interesting coincidence, but one that Christian writers would not endeavor to point out, for the reason that it brings in sharper contrast Josephus's utter ignorance of the Christian movement. Their position on board would have been widely different, Josephus being a passenger of some distinction, while Paul was a prisoner and making professions which, if noticed by Josephus at all, would but have excited his ridicule.

For such a man, having such experience as Josephus had in the very home of Christ, and so

soon after his time, and writing a history of that country, embracing every year of the lifetime of Christ—for such a man to have no word of him is equivalent to proof that the supernatural events related in the New Testament in connection with Jesus Christ did not occur. Josephus wrote his histories about the time or before the earliest uncanonical gospels were written. He was as old as any of the writers of those gospels. He was there upon the ground at the time many of the events they recorded were said to have taken place and was an important officer the latter part of that time. He was far more intelligent than they, as is attested by his histories, which extend greatly beyond the capacities of any of the gospel-writers, canonical or uncanonical. He was a witness on precisely the same footing that those gospel-writers were as to time, place, and experience, and a much superior one, because of his superior intellectual and social position and because of his disinterestedness.

But the church makes saints of its own witnesses and sanctifies and magnifies their testimony, and equally denounces Josephus, not for anything he wrote of Christ or of the Christians, but because he did not write of them at all. He comments favorably of John the Baptist and equally well of the Essenes, but as for the wonderful events recorded in the New Testament he had nothing to write, for there had been no such events.

Another Jewish officer, named Justus, also held

office in Galilee during the same time that Josephus did. They were so similar in position and experience as to have had strong feelings of rivalry, and that circumstance may have had something to do with the writing by each of a history of those times. Josephus complains of Justus, in that he had not given just accounts of him. There was the same reason, therefore, that Justus should have given accounts of Christ as there was that Josephus should, and his silence emphasizes the silence of the latter. The history by Justus must have been even more objectionable in that respect, for the church, which certainly would have preserved it if not detrimental to its interest, has not done so. That history is destroyed. It was in existence as late as the ninth century,<sup>1</sup> at which time Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, wrote of Justus that: "He makes not the least mention of the appearance of Christ or of what things happened to him."

Plutarch, also, was contemporaneous with Paul and Josephus. He was probably 7 to 15 years younger than the latter, and, as a young man, may have had some personal knowledge of Paul, for he was a Greek of distinction, filling important public duties in different parts of the Empire, having journeyed, it is supposed, as far as Alexandria, and must necessarily have visited many of the places frequented by Paul. At least, it is hardly possible that Plutarch was ignorant of the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Robt. Traill's Josephus.

Christian movement, for he wrote some of his works late in life, when Christianity must have grown to considerable proportions.

Plutarch's Lives numbers 67, of which only 50 are now extant. Only 8 of those Lives were of men living within the Christian era, they being the first 8 emperors, as follows: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Christ was born in the fourteenth year of the reign of Augustus, and all the events related in the New Testament were within his and the four succeeding reigns. Vitellius also, before he was emperor, had been president of Syria, and the several notices which Josephus makes of him indicate that he was long in office there. His authority was superior to Pilate's, for he deprived that officer of his office and sent him back to Rome. Josephus writes of Vitellius in the paragraph immediately preceding his account of John the Baptist, and again in the paragraph next following. In this he seemingly locates the execution of the Baptist within the presidency of Vitellius, in which case the crucifixion must have taken place while he was in office. He was an officer to whom the Nazarenes could have appealed in case Pilate exceeded his authority in ordering the crucifixion, and the fact that after that event he was in disgrace with Vitellius ought to have turned the eyes of Christians upon the latter officer and secured the preservation of any biography of him that might have been written. So far as Plu-

tarch's Lives is concerned, it was more important in the history of Christianity to preserve his Lives of the first five emperors and the eighth emperor than to preserve all the remainder of the 67. But those 6 are numbered with the 17 missing; not one has been preserved. The chances that any one would be among the 17 is as 1 to 4, but the chance that a particular 6 would be among them is as 1 to 3,748.

Thirteen of those biographies were of the leading men in those events that led to the imperial form of government, commencing with Marius, a century before. They were the great actors in one of the most important epochs in history, and hence their preservation, outside of the church, was more important than the preservation of all the remaining 67. This seems to have been recognized, for not one of them has been lost. The list is as follows: Caius, Marius, Sylla, Tiberius Gracchus, Caius Gracchus, Lucullus, Marcus Crassus, Sertorius, Pompey, Julius Cæsar, Cato, Cicero, Brutus, and Mark Antony.

It was impossible for Plutarch to mention anything connected with Christianity, except in his biographies of those 8 emperors, for all the remainder were of men that lived before the time of Christ. But only his unimportant biographies of Galba and Otho have come down to us. The political experience of both those men was very short and had been in Spain, where Christianity had not penetrated, and, hence, could not in any

way have been connected with them. The preservation of those two short and unimportant biographies makes the loss of the other six all the more marked. Chance could not have preserved the 13 and lost the 6. Those biographies have been designedly suppressed, and, in their suppression, the church confesses that he gave testimony adverse to the statements made in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

Among the numerous other works of his that have been lost are the following, the titles to which suggest that they, also, may have conflicted with Christianity or, at least, with its claimed originality: Two books on Introduction of the Soul, two books of Extracts from the Philosophers, three books on Sense, and two books of Proverbs.

But there were reasons for the suppression of the works of Josephus also, and they probably would have been but for a forged interpolation of Christ that they contain. Of all historians, Josephus

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<sup>1</sup> A French translation of Plutarch's Lives, published early in this century, contains a biography of both Augustus and Titus, written by M. Dacier. This is distinctly stated on the title-page, and matter inserted in the narrative shows that no deception was intended, as comparison with modern events is made. Nevertheless, some have been misled by this into a supposition that they were the work of Plutarch. The too conspicuous announcement on the title-page is often overlooked, in accordance with that peculiarity of human nature which Edgar A. Poe has so interestingly portrayed in his story entitled *The Purloined Letter*.



ought to have known J esus, and, if he could be shown to have acknowledged him to be the Christ, it would be most valuable testimony. As between forging such an acknowledgment or suppressing his works, the primitive church chose the former. But for that forgery his writings would have gone with all the numerous lost works that would, unitedly, have made a belief in the divinity of Christ an impossibility. Eusebius, bishop of C esarea, is charged with being the author of this fraudulent passage. It is inserted in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book xviii, Chap. 3, and is as follows:

At this time appeared a certain Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he may be called a man, for he was a worker of miracles, a teacher of such men as received the truth with joy, and he drew to himself many Jews and many also of the Greeks. This was the Christ. And when, at the instigation of our chief men, Pilate condemned him to the cross, those who had first loved him did not fall away. For he appeared to them alive again on the third day, according as the holy prophets had declared this and countless other marvels to him. To this day the sect of Christians, called after him, still exist.

Judge Waite, in his *History of the Christian Religion*, says:

If the passage in Josephus concerning Christ were genuine, then the failure to connect him with John the Baptist would be utterly incomprehensible. But, since it is the general verdict of scholars that the passage in the third chapter of the eighteenth book of the *Antiquities*, wherein it is stated that Jesus was the Christ, etc., is an in-

terpolated forgery, the matter appears very differently.

Rev. Robert Traill, in his preface to his translation of part of the works of Josephus, refers to the large amount of controversy regarding that passage and admits its unauthenticity, a conclusion which seems to have become quite general.

Under the head of "Jesus Christ," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the writer says:

That Josephus wrote the whole passage as it now stands no sane critic can believe. Vespasian, not Jesus, was the Messiah of that apostate Jew. There are, however, two reasons which are alone sufficient to prove that the whole passage was spurious: one that it was unknown to Origen and the earlier fathers, the other that its place in the text is uncertain. It is now found after the historian's notice of Pilate, but the remarks of Eusebius show that in his time it was found before them.

From the same work, under the head of "Josephus," is the following:

In a famous passage in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, first quoted by Eusebius, he speaks of Christ as something more than human and attests his miracles, death, and resurrection. The authenticity of the passage has been very much disputed. If it be admitted (and the external evidence in its favor is very strong), then Josephus must have been a Christian. On the other hand, the common belief that he was not a Christian condemns the passage as spurious. But it happens that Josephus nowhere else in all his writings commits himself in favor of Christianity. As an impartial historian he could not but accept it as an historical

fact; yet, even though he may have believed in its truth, he was too skeptical and indifferent to make himself a martyr for the sake of any truth or doctrine whatsoever. It is most probable that the passage in question, without being absolutely spurious, has been modified into its present form by Eusebius, who is well known to have often taken such a liberty in his quotations.

This last quotation supplies an illustration of what Christians look upon as pious treatment of anything unfavorably affecting their religion. This writer evidently believes the reference to Christ to be a forgery, yet he sorrowfully and but partially admits it, and does what he can to encourage his readers to believe it was not a forgery. It was his true religious duty to be as indignant over this forgery as over any other, but he has only tender words for Eusebius, who committed the act, and states that he probably *modified* it into its present form. He piously, as understood within the Christian system, states that the external evidence in its favor is very strong.

Now it is mostly by external evidence that the account is known to be a forgery. If it were authentic, external evidence would prove it beyond question. If it was fraudulent, there could be no external evidence in its favor; the nature of the question does not admit of it. If the quotation were written by Josephus, it would have been possible for other writers of those times to comment upon it; but if it was not originally in his works there could necessarily be no comments of

any nature. The absence of such comments by early Christian writers, who would have been glad to notice it if it had been there, is the strong external evidence that Josephus did not write it.

In Antiquities of the Jews, xx, 9, mention is made of James the brother of Jesus "who was called Christ." This little item comes in naturally enough, following as it does the famous fraudulent *testimony*. Having previously supposably mentioned Christ in most favorable terms, it would be natural to expect that he would be mentioned again, and, having once stated who Christ was, it would be sufficient when mentioning Jesus to state that it was he who was called Christ. It would simply identify a man previously mentioned.

But with the fraudulent passage expunged this notice of Christ stands alone, the only one in the works of Josephus, and as such it detracts from the importance of Christ rather than the contrary. If Josephus really wrote those four words then he knew there was a man Jesus having the especial title of Christ, but occupying a position so unimportant as to be of no possible interest and unworthy of an account in his history. It would not be natural, however, under such circumstances, to make even this one notice. If it was worth stopping to write *who was called Christ*, it was equally worth while to state why he was so called. Other facts, however, connected with this statement, tend to show that Josephus never wrote those words, but

in place of them had written these words: *the son of Damneus*.

This account of James sets forth that the office of procurator was vacant three months between the death of Festus and the arrival of his successor, Albinus, and that Ananias, the high priest, took advantage of this to cause the brother of Jesus, whose name was James, to be stoned to death. The account further shows that James was of importance enough for this to be of great public interest, resulting in the people sending to Albinus before his arrival and in Albinus writing to Jerusalem about it also before his arrival; and further that King Agrippa, finding that Albinus was angry, caused Ananias to be removed and made Jesus *the son of Damneus* high priest in his stead.

All this is suggestive that Ananias had taken advantage of the absence of the procurator to cause the death of a rival and that indignation, together with sympathy for James's family, caused the removal of Ananias and the substitution of Jesus the brother of James (and son of Damneus) in his place.

When, ten or twenty years later, Josephus wrote his histories, he knew this man Jesus as one of the high priests, and as such, in Josephus's ideas, he was a distinguished character, supposably known to his readers, and he (Josephus) identified James by him. He gave the name of Jesus first, the passage being constructed thus: *The brother of Jesus*

*who was called Christ, whose name was James.* The greater importance of Jesus in the mind of Josephus is the only explanation that can be given for this labored transposition of the two names. But, if he was in truth referring to Christ, then the superior position given him increases the inconsistency of there being no further mention of him. Josephus would then be identifying one unknown man by a second unknown man and identifying the latter by an unknown title. He would have given the less known man the superior position. The name of Jesus under such circumstances was uncalled for.

Furthermore, if this were the brother of Christ, the account would have appeared in the New Testament. Such an important event as the martyrdom of the brother of Jesus could not have been overlooked. Some or all of Paul's epistles from Rome must have been written after this occurrence. It must have taken place at about the time of his arrival there, for, as stated, Festus was evidently procurator but a short time. All the gospels were written after this time.

This high priest, Jesus the son of Damneus, was succeeded by another Jesus the son of Gamaliel. (See Acts v, 34.) Necessarily whenever either of these two was referred to he was distinguished from the other by stating the name of the father.

This Josephus never failed to do in his several references to each of those two men. The passage, therefore, as originally given by him was undoubt-

edly in these words: "The brother of Jesus the son of Damneus, whose name was James;" but when, from 200 to 250 years later, Eusebius inserted the fraudulent *testimony* he would naturally support it by at least one more reference to Christ, and at this point he found his favorable opportunity. He undoubtedly erased the Greek equivalent for the words "the son of Damneus" and substituted in Greek the words "who was called Christ."

When there is none to criticise and object and the great public is all one way on any one subject, it is surprising to what great lengths even intelligent men will go in their unsupported, unauthorized statements. In the cause of Christianity one writer will endeavor to get over a difficulty by some preposterous improbability as vague as a dream, and all other Christians will thenceforth accept such explanation as a proven fact. In this way quite a theory has been built up in efforts to explain away Josephus's silence as regards Christ. His visit to Rome was to ask favors of Nero, in which he was successful.

And now in explanation of Josephus's silence it is suggested that he himself was possibly a Christian and withheld accounts of Christ through fear of Nero. Some such theory as this is advanced in face of the fact that Josephus wrote his histories long after the death of Nero and when that name was odious. He also gave very unfavorable accounts of that emperor in his history,

sufficiently so to have incurred the displeasure of some of his influential friends, if any such were then living. On the other hand, it will be shown that there is no satisfactory evidence that Nero had any feeling about the Christians or any knowledge of them. There was not the least danger in anybody being a Christian who wished to.

Gibbon states that Tacitus, the author of the account of this persecution, wrote it sixty years after and would necessarily color it in the light and knowledge of Christians of that time rather than of the sixty years before. He writes that there were two sects of Galileans:

But the most opposite to each other in their manners and principles: the disciples who had embraced the faith of Jesus of Nazareth and the zealots who had followed the standard of Judas the Gaulonite. The former were the friends, the latter the enemies of human kind; and the only resemblance between them consisted in the inflexible constancy which, in the defense of their cause, rendered them insensible of death and tortures. The followers of Judas, who impelled their countrymen to rebellion, were soon buried under the ruins of Jerusalem; whilst those of Jesus, known by the more celebrated name of Christians, diffused themselves over the Roman Empire. How natural was it for Tacitus, in the time of Hadrian, to appropriate to the Christians the guilt and the sufferings which he might, with far greater truth and justice, have attributed to a sect whose odious memory was almost extinguished. Whatever opinions may be entertained of this conjecture (for it is no more than a conjecture), it is evident that the effect, as well as the cause, of Nero's persecution was confined to the walls of Rome, and



that the religious tenets of the Galileans, or Christians, were never made a subject of punishment or even inquiry.

Gibbon would not have advanced this conjecture if he had not believed it to be well founded. But he was unnecessarily cautious. The New Testament supplies evidence that this conjecture could have been recorded as an absolute fact. The probabilities are that at the time of that persecution there was not in existence a religious sect known by the appellation of *Christians*. There were contentions that ultimately led to the production of that word, but it is doubtful if as yet the word itself had ever been uttered.

Only a short time before in Jerusalem the Jews called Paul a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts xxiv, 5), and certainly, if he and his companions were not known at that time as *Christians* in the very home of Christianity, it is not reasonable to suppose that at about that time they were known by that name in Rome, particularly when, as previously shown, the Romans at the end of the second century were still unfamiliar with it.

Tacitus was born at about the time of the event he records, and therefore could not have based his account upon personal observation, neither could there have been records from which he could have taken the name of Christ and the manner and time of his death. The account is suspiciously accurate in that respect. Josephus wrote his *Antiquities* of

the Jews in A. D. 93, and though the event had occurred in his lifetime and he had been in Rome near or at the time, he knew nothing of it. This being the oldest mention of Christians outside of the New Testament, by either profane or Christian writers, the account is here given :

With this view [that is, to divert suspicion], Nero inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from one Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth and not only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city as for their hatred of human kind. Some were nailed on crosses, others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs; others, again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race and honored with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved indeed the most exemplary punishment, but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, from the opinion that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed, not so much to public welfare as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant.

But was Josephus so utterly silent regarding Christ? Is it true that all profane writers of his time omitted any mention of him or his proselytes? May it not be that certain accounts did have features suggestive of Christ, but in such an objectionable shape as to make Christians more interested in denying than admitting the connection? Objectionable accounts would be worse to a believer than no account at all, and, as nearly all writings on this subject, that have come down to us, were by Christian believers, written in the interest of the church, their statements that there was no mention of Christ in any particular work mean that there was no satisfactory mention of him.

Nothing in the New Testament indicates that Judea was otherwise than peaceful at that time, but Josephus shows that the country was in turmoil and confusion. Between Roman officers, Jewish officers, and bands of robbers, there seemed to be rivalry as to which should rob the people most. Any man seemed to be an officer who could secure a following of a band of men, and whether he would be called robber or patriot turned upon but a slight difference of success or political change; and in this boiling mass of humanity we obtain several glimpses of that upon which some of the accounts of Christ were based; not that they were numerous, for the New Testament account itself is exceedingly limited.

It is important to take into consideration the fact that there is usually confusion as to dates of

events that are known only by tradition. It is the events rather than dates that are repeated. In the time of Josephus this carelessness of dates was greater than it is now, for even in his carefully prepared history he gives no dates, neither does he in his life, not even so much as the year of his own birth. Neither are there any dates given in the New Testament. If the historians of those times made so little effort to give us an idea of the time of the events they recorded, how much more probable is it that rumors of events upon which parts of the New Testament were based should be associated in the mind of Josephus with those of his own lifetime. The several incidents in his works similar to those in the New Testament are nearly all so represented by him, and consequently at a time quite twenty-five years later.

In the great number of sects existing at that time, with only verbal accounts of them, the acts of others might be attributed to Christ, while his acts might equally erroneously be attributed to others. Errors of this kind would be as natural to writers of the gospels as to Josephus. They would be likely to incorporate ignorantly the acts of others which were similar and had occurred at any time before those gospels were written.

The most striking similarity is in Antiquities of the Jews, Book xx, Chap. 8, and is as follows:

And now those imposters and deceivers persuaded the *multitude* to follow them into the *wilder-*

ness and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs that should be performed by the providence of God. Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem one that said he was a prophet and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the *Mount of Olives*, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at a distance of five furlongs. He said farther that he would show them from hence how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down.

Josephus has the same account more in full in his Jewish Wars, Book ii, Chap. 13:

There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, which laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did those murderers. These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness as pretending that God would there show them the signal of liberty. But Felix sent horsemen and footmen, both armed, who destroyed a great number of them. But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together 30,000 men that were deluded by him; those he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the *Mount of Olives*, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place. \* \* \* But Felix prevented his attempts, etc.

In his autobiography, Josephus writes of one Jesus and his friend John the son of Levi, and

Simon, John's brother, who seemed to give him considerable trouble and against whom he had very bitter feelings. These men were more or less prominent and, according to Josephus, lawless. He wrote of Jesus in part and of his own office as follows:

Now as soon as I was come to Galilee and had learned of this state of things by the information of such as told me of them, I wrote to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem about them and required their directions what I should do. Their direction was that I should continue there, and that, if my fellow legates were willing, I should join with them in the care of Galilee. \* \* \* So I removed together with them from the city of Sepphoris, and came to a certain village called Bethmaus, four furlongs distant from Tiberias. \* \* \* I told them that I was sent to them by the people of Jerusalem as a legate, together with those other priests, in order to persuade them to demolish that house which Herod the tetrarch had built there, and which had the figures of living creatures in it, although our laws have forbidden us to make any such figures; and I desired that they would give me leave so to do immediately. But for a good while Capellus and the principal men belonging to the city would not give us leave, but were at length entirely overcome by us and were induced to be of our opinion.

So Jesus the son of Sapphias, one of those, whom we have already mentioned as the leader of a seditious tumult of *mariners and poor people*, prevented us, and took with him certain Galileans, and set the entire palace on fire, and thought he should get a great deal of money thereby, because he saw some of the roofs gilt with gold. They also plundered a great deal of the furniture, which was done without our approbation; for, after we

had discoursed with Capellus and the principal men of the city, we departed from Bethmaus and went into the Upper Galilee. But Jesus and his party slew all the Greeks that were inhabitants of Tiberias and as many others as were their enemies before the war began.

A few days afterwards there was a great clamor against Josephus, when he writes:

And it was Jesus the son of Sapphias who principally set them on. He was ruler in Tiberias, a wicked man and naturally disposed to make disturbance in matters of consequence; a seditious person he was indeed, and an innovator beyond everybody else. He then took the laws of Moses into his own hands and came into the midst of the people and said: "O, my fellow citizens, if you are not disposed to hate Josephus on your own account, have regard, however, to these laws of your country, which your commander-in-chief is going to betray; hate him, therefore, on both these accounts and bring the man who has acted thus insolently to his deserved punishment."

Some time after this, at a feast, Jesus asked Josephus a question that is inconsistent with the charge that he (Jesus) had burned Herod's palace. Josephus writes that—

Jesus, who was the ruler, asked: "What became of the vessels that were taken out of the king's palace when it was burned?"

When Paul was first placed under arrest in Jerusalem, the Roman officer having him in charge—and who was probably a Greek, as he was not a Roman citizen by birth—first asked

Paul if he could speak Greek, and then asked him the following question :

Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? (Acts xxi, 38.)

Nothing in the New Testament justifies such a question, but it will be seen that, after the accounts just quoted from Josephus, it was a perfectly natural one. The question indicates a knowledge of both the Egyptian leading the men into the wilderness and the murder of the Greeks in Tiberias. Paul had necessarily been exalting Jesus and relating his career and that name of Jesus and that career suggested the above question.

The uproar that Paul had raised was similar to the effect produced by Christ at his crucifixion and he was proclaiming the same sentiments. Their positions were very similar, but this similarity added to Paul's account of Jesus Christ brought to the mind of that officer no remembrance of him as described in the New Testament, but it did bring to his mind the Egyptian described by Josephus, which he apparently also blends with Jesus of Tiberias.

The Egyptian resorted to the Mount of Olives and asserted that at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down.

Christ also frequented the Mount of Olives and from there said :



There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. (Mark xiii, 2, 3.)

Each also had a following into the wilderness, the whole being a similarity so great as to make it improbable that they were two different individuals. Either the gospel-writers, in collecting the traditional accounts of Christ, attributed to him some of the acts of this Egyptian or else the Egyptian was Christ, but erroneously located by Josephus in the procuratorship of Felix, with the number of his followers exaggerated.

Although Paul was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," the Greco-Roman officer asked him if he was not *that Egyptian*, which shows that citizens of other countries could still mistake Jews for Egyptians. The New Testament brings in a very improbable story of Jesus having been taken to Egypt in infancy in order—

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. (Matt. ii, 15.)

According to that there was some well-known prophecy that made it desirable to connect Jesus with Egypt and this pretense would naturally be pointed out by his followers. In this way he might have become known to Josephus as an Egyptian.

## CHAPTER X.

### JOSEPHUS AND JESUS OF TIBERIAS.

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JOSEPHUS records other adventures of Jesus of Tiberias in Jewish Wars, Book iii, Chap. 9. He gives the name of his father as somewhat different (Saphat),<sup>1</sup> but the account shows that he was the same man Jesus, before referred to, who was a leader of mariners and poor people. He was not at the time a ruler in Tiberias, but was a man possessing sufficient popularity to be a trouble to the authorities. He brought misfortune upon the city, when it was besieged, by making an unauthorized sally and capturing the horses of Valerian and four or five others who were with that

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Elias Colbert, in commenting on this name states that—

The Hebrew original of the name is "Shaphat," the consonants of which are שפח, read from right to left. It occurs in Numbers xiii, 5; First Chronicles iii, 22, and v, 12; also First Kings xix, 16. The SH was changed into S in the Septuagint translation, as the Greek alphabet has no equivalent for SH. The same change was made in many other words, for instance Shimeon to Simon, Shemshon to Samson, Sholomon to Solomon, Shamael to Samuel. The third consonant of the word Shaphat is very similar in shape to the Hebrew ש, which has the sound of S, and it was easy in copying with a pen to mistake one for the other. A very little running of the pen in the upper part of the T (Teth) would cause it to appear as a continuous line and be read for S (Samech).

officer, the city at the time being quite in the power of the Romans. The authorities were obliged to repudiate this act of Jesus, who then went to Taricheæ, the principal city of Genesareth.

But his presence there was equally a source of misfortune, for his force was large enough to draw the Romans after him. The city would have been taken under any circumstances, but its capture was hastened by the opposition of the citizens to its evidently hopeless defense. Jesus throughout is shown to have been enterprising and belligerent and seemingly in command. Josephus states that—

As the Romans were building a wall about their camp, Jesus and his party were neither affrighted at their numbers, nor at the good order they were in, but made a sally upon them; and at the very first onset the builders of the wall were dispersed, and these pulled what little they had before built to pieces; but, as soon as they saw the armed men getting together and before they had suffered anything themselves, they retired to their own men. But then the Romans pursued them and drove them into their ships, where they launched out as far as might give them the opportunity to reach the Romans with what they threw at them, and then cast anchor, and brought their ships close, as in line of battle, and thence fought the enemy from the sea, who were themselves on land.

There was a terrible sedition in the city, for "those to whom the city belonged were not disposed to fight."

Titus took advantage of this to enter the city.

Whereupon, those that were upon the walls were seized with terror at the boldness of the attempt, nor durst any one venture to fight with him; so they left guarding the city; and some of those that were about Jesus fled over the country.

These men were making a heroic stand for their country and fighting desperately almost against hope. Under such circumstances, this man, Jesus, would be almost worshiped in after years by large numbers of Jews, even though he was insubordinate and his ill-advised operation a useless waste of life. It is possible, also, for the Jewish superstition to have become somewhat associated with his career. That superstition was composed far more of self-conceit than natural religion, and hence all public events were supposed to have been brought around by the Almighty with special reference to themselves, and consequently the leaders in those events were His chosen instruments, and therefore divine.

This was twenty-five or thirty years after the crucifixion, but it was, also, fully as many years before there was any written life of Christ. As before stated, the nature of the disciples' belief did not admit of the thought of writing his history. The events he predicted were to take place while those familiar with that life still lived, and when the growing church and failing predictions drew out a want for written records it would be his sayings that would be first wanted. Only those terrible predictions that so filled his credulous followers with fear would be first written. Not until

the church had attained considerable power would there be awakened a curiosity to know the life of the man they worshiped. But when that time came those who were familiar with that life were all dead. His generation had passed away and the church was obliged to content itself with the meager traditional rumors of Jesus that then prevailed.

A young man living in the time of this man, Jesus of Tiberias, would be an old man when the first life of Christ was written, and it is exceedingly probable that the rumored heroism of the one would become blended with the rumored miracles of the other. The Christian movement would be the gainer by it, as the fame of the two would be attached to Christ. It probably might be said of this second Jesus that "His fame went throughout all Syria." (Matt. iv, 24.) "He was a leader of mariners and poor people," which aptly describes the disciples of Christ, who were fishermen and poor people about and upon that Sea of Galilee. They had intimate companions of the same name (Simon and John). There was a similar spectacle in Christ on board ship addressing the multitude on the shore (Mark iv, 1) and Jesus of Tiberias and his followers confronting the Romans on the shore, though the scene otherwise was greatly different.

The Romans succeeded in destroying the ships at the close of this battle, whereby several thousand Jews were drowned. Josephus writes:

One might then see the lake all bloody and full of dead bodies, for not one of them escaped. And a terrible stink and a very sad sight there was, on the following days, over the country; for, as for the shores, they were full of shipwrecks and of dead bodies all swelled; and, as the dead bodies were inflamed by the sun and putrefied, they corrupted the air, insomuch that the misery was not only the object of commiseration to the Jews, but to those that hated them and had been the authors of their misery.

Among an ignorant population, where knowledge of public affairs is obtained only through oral testimony, all events unfavorable to their country become distorted and falsified into those of an opposite nature. Such people remain in blissful ignorance of their country's woes. They know of no defeats, for time or distance soon transforms all such into victories. The battle of Taricheæ, therefore, no doubt in later years was remembered by the lower classes as a victory for the Jews. Their egotism, as well as ignorance, would insure this transformation. Jesus of Tiberias had been one of their own class and would naturally be revered and glorified by them as one of the greatest of heroes. He would be represented to have been invincible and perhaps supernatural. This battle would certainly be known as one of his greatest exploits, and it would be the Roman legions, rather than their countrymen, who were drowned in the sea.

The noncombatant principles of the Essenes would not prevent their secret admiration for this

man. People cannot suppress their natural feelings through vows and resolutions. It has been seen in our times how the Quakers manage to give voluntary aid to their country in time of war, in spite of their professed opposing sentiment. The Essenes would glory in this man, Jesus, even though affecting to despise the acts that gave him his renown. These several circumstances suggest the hypothesis that the incident related of Christ in Matt. viii, 28 to 34, Mark v, 2 to 17, and Luke viii, 27 to 37, of the legion of devils being sent into 2,000 hogs and drowned in the sea, was an allegoric reference by the Essenes to the disastrous event just quoted. It is in this style that such people, with such views, would praise the man while condemning the act. They believed some of their own numbers possessed supernatural powers and would readily attach such powers to Jesus.

The statement in the gospels is a preposterous one to make without explanation. Two thousand hogs would be more than could be found together in the open country, even now in our great pork-producing country, and their swollen, decaying bodies would afterwards be a most serious matter. The fact that such a number was represented to be in the possession of a people who did not eat pork is strong evidence that the account is allegorical. The word legion is used in an unnatural manner in the gospels, but with this explanation its meaning is clear: The devils drowned in the

sea, whose name is legion, were the Roman legions, who were represented to have been sent into animals most abominated by Jews. The two possessed of these legions who could not be bound were Vespasian and Titus, who could not be defeated. Mark and Luke represent but one man as being so possessed, while Matthew states there were two. This discrepancy is favorable to this hypothesis, for Titus was both second in command and son of the commander, and, when the narrative was written, both father and son had been emperors. Such a close connection would naturally beget an indiscriminate reference to Vespasian or Vespasian and Titus as the commanders. All the gospel accounts represent that Jesus was requested to "depart out of their coast," an unnatural request to make under the circumstances as represented. Josephus states that the same request was made to this man, Jesus, many of the citizens being very angry that those who owned the city should be subjected to such dangers by men who had no interest in the place. The absence of any mention of this incident in the Fourth Gospel indicates some known objection to it when that gospel was written.

The city of Tiberias was built by Herod when Tiberius was Emperor, and, consequently, in the lifetime of Christ; and, as Joseph was a carpenter, it may account for his presence in that part of the country. Capernaum is located on ancient maps as being some two or three miles from Tiberias.



The Sea of Galilee, or Lake Gennesareth, or Sea of Tiberias is only about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles long by about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide.

The foregoing quotations from Josephus were taken from Rev. Wm. Whiston's translations of the works of Josephus, which is an old and standard work; but there is a late translation of *The Life of Josephus and of Jewish Wars* by Rev. Robert Traill, in both of which the name of this man Jesus is given as *Joshua*. Those names are equivalent in Hebrew and mean *Jehovah is Salvation*, and if both those writers had been translating from that language there would have been some excuse for this difference, provided each should at all times use their own translation of the word *Jesus* wherever found. But Hebrew was a dead language in the time of Christ and the question of the translation of that name had long passed. Plainly, this man Jesus of Tiberias had the same name as Jesus of Nazareth and whatever reason can be given for designating one as *Joshua* applies equally to the other.

This change of that name was an extreme measure on the part of Mr. Traill and shows that he recognized at least the possibility of traditions of this man Jesus having been blended with those of Christ and he sought to hide that fact by a falsification. He translated only those works of Josephus in which that man was mentioned, and it is not improbable that he deemed that alteration of sufficient importance to justify his labors. It

will be noticed that this alteration is in the nature of a suppression; knowledge of an important fact is intentionally, deceptively suppressed in support of that which is so vehemently designated as "the Truth."

For more than seventeen hundred years Christian writers have, from time to time, in this manner cleared away some item of evidence in conflict with their system. Sometimes it has been a slight alteration, sometimes a slight interpolation, and at other times a suppression, but most commonly direct misrepresentations. That any such items have reached us at all was because of former ignorance of the exposures that time would develop. Their superstition, too, has for many centuries prevented any material alteration in the very place where they could have done most to sustain their doctrines. In their veneration for the Bible so many eyes were turned upon it that from very necessity it has come down to us, through later centuries, in all the nakedness of truth, not of its statements, but of the superstition, credulity, disagreement, and ignorance of its writers.

Josephus relates an incident of a deception practiced upon a highly respected and virtuous lady by some priests in a temple. The story is so similar to the New Testament account of the immaculate conception that it is commented upon by Christian writers. It seems to be the rule with all those writers to assume that Josephus knew of the Christian movement; they only differ in their

theories as to why his works give no evidence of that knowledge. He ought to have known of it if it were true; therefore, they assert that he did know of it. One theory given in regard to the event referred to is that Josephus originated the story himself in order to throw discredit upon the gospel account of the Virgin Mary by robbing it of its originality and implying that it was made up out of that incident.

Immediately before mentioning Pilate as procurator, and consequently in the lifetime of Christ, Josephus, both in his *Jewish Wars* and *Antiquities of the Jews*, gives an account of Judas a Galilean who led a revolt; and in each of those histories association of ideas leads him to immediately give an account of three religious sects of Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, with the latter of which he in a measure connects Judas. The account is given the most fully in *Jewish Wars*, ii, 8. He writes:

A certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt, and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay tax to the Romans and would, after God, submit to mortal man as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders.

He then at great length narrates the manners and customs of the Essenes, who had all the tenets of the Christians and some that the latter did not adopt. He represents them in a favorable light and clearly shows that Christian ideas did not

originate with Christians. He states that the Essenes taught that the soul was immortal, which was not believed by the Sadducees and not fully by the Pharisees.<sup>1</sup>

The Essenes rejected pleasure as an evil. They despised riches and held all property in common. They neglected wedlock. Their piety towards God was very extraordinary; they said grace before eating and afterwards praised God for having bestowed their food upon them. They were eminent for fidelity and were the ministers of peace, and whatsoever they say is firmer than an oath, but swearing is avoided by them. They had prayers before sunrise and after the fifth hour they assembled together and after clothing themselves in white veils bathed in cold water. They kept very quiet and their perpetual sobriety was remarkable. They were stricter than any other Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day. They would assist those who were in want and show mercy and bestow food upon those who were in distress. There were also those among them who undertook to foretell things to come, etc.

He also states in Antiquities of the Jews that—

The doctrine of the Essenes is this, that all things are the best ascribed to God. They teach the immortality of souls, and esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for. \* \* \* It also deserves our admiration how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue.

Here we see existed, in the little country where Christianity originated, a sect full of naturally

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<sup>1</sup> It is asserted by some that the Old Testament does not teach the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This at least shows that there was a difference of opinion about it among the keepers and authors of that work.

religious impulses and having sentiments and practices that Christians claim were first made known to the world through Christ. Where Josephus shows that the seed had been abundant, Christians assert that the crop was supernatural and bore a variety that had never existed before. Even the Essenes did not originate their religious tenets, for Josephus states that "These men lived the same kind of lives as do those whom the Greek call Pythagoreans." The ethics of Christianity was consequently venerable with age in the time of Christ, for Pythagoras lived about 560 years before that time, or some 350 years before the sect of Essenes was founded. The only apparent difference between the Christians and Essenes is that the former did not adopt all the tenets of the latter. It is probable, however, that this difference was but the growth of time through the gradual neglect and final abandonment of first one and then another of the too rigid practices of the Essenes. We know, for instance, that celibacy and communism were practiced by the early Christians.

The description of John the Baptist accords well with that of the Essenes and he may have belonged to that body of Jews. His proselytes at least were evidently drawn largely from them. Renan in his *Life of Jesus* states that "The Essenes or Therapeutes were established near the country of John, upon the eastern borders of the Dead Sea." John and his disciples were plainly familiar with the sentiments of that order. The New Testa-

ment has much in it of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but it contains not one word that indicates a knowledge of the Essenes. This omission or elimination is a virtual acknowledgment that the latter preceded Christ in sentiments attributed to him. It is the church's proclamation of its jealousy of that body.

Josephus does not state that Judas was an Essene, but association of ideas which he twice exhibits indicates that he was closely allied to them, though a leader of a sect of his own. He locates his time at about the beginning of the procuratorship of Pilate, but he closes the account by stating that "It was in Gessius Florus's time that the nation began to go mad with this distemper" (referring to the sentiments taught by Judas and others). It was the tyranny of Florus, more particularly, that drove the Jews into rebellion against the Romans.

Judas's opposition to paying taxes seemed to be based upon ignorance of his relations and duties to government, rather than upon a disposition to rebel against the Romans. An incident recorded in the synoptic gospels indicates that Jesus also opposed paying taxes. He was asked by Pharisees and Herodians, sent to "catch him in his words" (Mark xii, 13), or "spies which should feign" friendship (Luke xx, 20), if it was lawful to give tribute to Cesar.

This question, under such circumstances, shows that they had reason to expect that he would con-

vict himself of resistance to the law in that respect. His answer, also, is confirmatory of this, for he gives an ingenious reply that seems to be favorable, but which does not meet the question. The authorities could not object to his sentiments as expressed in his answer, while on the other hand his companions could not charge him with having weakened in the presence of those officers. After being told that the image and superscription on the penny were Cesar's, he gave that oft-quoted reply, "Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's." However correct this sentiment may be, the inference has no connection with the question, for coin with Cesar's image and superscription upon it would not necessarily belong to Cesar. Refusal to pay taxes would naturally be made in the belief that the authorities had no right to levy them, and the answer of Jesus neither affirms nor denies that right.

In Matthew xvii, 25, 26, 27, Jesus is represented as hesitating and but tolerating payment of tribute and though it is stated to have been paid by a miracle it was made to appear to have been done because it was a trifle unworthy of dispute.

In one place Josephus writes of Judas as a Gaulonite, a citizen of a town in Galilee, and he is referred to by that title by Gibbon. He is also mentioned in Acts v, 37. Here, again, association of ideas connects him with the Christian movement; otherwise there was no apparent reason why

the lawyer Gamaliel should have singled out Judas and Theudas from the many bands of men in Judea in those troublesome times. Life was cheap in those days. There were too many who perished to make that a reason for naming them. Peter and the apostles were being tried for persisting to advocate the doctrines of Jesus, and this brought to the mind of Gamaliel two leaders of similar bands, Judas and Theudas. The latter was one who was characterized as a false prophet, who said that if the people "would follow him to the river Jordan he would divide the water."

Josephus also writes of Theudas in the same paragraph with Judas and, as shown, is also reminded by them of a body similar to the Christians. He gives this account in that part of his histories where Christ should have been mentioned if he had known of him. The sentiments, location, repeated association of ideas, and time of this man Judas, therefore, closely connect him with Christ. The odium the disciples caused to be attached to that name may have had its origin in rivalry and jealousy. The circumstances suggest the possibility of his having led a wing of the followers of John the Baptist. It is worthy of note that among the lost gospels there was one by Judas Iscariot, which is certainly inconsistent with the New Testament account of his treachery.

But Josephus relates an incident that indicates that he did hear an undefined fragment of the traditional rumors of Christ. It is, for reasons be-



fore mentioned, attached to the siege of Jerusalem, about thirty-five years later. It is in Jewish Wars, Book iv, Chap. 5:

But, what was still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom to make tabernacles to God in the temple and began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and holy houses, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against the whole people." This was his cry as he went about by day and by night in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his and took up the man and gave him a great number of severe stripes: yet did not he either say anything for himself or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Thereupon, our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, when he was whipped until his bones were laid bare; yet did not he make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but, turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was "Wo, wo to Jerusalem." And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him "who he was, and whence he came, and why he uttered such words," he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty till Albinus took him to be a madman and dismissed him. Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen

by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Wo, wo to Jerusalem." Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals, and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months without growing hoarse or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfillment in our siege, when it ceased, for as he was going round upon the wall he cried out with his utmost force, "Wo, wo to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy houses." And just as he added at the last "Wo, wo to myself also," there came a stone out of one of the engines and smote him and killed him immediately, and as he was uttering the very same passage he gave up the ghost.

The siege and capture of Jerusalem would naturally excite the superstition of that superstitious people and would enable the disciples of Jesus to claim it as a result of his persecution. It evidently gave an impetus to the Christian movement, for it is only after that time that there began to be written accounts of it. Stories of Jesus would be revived, and, as he was then generally unknown, they would become distorted, as all rumors do, and naturally some of them would become connected with the time of the siege. All the expressions this man is represented as using are about the same as some attributed to Christ, particularly the one he was said to use the most, "Wo, wo to Jerusalem, to the people, and to the

holy houses." A figure of bridegrooms and brides is used a few times in the gospels, and his refusal to answer questions when before the authorities is much like the representations of Christ under the same circumstances. He made his appearance in Jerusalem at the passover, the same as Christ. The gospels also state that Christ was scourged, and finally the same expression is used at his death, "He gave up the ghost."

There are enough coincidents in this account to make it very probable that it is a vague, distorted fragment of a direct superstitious rumor of Jesus that reached the ear of Josephus. Its unimportance is consistent with his omission of any account satisfactory to Christians and consistent with his absolute ignorance of the existence of Christ.

The capture of Jerusalem, which event occurred but a short time before Josephus wrote his works, was the last of four simple events to which Christianity owes its origin. The accounts of Jesus having prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were written after the city was captured and the temple destroyed. Nevertheless that Jesus made such a prophecy is probable, because it was, under the circumstances, natural. Any man claiming supernatural powers would scarcely fail, when so situated, to predict the destruction of homes and all that was cherished by the people who were about to torture him.

Furthermore, a man of ordinary intelligence could readily foresee that any occupation of Jeru-

salem by the multitude that accompanied him or by any body of Jews in the rebellion that was then brewing would be but temporary. It required but slight foresight to see that such an occupation would soon bring the Romans—

Who would cast a trench about the city and compass it around, and keep it in on every side, and who would lay it even with the ground.

When, therefore, the city was taken some twenty-five to thirty-five years later and this possible prediction *partly*, but not wholly, fulfilled, it would naturally have great effect upon the intensely superstitious followers of Jesus and be a great lever in their hands to act upon the superstition of others. Jerusalem was simply being restored to the government that was in authority in the time of Christ; but they were God's chosen people and as their temple was destroyed something as portentous as the end of the world ought to follow.

John the Baptist had been actuated in his movement by this same idea, and in doing so he unconsciously made the first step in erecting the Christian superstition by proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. The second step was in Jesus claiming to be that Messiah and was a result of the first. The third step was in the powerful effect made upon the minds of his simple disciples by the disappearance of his body or his possible resuscitation. The fourth and last step was this

seeming fulfillment of his prophecy by the capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple.

In this simple succession of events lies the origin of Christianity as a distinct sect.

Their articles of faith, as now understood, were mostly to be developed in the future. Time enforced a renunciation of certain impracticable doctrines, and future difficulties enforced the adoption of others, the whole forming a combination unknown to the primitive Christians. Not that that combination was composed of parts original with the Christians in later times, for it was not. One of their greatest future difficulties, they met with their worst doctrine, which they borrowed from mythology. That combination and their ideas of Christ are all that is original in the system. The reader is referred to a late work—*Evolution and Christianity*, by J. F. Yorke—for an account of the many parallels between the Christian religion and others that preceded it.

When Josephus wrote, that movement needed to be somewhat *sanctified by time*; it required a little forgetfulness to rob it of much that even then was commonplace and coarse. Time had not done this while Josephus yet lived; the structure had not sufficiently progressed, and, hence, he only heard a little of the coarse material upon which Christianity was founded. In his loud silence alone there is sufficient evidence of the untruthfulness of the accounts of Jesus Christ as given in the New Testament.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ST. PAUL.

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MORE is known of St. Paul than of any other character mentioned in the New Testament. The circumstances that led to his greater renown grew out of the fact that he knew not more, but less of Christ than did any of the other apostles. He had not, like them, been with Christ and become thoroughly imbued with his sentiments, and was therefore freer to act upon ideas of his own when occasion required. Except for those more practicable ideas of his we should never have heard either of him or of Christ. Paul's religious nature was powerfully acted upon by what he regarded as his supernatural conversion. He describes what is believed by some to have been a sunstroke which may have affected his mind. The mind and health are often seriously impaired in such cases, and his absence in Arabia (Gal. i, 17) immediately after may have been but his slow recovery. That he considered that event to be of great importance is manifest from his frequent allusions to it and by the position he assumed towards the other apostles because of it. An account of it is given in full three times in the Acts of the Apostles, and his references to it were

usually with a view of asserting the divine authority of his doctrines. Evidently he would not admit any authority over him by the other apostles, even when in a united body. He said he was "An apostle not of men, neither of man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

In the first and second chapters of his Epistle to the Galatians he strongly proclaims his independence of the other apostles and implies superiority over them. He said if any other man or an angel from heaven preached any other doctrine to them than that which he had preached "Let him be accursed." He indirectly states in the 10th verse that God speaks to them through him and that the gospel which he preached was not taught to him by man. He then goes on to show his authority for this statement by calling attention to his miraculous conversion, which he assumes they had heard of, an assumption that shows his own high ideas of its importance.

He then states that, when it pleased God to call him to reveal His Son, *he did not confer* with anybody and especially that *he did not go to Jerusalem* nor to the apostles before him. Not until three years after did he visit Jerusalem and then he saw of the apostles *only* Peter and James. He afterward went into the region of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face to his fellow churchmen in Judea. He did not go to Jerusalem again until fourteen years after and asserts that he then *went*

*up by revelation*, not to consult, but to *communicate* unto them that gospel which he preached among the Gentiles; that is to say, he had been sent by the Almighty to instruct those apostles who had been taught by Christ.

That visit discloses the existence of jealousy and rivalry between them. He writes of false brethren brought in "*to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus.*" The apostles were plainly angry with him for his pretensions and his independent promulgation of sentiments that were exclusively his own. Questions as to superior authority must have been raised, for he states that he did not give place by subjection to them, "*No, not for an hour.*" The strength of this expression indicates the acrimony of the contest that drew it out. He states that in conference they added nothing to him. In his opinion he was there to teach rather than to be taught, and he learned nothing from them. He writes that James, Cephas (Peter), and John "*seemed to be pillars,*" as though he had never known that, and implies that some concession was made to him when they perceived the grace that was given him and they gave him and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship."

But this seeming restoration of harmony is not sustained in the subsequent verses, for there was continued contention about the great question of preaching to the Gentiles.

According to Acts of the Apostles the authority



for preaching to others than Jews was derived through Peter's vision, accompanying Cornelius's miraculous conversion. This goes to show that the one or two sentences inserted in the gospels were interpolations (Matt. xxviii, 19; Mark xiii, 10, and xvi, 15). Peter and the apostles did not so understand it, and, as against those slight and timid interpolations, the gospels record repeated instances where Christ exhibited most intolerant aversion to Gentiles. He compares them to dogs and unequivocally asserted that he was sent for the lost sheep of Israel only. (Matt. xv, 24-26.) But even the account of Peter's vision and his reference to it are inconsistent with later accounts and must also have been an interpolation, for now, after many years, the question of admitting Gentiles causes an angry contention and is plainly opposed by Peter. It was the cause of a delegation from Antioch to Jerusalem and a second delegation from Jerusalem to Antioch, the two conferences ending in a division into two parties, as they were unable to agree. Paul says (Galatians ii):

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

It will be seen by this that Peter was not willing

to eat with Christians as now understood in the system, even though those lines have been *doctored* with intent to hide that fact. Paul and Barnabas had not only failed to induce the apostles at Jerusalem to assent to the admission of Gentiles, but on the contrary they had been followed to Antioch by Peter to counteract Paul's efforts and he (Peter) succeeded in inducing Barnabas to yield to the authority of the Jerusalem council. Paul's assumption that "the gospel of the uncircumcised was committed unto him, as the gospel of the circumcised was to Peter," is a demand that his supernatural pretensions be admitted the same as Peter's. It is also equivalent to an admission on his part that he knew nothing of the pretended story of Peter's vision.

His charge that Peter would not eat with Gentiles when Jews were present was evidently put forth to make Peter unpopular with the former; otherwise it was trivial and its publication injurious to their cause.

This visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem and the evident feeling upon the Gentile and circumcision questions are also given in Acts xv. The return delegation (which was unnecessary if they were in harmony) is mentioned, but Peter's name is not given as a delegate. Paul's account discloses enough to show that there were a spirited contest and much ill feeling, in which Paul's friend and companion was won over to the other side, and they separated from that time.

The reason for this separation is given in Acts as being because Barnabas wanted Mark to go with them, which Paul refused because he had left them on a former occasion. This is not the whole truth. Mark's leaving them at the time referred to was a serious offense to Paul, because he did so to side with the Jerusalem party and immediately went to that city. (Acts xiii, 13.) The offense consisted in the motive for leaving them, and not in the act itself, and without change of views would continue to be as offensive to Barnabas as to Paul. But Barnabas had changed sides upon the Gentile question and was therefore in harmony with Mark, while Paul, with his views, could preach with neither.

In Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (chapter iii) he also asserts his divine ordination and that he was exclusively sent to the Gentiles. He says:

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words;

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all

saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The modesty expressed in this last verse was not characteristic of Paul. It is in sharp contrast with the spirit exhibited in his Epistles to the Galatians (i, 8,) where he hurls curses upon any who preach any other gospel than that which he had preached, even though it were an angel from heaven.

Paul has much to say in his Epistle to the Romans upon this question of the admission of the Gentiles. He seems to argue upon that point in nearly every chapter. He twice alludes to "my gospel" and also to his having been especially appointed an apostle to the Gentiles (xi, 13; xv, 16, 18). He not only asserted his broad claim to divine inspiration and to his independence of the other apostles, but he acted it in his intercourse with others. He had a strong will and was combative and evidently met with much opposition and contention. His epistles show that he would not tolerate any difference with others in his opinions. He seemed to look upon himself as quite the head and chief authority of the church, and, judging from the New Testament, he was. Most of that book, after the gospels, is devoted to his acts. Nearly all the epistles are by him and two-thirds of Acts of the Apostles are taken up with accounts of him.

This, however, does not by any means prove

Paul intellectually superior to any of the others, but it does prove that his doctrines were more acceptable to the church some two hundred years later than were those of the other apostles. He and his followers were a party by themselves, and when in time the church leaders were incorporating those early writings into the New Testament they would have to wholly reject Paul or wholly accept him and reject the others. They made the latter choice, being forced to do so by Paul's liberal views upon the admission of Gentiles.

There is no room to question the fact that Jesus first, and Peter and all the apostles except Paul afterwards, never consented to the admission into the church of any but circumcised Jews. The few interpolated passages to the contrary are abundantly contradicted, as shown by other accounts, which undoubtedly were too well known to be eliminated from the gospels. The other apostles were safe in Jerusalem at a time when the Jews were exceedingly incensed against Paul and would have killed him but for the Roman officers. This shows that it was not belief in Christ that enraged the Jews. It is plain that his adherents were tolerated there as part of themselves. Such preaching as the Apostles had done in other countries had only been to Jews in those countries. This is not only frequently disclosed, but it is asserted in one instance by Peter, in Acts xi, 19. He said:

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as

far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

But Paul, by preaching to the Gentiles and, above all, by holding any doctrine that admitted the uncircumcised to an equality, was touching them (the Jews) in their most cherished article of conceit, and, in so doing, he would be looked upon by them as an apostate and traitor. That the Jews had this feeling was well known to his fellow Christians before he went to Jerusalem, for they warned him not to go, though they knew the other apostles were there unmolested. The brethren in Jerusalem also understood the feeling to be against Paul exclusively, and promptly informed him of his danger on his arrival, stating, in substance, what was true, that he subverted the laws of Moses and taught that circumcision was no longer necessary. (Acts xxi, 21.)

When Paul first called upon the brethren on this occasion he reported or boasted of what he had accomplished among the Gentiles, his particular field of operations (xxi, 19). The spirit of the brethren's reply was to the effect that sufficient success had attended preaching to the Jews, who zealously kept the laws of Moses, to deprive Paul of any excuse for preaching to a class whom the Almighty had excluded from Zion. They said:

Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

In his address to the Jews, given in the next

chapter, Paul was trying to justify his course by claiming that he had a divine command to go "far hence unto the Gentiles," but his mention of the latter gave immediate offense to them. Whatever doctrines a Jew might otherwise have, he must remain true to the exclusiveness of the Jews. The foundation of their superstition was that God cared only for them and any doctrine that admitted Gentiles to an equality amounted to an abnegation of their religion.

These several circumstances all go to prove that admitting Gentiles and omitting some of the Jewish customs were the doctrines and acts of Paul exclusively. When, therefore, in those later times the church was wholly composed of Gentiles, they found that those doctrines of Peter and the other apostles excluded them all under any circumstances and had to be suppressed at all hazards. Those doctrines were too narrow for the wide field the church had then attained.

But Peter was directly appointed by Christ. He was his chief disciple and the leader after the crucifixion, at a time when Paul was persecuting them, and hence there were far greater reasons why the church should accept him as authority wherever he differed with Paul. For these reasons it was impossible to wholly ignore him. It was indispensable that some of his writings be incorporated in the New Testament. Such would naturally be the considerations of those compilers and the condition of that book indicates that such

was the case. Two short epistles of his are inserted and some of his sayings and doings are recorded in Acts, but the whole is shamefully small for the man who above all others should have been most favored by the church, provided it was actuated by no other consideration than a wish to know the exact truth as to the sentiment of Jesus Christ.

The limited amount of Peter's works admitted indicates how objectionable his sentiments must have been, for his suppressed gospel was the best known of any, and no doubt there were other of his writings. The little that was admitted has not been so much doctored but that his Jewish exclusiveness can be detected. It is addressed to "The strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," but the contents show that he meant the Jews only, who would be strangers in those countries. He writes (I Peter ii, 9):

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

In the 12th verse he writes "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles," showing that it was the Jews who were the royal priesthood, holy nation, etc., in case any could have doubted that he so meant. In Chap. iii, 6, he alludes to the women as daughters of Abraham. In Chap. iv, 3, 4, he is particularly severe upon the Gen-



tiles. When the Jews had "walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries," they were but doing as the Gentiles would have them do, and they (the Gentiles) would think it strange that they did not continue to run with them to the same excesses.

The Epistle of James, also, is addressed to the twelve tribes only. Those apostles could see nothing commendable in anybody but Jews; they tolerated no others.

Barnabas seems to have been an important man among them, and we should have heard more of him but for the same reason, that he also had a record not in keeping with the doctrines of the church in later times. Paul's companionship with him is favorable to the supposition that he (Paul) did not consider him a rival, for Paul's nature demanded subjection to his will. In one instance, however, the people gave Barnabas the superior position, for while they called him Jupiter they called Paul Mercurius (Acts xiv, 12). This is inconsistent with the leading part attributed to Paul.

Lewis, in his *Life of St. Paul*, states that this may have been owing to Paul's very small stature. He was too small a man to be consistent with their ideas of Jupiter. Nothing in the New Testament shows that Paul was a small-sized man. When we come to trace these little items of information derived from outside the New Testament, they usually prove to be from some confessedly untrustworthy source. From a more

or less acknowledged falsehood a little will often be accepted as truth simply because it was possible and gratifies curiosity or because it is desirable that it be held as truth. The progress of Christianity was not rapid enough to lift any of the characters in the New Testament out of obscurity in their own lifetimes. We know more of Paul than of Barnabas simply because his doctrines were more acceptable; but we do not know how much of Barnabas's has been suppressed, nor, for the same reason, do we know how Paul's intellectual abilities compared with his and with those of the other apostles, for even Paul's more acceptable doctrines were the result of circumstances.

Paul's willingness to include Gentiles in the plan of salvation did not come through divine revelations to himself, nor through Peter's pretended vision, nor through commands of Christ, neither of which he had ever heard. He did not preach to Gentiles through heavenly wisdom or from a heart overflowing with loving kindness; but on the contrary it was anger, resentment, spite, that and nothing more, that turned Paul to them. He preached to Gentiles because he could not reach the Jews. With him it was Gentile followers or none.

However much those original compilers and expungers of the Bible may have suppressed, they still overlooked many little items that unsuspectingly threw light upon that which they would have hidden. Their superstition in part, but

mostly their incompetency, blinded them into admitting certain passages that would have been rejected if they could have realized the full extent of that which they exposed. The 46th verse of the thirteenth chapter of Acts contains one of those items of information that usually would have been suppressed. To those men, however, this little item would have been a matter of indifference compared to the greater facts they were intent upon hiding. They wished to suppress all evidence of the local and temporary nature of the teachings of Christ, beside which the mere matter of Paul's personal distinction would seem hardly worthy of notice. Hence it is that the following verse was admitted which robs Paul of the glory of the one doctrine of his that made him the most prominent man in the formation of the Christian religion. He said to the Jews at Antioch:

It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

The Jews in other places were more incensed against him than against his companions. They drove him out of Thessalonica and Berea, although Silas and Timotheus could remain in the latter city (Acts xviii, 1, 5, 6). Paul then preached in Athens, after which he went to Corinth, where there were Jews and a synagogue in which he reasoned every Sabbath.

The New Testament shows that any Jew, when

so disposed, could speak in the synagogues; nor were the Jews prohibited from advancing new doctrines or theories. Their religion was treated about as political questions are now. It was *their law* and their synagogues were public property. It is shown that Christ and his apostles preached their doctrines in the synagogues for a time. When Paul reached Corinth from Athens he evidently spoke in the synagogue at first as a Jew, and did not mention Christ until after the arrival of Silas and Timotheus. It seemingly required the presence of those men to give him the necessary courage to proclaim those accounts of Jesus that had become so obnoxious to the Jews. But when they arrived, "Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ," an assertion which, as usual, angered them.

And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: *from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.* (Acts xviii, 5, 6.)

But Barnabas, unfortunately for him, did not share those feelings with Paul. He and the apostles had separated from him, and in so doing they turned their backs upon the Christian world and Christianity from that point left their history in obscurity. The Gentile question was the rock upon which they split. It was that which caused the suppression of the works of Peter and of the other apostles by the church in later times and caused their otherwise superior position to be

superseded by that of Paul. As it is, Christianity has of them but little more than their names. None of those men were laboring for future generations, and when those generations came they had to ignore them or be left without the religion which they had been brought up to believe.

Gibbon says that—

The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews and the congregations over which they presided united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ. It was natural that the primitive traditions of a church which was founded only forty days after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the immediate inspection of his apostles, should be received as the standard of orthodoxy. The distant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable parent and relieved her distresses by a liberal contribution of alms.

All the inspired writers were Jews. If there is a word in the Bible by a Gentile (and there are many) it is an interpolation. So completely Jewish was the Church that it has been obliged to adopt their great conceit and admit that the Jews were originally God's chosen people; but it attempts to escape prolonging this humiliation by asserting that they ceased to be so when they crucified Christ. But Paul, their great authority, the only apostle who tolerated them, did not so teach. Such a sentiment as that would have filled him with indignation, the sacredness and superiority of the Jews being as much the cornerstone of his religion as of that of all the apostles.

Paul explains the matter very differently. All the covenants had been between God and the Jews. No sacred agreements whatever had been made for the Gentile world. He shows the latter that their great misfortune consisted in being *strangers and aliens from his country*. Not being Jews they were without God in the world and no doubt quite unknown to Him. Like Peter, Paul considered that as they were not Jews they were "dead in trespasses and sins." They could not avail themselves of the sacred bargains made exclusively for the benefit of the Jews. The situation, therefore, left the Gentiles without hope. But Paul alone now took it upon himself to say that through faith in Christ they could be admitted as parties in the sacred contracts. Paul saw no pulling-down of the Jews by the crucifixion; such an idea would have been unendurable to him. The service that Christ rendered was to elevate the Gentiles, though he does not make it clear whether they were elevated to an equality with the Jews in all respects or not. He probably did not intend to be so understood, for he boasted of how thoroughly a Jew he was and evidently considered that essential to his sacredness and leadership.

The chapter where Paul explains this has not been tampered with so much but that his views are too clearly expressed to be misunderstood except by those who will not see. The words are in his Epistle to the Ephesians, Chap. ii:

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, *being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*

19 Now, therefore, ye are no more *strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints*, and of the household of God.

Paul boasted that, however much a man might claim as a Jew, he could claim more. He said (Phil. iii, 4, 5):

If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.

He has much to say about the law, meaning the Jewish religious laws and ceremonies, ten commandments, etc., and by substituting the latter words in place of *the law* in many instances much light will be thrown on his meaning (see Phil. iii, 6, 9). He has enough to say about the law in connection with Christ to indicate that he recognized difficulties there which required explaining. Whether he did so satisfactorily in all cases is not clear, but the extent of his labors in connection therewith shows that he considered the work important. He clearly taught that keeping the ten commandments alone would not save a man. If so, "then Christ is dead in vain." This matter will be treated of elsewhere.

Josephus also frequently wrote of the law in a sense that showed he referred to the ten commandments. He states, as an illustration, that the Jews requested Vitellius to not march through a part of Judea, "for that the laws of their country would not permit them to overlook these images which were brought into it, of which there were a great many in their ensigns," the law in this instance being the second commandment.

John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and St. Paul are nearly the sole actors in the beginning of Christianity. John unknowingly originated the movement and Paul enlarged its field of operations. The part that Christ performed was but little more than that of a figure. He supplied but the shadowy outlines of a short career, which each and every believer in the Christian era has filled up in his imagination according to his ideas of a God. The obscurity of Christ was an indispensable requisite to a successful adoption of his divine pretensions. It left full play for the imagination, which has done more for him than all the apostles and all the writers that ever lived.

Paul evidently possessed great command of language. This has always been a greater power than it would be if people did not so often mistake superior language for wisdom. A fine flow of words often blinds the hearer or reader to erroneous or inconsequential ideas. In those ancient times, when so few could read, it is probable that command of language was even a greater power



than it is now. Some of Paul's epistles are looked upon as quite superior, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians as an instance. Some of the sentiments it expresses, however, are not exactly true, and the virtue of charity is exaggerated, as compared to other qualities; but its words flow sweetly quite themselves, like "a tinkling cymbal."

With such command of language as he had and such strong will and persistency, he did more than any other man (all, in fact) to sustain and extend the Christian movement in the most critical time of its existence, *the years between the crucifixion and the capture of Jerusalem by Titus*. That event evidently gave an impetus to the Christian movement, as it filled the possible, because natural, prophecy of Christ, and was sufficient to prolong it into later times, when new considerations entered into its support.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ST. PAUL AND THE ASCENSION.

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PAUL knew nothing of the ascension; it had not been thought of in his time. He often spoke of the resurrection and always had reference to it only, when alluding to Jesus having arisen.

The story of the ascension grew in a natural manner and was probably not inserted in the New Testament until after the promulgation of the canonical gospels, as the only clear account of it is in the first chapter of Acts. It was an outgrowth of the unsupernatural presence of Jesus upon the earth. His ideas were simple. His second coming was to be soon—in the lifetime of his disciples—and no coming would be satisfactory unless he was seen coming “*Among the clouds with the angels, armed with great power.*” (Matt. xxiv, 30; Mark xiv, 62; Luke xxi, 27.) And, while his coming was intended to be understood as desirable for the world, the description of what it was to be is one of terror.

His predictions related mostly to Jerusalem and the temple, the destruction of the latter being magnified into a most important event. His field of operation and ideas of time and events were narrow. John the Baptist proclaimed the coming

of the Messiah, and if Jesus was that Messiah his presence fulfilled John's predictions and the prophecies of the Jews also; and now to still preach of another coming of Christ while he was yet here was equivalent to an admission that this first appearance was a disappointment and failure. It was. He did not fill their expectations, because he had been born like other people and had not *come in the clouds*, according to their ideas of a God.

This was the greatest difficulty which Christ and his disciples had to overcome. People could not believe in the divinity of a man, whose life they all knew to have been so commonplace. They said (Matt. xiii, 55, 56):

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

This was a natural criticism of one who made such pretensions. They recognized the fact that one claiming to be a God should have supernatural powers in coming to or leaving the earth, and several of the representations of Jesus evidently had their origin in efforts to overcome this difficulty. The doctrine of the immaculate conception, for instance, was an indispensable necessity on the part of those claiming that a man born like other people was, nevertheless, the Son of God.

The second coming of Christ was simply a

promise to do in the future what he should have been able to do then. He had not come in the clouds, displaying great power and glory at that time, but would do so upon another occasion, in sight of his disciples. But when long afterwards that promise still remained unfulfilled the then powerful church incorporated into the New Testament the story of the ascension. Christ had not originally come in the clouds, but they would remedy this by asserting that, at his final departure, he went up into them.

There are but two sentences in the four gospels indorsing the ascension and they only partially do so. In Luke xxiv, 51, are the words "and carried up into heaven," and in Mark xvi, 19, are the words "he was received up into heaven." This is all that the gospels contain of the ascension. In neither instance is the idea conveyed that Christ appeared bodily to ascend, as similar expressions even in our time are used in a spiritual sense, and, but for the few words in Acts i, 9, 10, there is nothing in the New Testament that would even suggest such an idea. Those words are: "He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up." These few words and the reference to it in the 22d verse of the same chapter give us all the knowledge we have of the ascension. None of the writers of the New Testament exhibits elsewhere any knowledge of that event.

When Paul was under arrest and severally examined by Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, there were two reasons why all details of his belief would be gone over. One was that the charges against him related to his doctrines, which were those that had previously led to so much disturbance. He was—

A mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

Who also hath gone about to profane the temple. (Acts xxiv, 5, 6.)

An investigation, therefore, of the charges against Paul would draw out his views in making his defense. It involved giving a history of the sect of the Nazarenes, and, consequently, a full account of Christ.

The other reason was that, in so doing, he would endeavor (as he evidently did) to convert his examiners to his doctrines. In doing this, he would necessarily repeat all the story of Christ as he understood it, and there is no one event he would have more carefully set forth than the ascension. Such a wonderful event, if true, would then have been capable of abundant proof and would have been more convincing than anything that could have been related of Christ. In fact, such an event would have been irresistible; it would be proof.

On the other hand, if there had been no ascension, then Paul must have believed that Jesus was still alive, as there was no other account of his

death after the resurrection. Festus, under all these circumstances, could not have misunderstood Paul on those two important points: the resurrection and the ascension. Both were equally supernatural and wonderful, and it is very improbable that the one should have been clearly stated and the other utterly ignored. In his account of Paul to Agrippa, Festus said:

But had certain questions against him of their own superstition and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. (Acts xxv, 19.)

In I Cor. xv, 3 to 8, Paul is represented as enumerating all the leading events in the life of Jesus, but, as usual, his narrative ends with the resurrection. We are not permitted to know what other ideas Paul may have had as to Christ after that time. If any were ever recorded, they would naturally have been eliminated by the same authorities who interpolated the ascension, and at the same time.

Paul, therefore, who was so near and who labored so much for the cause, and who could not have been ignorant of such an event as the ascension if it had occurred, gave more than his silent testimony against it. All his representations plainly end with the resurrection and he clearly conveyed the idea to Festus that he believed Jesus to be still alive.

(It is worthy of note that this mention of Jesus was made at a little earlier date than that given

by Josephus of the man Jesus in Tiberias, who was leader of a band of mariners and poor people.)

Strauss<sup>1</sup> says:

Thus it is undeniable that the above evangelists were ignorant of the ascension; but the conclusion of the most recent criticism, that this ignorance is a reproach to the first evangelist as a sign of his unapostolic character, is the less in place here because the event in question is rendered suspicious not merely by the silence of two evangelists, but also by the want of agreement between those who narrate it. Mark is at variance with Luke; nay, Luke is at variance with himself. In the account of the former it appears as if Jesus had ascended into heaven immediately from the meal at which he appeared unto the eleven; consequently from out of a house in Jerusalem. \* \* \* Now an ascent into heaven directly out of a room is certainly not easy to imagine; hence Luke represents it as taking place in the open air. In his gospel he makes Jesus immediately before his ascension lead out his disciples *as far as Bethany*, but in the Acts he places the scene on the mount called Olivet. This, however, cannot be imputed to him as a contradiction, since Bethany lay in the neighborhood of the Mount of Olives.

Paul claimed to be a Roman citizen, although his right to do so is not apparent. This was in the height of the glory of Roman citizenship, and any false pretense of it was often punished with death. When he was before both Felix and Festus he was in a position where his discharge involved greater danger than would his trial by the Roman officers. Surrounded as he was with enemies, he

<sup>1</sup> Life of Jesus, page 863.

could not have gotten out of Judea alive. Under such circumstances, claiming to be a Roman and appealing to the emperor would give him considerable time, with the chance that his explanation of the cause of his claiming the rights of a Roman citizen might excuse the act. He is represented as having made this claim on a previous occasion, but that instance involved no danger in making it. Felix, Festus, and Agrippa were all willing to discharge him, and if he had two trials in Rome, as represented, may it not be that his second trial was upon a charge of his having unlawfully claimed the rights of a Roman, involving as it did transportation to Rome, and that he was put to death for that reason?

When he was a prisoner in Rome and in danger of death, the epistles he then wrote breathe a more religious spirit than was usual with him. Take as an example Phil. iv, 8:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Sentiments of this nature are natural and would be advanced in substance by thousands in any age, according to the degree of their intelligence. Their spirit was created with us and was never for a moment indebted to Christ, the apostles, or anything in the Bible. Precisely what Irving said of Mohammedanism may be said of Christianity:



*It is a great truth coupled with a great falsehood.* There is but one God and for such divine directions as he wishes to give us he needs neither Mohammed nor Christ.

There were evidently no Christians in Rome when Paul arrived there. The brethren he met were his Jew brethren. They had never heard of Paul, but had heard of the sect he represented and they stated that they were everywhere spoken against. (Acts xxviii, 22.) They had a natural curiosity to hear this new and strange Jewish doctrine, but his denunciation of them in the 25th to 28th verses of that chapter indicates that he met with unsatisfactory results. In the last-mentioned verse he again turns to the Gentiles. The spirit of it is that if the Jews would not receive salvation it would be given to the Gentiles.

Paul's Jewish belief was as strong in him as his belief in Christ, and his virtual expulsion from Judea was quite as serious to him as excommunication would have been. In his Epistle to the Hebrews and in Acts xxi, it is disclosed that he weakened in the exalted position given Jesus and was willing to both retract and bring him down somewhat if he (Paul) could be restored to favor with his countrymen. The charges as recorded in the 21st verse of the last-mentioned chapter were true. Paul had taught in substance as therein stated that salvation was secured through faith in Christ alone; that it was not necessary to be a Jew or be circumcised or have knowledge of

the laws of Moses. The passages have not been so modified but that it can be clearly seen that the brethren were censuring Paul and recommending him to purify himself, that "all may know that these charges were nothing;" that is to say, that he now repudiates them (xxi, 24). Paul's compliance with this request by a ceremony which it took seven days to perform is a virtual retraction of those sentiments to which he owes his fame. His being requested to purify and the detailed directions given show that that ceremony was not one he had, for other causes, deemed it necessary to perform. This was immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem, where he had probably gone to stay, as indicated by this submission and by his having taken leave of foreign churches by representing that they would see his face no more.

In his Epistle to the Hebrews he wrote that Jesus was called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec (v, 6, 10; vi, 20, etc.), a supernatural personage whom he describes as having been without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually. Now consider, he says, how great this man was, for the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the spoils, whereas the most favored tribes were made to pay Abraham a tenth. He goes on to show Melchisedec to be quite outside of and superior to the tribes of Israel and the laws of Moses, to whom he was unknown.

He enlarges at some length upon Melchisedec, chiefly in Chap. vii, and in his whole description he plainly draws a parallel with Christ with the evident intention of showing his broad claim for Christ to be simply a renewal of claims they had previously accepted and ought to accept again. Melchisedec, he says, *was like the Son of God*, and he places him at the head of an order of priesthood wherein Christ follows in a secondary position.

In efforts to explain away Paul's account of Melchisedec, the words, *without father, without mother, without descent*, are represented to mean *without pedigree*. This is a weak evasion and has no bearing upon the most important part of the question. Paul had good command of language and would not have so expressed himself. If the pedigree of noted characters had been a matter of interest to him, he would have manifested it in the case of others. This explanation would make it appear that Paul gave the absence of Melchisedec's pedigree as one of his marked similarities to Christ. But the gospel-writers, in their eagerness to give Jesus a pedigree, succeeded in giving him two.

This subterfuge does not explain Paul's further statement that Melchisedec had neither beginning nor end of life. He said he was "like unto the Son of God," and hence the lower Paul is shown to have placed Melchisedec the lower he placed Christ, for to show a similarity between them was his only object.

Melchizedek, king of Salem, is mentioned in Genesis xiv, 18, and Abraham's return from the slaughter of the kings, but the remainder of Paul's account is not given. This suggests the question as to how much of the Jewish books was excluded from the Bible that ought to have been admitted. Belief in the divinity of Christ enforced a belief in the sacredness of those books, but this enforced acceptance would naturally be objectionable and would be resisted as far as possible. No books were evidently accepted except those referred to by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament; but there is nothing to show that all so referred to were admitted. Paul in this instance refers to records of which the Christian world knows nothing, but which must have originally formed a part of those works which the church now calls the Word of God. As it is, the New Testament is said to refer to 31 of the 39 books of the Old Testament, and those 31 no doubt refer to the other 8 and more.

Paul never had the faintest conception of the pinnacle upon which he was standing. He knew nothing of the renown that awaited him and of the vast importance that would be attached to his letters. The temporary nature of his religion did not admit of the thought that time and fame would bring together those widely scattered epistles and canonize their contents as the inspired wisdom of God. That which he wrote to his countrymen he thought only his countrymen would read, and

hence, in his anxiety to placate them and be restored to favor, he burdened the church with Melchisedec. According to him this man was a god, and yet the church has not been able to accept him (Melchisedec), as there were already three in the Godhead and a fourth was too much even for Christian credulity. That part of Paul's account is therefore numbered with the many parts of the Bible which Christians pretend to believe, but wholly ignore.

Contrast the full account given of Melchisedec with the limited account of the ascension. The church needed the latter; hence upon the basis of a couple of sentences it has always put forth its finest efforts in language and paintings; but Melchisedec was in the way and he has therefore been left in unexplained obscurity.<sup>1</sup>

Even the resurrection is but weakly asserted in the gospels. Matthew mentions but two instances of Christ's appearance and those were in the nature of an apparition, where *some doubted*. According to Mark he appeared three times, first to one who did not recognize him, then in a different form to two others who also did not know him, and finally to the eleven, making fourteen in all. Luke mentions but two instances, and he was not known at first in either. The Fourth Gospel adds an appearance in Galilee, but still unrecog-

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<sup>1</sup> Melchisedec is supposed to have been the founder of Jerusalem, about 2050 B.C.—*Dean's History of Civilization*.

nized. In other words, the gospels mention two, or possibly three, instances of an appearance of Jesus after the crucifixion, and they admit that the very few witnesses did not at first recognize him and some doubted even then. Paul is made to say (1 Cor. xv, 6) that he was seen by five hundred, but this testimony came far too late. It is inconsistent with Paul's silence on that point upon other occasions and inconsistent with all other accounts. Its late date and the importance of the item concentrated in a few words show that it is an interpolation and demonstrate that the church had in those later times become awake to the need of more witnesses of the resurrection.

In confidently believing that which leads to such vast results upon such slight evidence, the Christian does not make so much of an exhibition of his devotion to Christ as he does of his devotion to the sanctity of credulity.

It is said that so many eyes have been fastened upon the Bible that from necessity it has come down to us through later centuries unaltered. But two incidents related of Paul suggest that this may be a theory only, and not strictly true. Throughout most of the Christian era there were few who would be disposed to point out any alterations if discovered, and even at the present time, if some old manuscript or other evidence should be unearthed that contained matter unfavorable to the truth of that book, our most honest and intelligent ecclesiastics would not perceive that it was

their religious duty to make known such discovery, but, on the contrary, they would treat it as an occasion for sorrow and tears, and one which if possible should be relegated back to oblivion. The incidents referred to are narrated in the following verses:

And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. (Acts xx, 9.)

And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. (II Cor. xi, 33.)

The interest in these incidents centers in the fact that there were no windows in use in those times, nor for many hundred years thereafter. Thomas Hope, in his *Historical Essay on Architecture*, states that—

The ancients seem long to have manufactured vases and other portable objects of glass ere they thought of applying that close and yet diaphanous substance to its most useful and agreeable purpose: that of excluding from apartments the cold and wet of the atmosphere, while admitting all the heat and light of the sun; and the want of the thin plates of glass, now used for that purpose, only permitted them to throw into apartments a considerable body of light, by exposing them at the same time to every inclemency of the weather, or, to protect them effectually against wet and wind, by excluding in the same proportion all daylight and contenting themselves with the dim glare of lamps. In general, it caused them to seek a medium between the two extremes by suffering a few straggling rays of light to penetrate athwart the

ends of the rafters that lay on the walls and formed the ceiling, or by introducing immediately under the shelter and projection of the eaves a sort of wide, low window, which, only commencing, for the sake of restricting its perpendicular opening and permeability, high from the floor, afforded no view of external objects. These restraints, as we before observed, influenced the whole of their architectural system: it caused the smaller temples to receive the requisite light through an enormous door, always open, and the larger ones to remain hypæthral, and thus, even within, little better than external courts; and such was not only the magnificent Temple of Minerva at Athens, but even the Pantheon at Rome, of which the round central opening only shows all the beauties by permitting every passing shower to deluge its gorgeous pavement. It caused the dwelling-houses, for seclusion as well as safety, to shun all windows outside; to have every aperture for light, as for egress, turned inwardly to a vast open court or impletorium, and only to present to the street, instead of the multifarious windows of modern habitations, an impenetrable dead wall; it even caused so many apartments of every sort to be left, for warmth and comfort, entirely destitute of windows, or apertures for daylight, of every description, that in the baths of Titus the fine group of the Laocoön was found in a room which, however glittering with precious marbles, depended entirely, for the light that made them visible, on artificial illumination.

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Later, indeed, than Theodosius, in some funeral chapels, such as that built at Ravenna by Galla Placidia for all her near relations, and by Constantia for her father, the windows, probably by way of increasing the gloom, were still so narrow as to resemble mere loopholes; and afterwards,



in conventual churches, it again became the general rule to so contract the windows, as to clog their openings by intervening pillars, that they scarcely admitted any direct light.

More than two hundred years after Paul's time, Diocletian, after his abdication, built a palace that was much celebrated for its magnificence. He had been Emperor about twenty years and must necessarily have brought to bear all the architectural knowledge of his age. Gibbon gives a description of this palace, in which he says:

But they [the rooms] all were attended with two imperfections, very repugnant to our modern notions of taste and conveniency. These stately rooms had neither windows nor chimneys. They were lighted from the top (for the building seems to have consisted of no more than one story) and they received their heat by the help of pipes that were conveyed along the walls.

Pompeii was buried under the mud and ashes of Vesuvius about 20 or 30 years after the time of Paul, and the absence of windows in its ruins gives the streets a desolate and prisonlike appearance. The rare openings that were possible at that time were not such as a man could fall out of. Those two incidents have a wonderfully modern sound and could not have been in the New Testament until many hundred years after the time referred to. It may be represented that the first-mentioned incident indicates God's displeasure at any dereliction of duty to the clergy, and that was the abundant motive for its interpolation.

There has been much speculation as to whether Paul ever saw Jesus or not. The circumstances indicate that he did. He said he was a Pharisee and he was one of the most bitter in persecuting the disciples. He was present when Stephen was stoned to death, to which he consented, and "kept the raiment of them that slew him." He therefore had to the fullest extent those prevailing feelings among the people that forced Pilate to consent to the crucifixion, and, necessarily, he must have become possessed of those feelings from the same cause. It is true, he might have been absent at the time and have known of those events only by common report. But the mind is never so much impressed by verbal accounts of exciting events as it is by witnessing them. Certainly, verbal accounts would not raise greater feelings than were produced in those that took part in those events, particularly in a man like Paul, whose persistency in his purposes indicates anything but a flighty mind.

Necessarily, before his conversion, he must have been equally devoted to the Jewish faith, as is indicated by his bitterness against Christ's followers. To men of such sentiments as his then were, there was no act so unforgivable as taking enforced possession of their temple. Necessarily, too, the amount of feeling such desecration would raise in each would be measured by the extent of their natural religious mental faculty, and, as stated, it was evidently large in Paul. He must have

imbibed those feelings against Christ by personal observation. His subsequent labors would cause him to be reticent upon any offensive part he might have then taken. His reticence, therefore, is evidence that he did take part rather than the contrary, for he was too near those events and had too much bitterness of feeling to have not seen Christ during the tumults in Jerusalem, and he would have so stated if his part at the time had been such as to be unobjectionable in his new belief. It is probable, therefore, that Paul did see Christ, that he was among those Pharisees who clamored for his crucifixion, and that he was a witness of it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FAITH.

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ONE feature peculiar to the Christian system is the supposition that faith is often tried by the wickedness of this world. It is pictured as a cross upon a rock in the midst of a dark and stormy sea, and it is implied that only by most devout watchfulness and care can faith be retained. It is being constantly held up as the Christian hope and salvation. Fully a fourth of all sermons and Christian writings are devoted to it. The word beautifully decorated in countless ways is constantly kept in view and the importance of the thing itself for the maintenance of their system is ever before them. As the soldier nerves himself to brave the dangers of battle, so does the Christian believer nerve himself to withstand the many severe trials upon his faith that he is made to believe he will encounter in his dealings with the world.

But if this be true it is important to know just where his faith will be most severely attacked in order that he may be upon his guard and call in such help as he can to sustain himself. Necessarily he does not experience those trials in church, for it is

there that he is fortified and confirmed in the supposed importance of it. His trials must necessarily be when he is away from those influences and when, for the time, he is guided by his own mind alone. To understand the Christian's trial of faith, therefore, we need to look to his experience outside of rather than within the church. But, in all transactions with other people of every name and nature, there is but one moral question for each party to consider, and that is to see that they deal conscientiously with one another. In his dealing with others, if the believer is cheated, that circumstance has no bearing upon his faith. He may regret the dishonesty of those who cheated him, but it will not in the least disturb his religious opinions.

But if he himself should happen to be the guilty person, he will find that the teachings of Christianity will lull his mind to quietness and rest. Only within it is there tenderness expressed for such acts. Only there is he taught that his sin may be forgiven; and, though often repeated, it may still as often be forgiven. It is only there that his sin is obscured and made to seem exceedingly small through contrast with a great, mysterious, and unjust load of sin inherited through Adam's fall; and it is only there that he is taught that by faith he may be released from the consequences of his inherited sins and also from the consequences of those delinquencies for which Adam was not responsible. He has no trials of

faith here, for faith is especially adapted to those who have been wicked or contemplate being so. It is a license rather than the contrary to the tempted. In no place can the Christian retain his faith with such ease as in those transactions wherein his own integrity is at fault. The Christian's faith never undergoes trials in business.

And yet there are times when the faith of the intelligent Christian is most severely tried, when, but for early associations and the opinions of others, he would be "ingulfed in the waves of unbelief." He may study the works of God and find his study expanding more and more with rich new discoveries, and, instead of those of a late date conflicting with those of a former, he will find they only the more increase his admiration and wonder of God. The field for further exploration of His works is unlimited, and the facts found by one generation always perfectly agree with those found by the generation before. Whatever branch of God's works he may adopt he will always find it above the comprehension of man. Much may have been discovered, but it will be small as compared with that yet to be discovered. It is only after contemplation of those works, and when he turns to his Bible and reads of the ideas of God as expressed by its writers, that the intelligent Christian's faith is tried.

The believer's trials of faith lie wholly between the works of God and that which they call the word of God. The test which the works of God, as

measured by man's understanding, always bear the so-called word of God never bears. The latter can be understood fully. The ignorance and superstition of its writers are plainly exposed in their works, their ideas and motives may be easily accounted for, and the developments of time are constantly widening the gap between those ideas and the better known works of God. The people at large do nothing to disturb the faith of the Christian. He can avoid all study of any of God's works and his life-long schooling in the supposed virtue of faith will secure its retention unclouded with the least doubt. The writers of the Bible knew comparatively nothing of the works of God, and if their followers do not wish to doubt their statements they must keep their own knowledge down to a level with those writers. Whenever the believer tries to explain away parts of the Bible, either by the favorite plan of allegory or in any other manner, he is simply shuffling between his better knowledge and his faith, between the enlightenment of our times and the ignorance of the past.

Faith is the abdication of reason. Paul tried to defend it from some such a charge as this with the negative argument that "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Cor. iii, 19), and expressed the same determination in regard to it that Falstaff did with honor, *he would have none of it*. So with Paul, he would know nothing "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (I Cor. ii, 2.)

His ideas of *opposition of science* were that it was *profane babblings*, and experience seemed to have taught him, not to combat, but to avoid it. (I Tim. vi, 20.)

And yet Paul wrote nothing more directly to the point than this. The end in view was to convince as many as he could that Jesus was the Son of God, and the reasons he had to offer in proof were such as only the most ignorant, most superstitious, most credulous, could accept; and hence he advocated avoidance of anything that tended to elevate the people above that condition. He instinctively recognized the point just stated, that, to keep faith in Jesus pure, the believer's intelligence must not be above the superstitious nature of the evidence.

It is not true that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. It is wisdom so far as it goes, even though it is insufficient to guide the universe. A man might as well willfully close his eyes and stumble around in the dark because artificial light does not equal the light of the sun as to willfully refuse to avail himself of such wisdom as man possesses. Even that narrow limit is a large enough ocean for the intellect of those who presume to criticise the management of that God by asserting that he made a partial failure in his control of the human race. The question of faith is a very small one. There is nothing complicated about it. It came through a natural succession of simple circumstances and can be easily under-



stood by those who will look at it in the unshaded light of their intelligence.

The following, taken from the eighth chapter of Matthew, is an illustration of the ideas of a God as manifested by the so-called inspired writer, and, if his judgment therein had been reliable, this incident would have filled us with equally as much awe as it did him. Such difference as time would have developed would tend to disclose new proofs of Jesus' divine power which those ancient writers did not see. Whether we have growing admiration or growing disgust for such accounts as this is dependent upon whether we believe that Jesus was or was not the Son of God. As before stated, I believe this to be allegorical and that it refers to another Jesus; but it is deemed worthy of a place in all the synoptic gospels as the inspired word of God, and Christianity, therefore, is responsible for such intelligence as it displays.

28 And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine, feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they

were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

\* \* \* \* \*

34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

The strength of that feeling which holds us to our duty to our families and our fellow men is an exhibition of the power of our Creator to make us know that which it is indispensable we should know. But Christians represent God as solliciting us to know that Jesus Christ was His son and as proposing by such accounts as this to fix that all-important item of knowledge in our minds. This incident makes as strong demand upon our faith as anything in the Bible. It has precisely the same authority and is given as one of the important evidences of the divinity of Christ. It was in the full belief of such incidents as this that the first converts were made, and they were the only Christians who ever judged of this question on its merits. People who were deranged they supposed were possessed by devils. Their superstitious fears of devils were great, and no power that Jesus could be said to possess would sooner attract their attention or would more excite their wonder and awe. The men who were won over to Jesus by such stories as this were the men who fastened the Christian superstition upon the world; for after their time other motives and interests en-

tered in to support it and the opportunity for independent judgment never came again. Until recently, however, all believers within the Christian era have believed in just such stories as this.

Although believers make so much of their self-created virtue, faith, there was much believed by the highest of the early Christian authorities that is not believed by their successors in our time. While decrying unbelievers in general, they are themselves unbelievers in certain details. The existence of a devil is denied by the more intelligent supporters of the divinity of Christ. But there is no other thing more persistently set forth throughout the Bible, nor more profoundly believed by Christ and his disciples. The devil is represented as possessing powers quite equal with God Himself; in fact the doctrine of the atonement implies even greater power on the part of Satan in some respects. The pretense of saving the world is dependent upon there being a devil from whom to save it. So much of the system throughout is interwoven with accounts of the devil, so much of its story and machinery is with especial reference to him, that belief in the devil (sometimes respectfully called the Adversary) is as fully a dogma of the Christian system as belief in Christ. The devil is the cornerstone of that system; without him the whole fabric must fall. This has of late been a question of embarrassment to the church, as instances have occurred where it has

been necessary to act upon it, and the absurdity and humiliation of expelling a member for heresy because he did not believe in a devil were fully recognized.

The Christian whose faith does not include belief in the devil insults the intelligence of his savior and denies that there was any necessity for his coming. Christ says: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord" (Matt. x, 24); therefore anything that he believed must not be doubted by his followers. He not only believed in a devil, but he believed in a variety of devils. He said (Mark ix, 29) in reference to a devil that was particularly hard to expel that "*This kind* can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

In the account of Christ in the wilderness the devil is referred to in respectful terms and his power treated as though it was practically unlimited.

According to Jude the brother of Jesus, even Moses was claimed by the devil, and as high authority as the archangel Michael "durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." (Jude, 9th verse.)

Necessarily, therefore, all orthodox Christians must believe in the devil as fully as in Christ. However opposite they may be in character, they are inseparable in the system. Faith must include them both.

The author of *The Unseen Universe* quotes the

following from *The Lord's Prayer*, a book written by Rev. Charles Parsons Reichel, B. D. :

If the testimony of Scripture be deemed sufficient, then I cannot see that it is possible to deny the personal existence of Satan any more than that of God. *How* Satan exists or where at the present time, or how his power avails, as we are told it does, to contrive and suggest temptations to the mind of man, and to what extent he is aware of what is passing in men's minds, so as to adapt his suggestions to their weakness, we are not told, and do not therefore know. But our not being told the manner in which his power is exercised and brought to bear, is no proof of the unreality of that fearful Being who is everywhere in the New Testament exhibited as the adversary of God and goodness, whether in the individual or in the development of the human race.

The story of Jonah in the whale's belly is also rejected by many within the system, but Christ believed it. He said (Matt. xii, 40): "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

The fabulous character of the Bible account of Noah and the flood is now established beyond the possibility of doubt; yet Jesus believed that account. (See Matt. xxiv, 37, 38, 39.)

We are told that Christ lived and died as much for us as for those of his own time. It was, therefore, just as important that he should have devoted some time to convincing the generations to come, in that which it was so important to believe, as to convincing those in his presence. This he could

easily have done by announcing facts then unknown, but which have since been learned and have done much to elevate mankind. Christ and his followers were bitter against idolators, and, as there were worshipers of the sun in those days, he could have done much to prevent that form of idolatry and could have greatly enhanced human knowledge by explaining what is now known of the sun and solar system. Thus also would he have prevented the manifest absurdity of a belief in the successful effort which Joshua is credited with having made in upsetting our whole planetary system by causing the wrong body to stand still. Churchmen now at times endeavor to belittle what is known in astronomy by showing what astronomers do *not* know and also by ridiculing their former theories, which are now acknowledged to be erroneous, and give that as a reason for ignoring facts about which there is no question whatever. Our first lessons alone in that study are enough to expose the ignorance of the so-called inspired writers. There was not a man then in existence who knew that the world was round or that the sun did not move around it daily. Nothing could have been so convincing of Christ's supernatural powers as would have been such an exhibition of knowledge of important facts then unknown. If he had been what he is represented as being, it would have been a very simple matter to leave not the least doubt upon that question.

The steam engine has conducted more to the

prosperity of the world within this century than has all that Christians claim for Christianity within its more than eighteen hundred years of existence. All machinery has come into use within a very short time, the invention of the steam engine having led to its introduction. It has revolutionized the world and has been one of mankind's greatest blessings. It has done much to secure "peace on earth, good will toward men," a service which Christianity promised, but never rendered. If Christ had given the world the steam engine, he would indeed have appeared like a god. No miracle could have astonished his disciples more and no effects could have been so convincing to subsequent generations.

Said Thos. H. Benton, in a speech in the United States Senate:

Christ and the apostles appeared in a province of the Roman empire when that empire was called the Roman world and that world was filled with slaves. Forty millions was the estimated number, being one-fourth of the whole population. A freedman, one who had himself been a slave, died the possessor of four thousand; such were the numbers. The right of the owners over this multitude of human beings was that of life and death, without protection from law or mitigation from public sentiment. The scourge, the cross, the fish-pond, the den of the wild beasts, and the arena of the gladiator were the lot of the slave, upon the slightest expression of the master's will. A law of incredible atrocity made all slaves responsible with their own lives for the life of their master. It was the law that condemned the whole

household of slaves to death in case of the assassination of the master, a law under which as many as four hundred have been executed at a time. And these slaves were the white people of Europe and of Asia Minor, the Greeks and other nations, from which the present inhabitants of the world derive the most valuable productions of the human mind. Christ saw all this, the number of the slaves, their hapless condition, and their white color, which was the same with his own; yet he said nothing against slavery.

The short Epistle by James, in the New Testament, was probably inserted for the same reason that caused the insertion of the Epistle of Peter. It would not do to pass by the brother of Jesus, even though his doctrines were objectionable. He evidently confined himself to Judea, and his sentiments were promulgated before the wide interest of the church had developed wants in conflict with them. That epistle is clearly by a different writer, as it is in marked contrast with the others and breathes a purer religious spirit and has less objectionable matter than any other book in the New Testament. It also exhibits a slight family resemblance to Jesus in ideas, by the severe denunciations which James makes against the rich. Those two were more severe upon that class than were any others named in the New Testament. In his address, given in Acts xv, and in his epistle, a slight personal characteristic is manifested in the frequent use of the words "my brethren."

In his time, the few believers had not yet awak-



ened to the fact that, to make people believe that Jesus was the Son of God, there must be a consideration attached to, and obtainable only through, that belief. If heaven could be reached without that faith, then such faith was unimportant and unnecessary. But this was unknown in James's time, and he, consequently, gave an honest and natural opinion of the relation that faith should bear to works. His views are clearly set forth in the second chapter, wherein it will be seen that he takes direct issue with Paul, the writer of the Gospel of John, the Westminster Catechism, and the church generally.

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

\* \* \* \* \*

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works? \* \* \*

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

But Paul, in particular, repeatedly taught exactly the contrary. Two instances are here quoted:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law [the ten commandments], but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal. ii, 16.)

For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians ii, 8, 9.)

According to this, boasting of good acts is so objectionable that, rather than incur that danger, the individual would better not cultivate them, but base his expectations of salvation upon his involuntarily inherited ideas of Christ. Certainly, a man who has no other claim to goodness than his faith has nothing in his works to boast of, and the less that is said of them the better it will be for his reputation.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans is chiefly devoted to two subjects: one, the admission of Gentiles, and the other, this question of justification by faith alone, which he establishes in chapters v, vi, ix, and x, and also in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians.

The answer to the thirty-third question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is:

Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

It is also further explained in a note that—

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity; and an error about justification is dangerous, like a crack in the foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life; and to have the poison of corrupt doctrines cast into this spring is to destroy life. If it be asked, How can it stand with God's justice and holiness to

pronounce us innocent when we are guilty? this answers it: Christ having made satisfaction for our sins, now God may, in equity and justice, pronounce us righteous.

The catechism gives the ten commandments in full and then instructs that those commands cannot be kept.

Question 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

Answer. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

A man's temptation and his disposition to resist are but partly measured by his natural religious propensities. When, for instance, he has large self-esteem he will judge of things very mildly, and such teachings as the above give him a wide margin for interpretation as to how much of those commandments it is safe to ignore. The Christian system terrorizes with representations of fictitious sins of its own creation, and, if the easy escape which it provides from the consequences of sin only covered its imaginary one, it would to that extent be harmless in such teachings. But the conceit of many leads them to self-indulgence that carries them beyond those imaginary sins into others of which but for such teachings they would not have been guilty.

In a retrospect of ourselves it is natural that we should judge of our character by a general summing up of all our acts, good and bad; but the

fact that in so doing we partly offset the bad because of its association with a large amount of that which is commendable greatly adds to the importance of obtaining a correct knowledge of what is commendable. A false standard of right and wrong will in this be a cause of dangerous self-ignorance and permit a corrupt man to complacently rest in his abundant practice of fictitious virtues and useless ceremonies.

Many people boast greatly of the ten commandments, asserting that without the Bible we should never have had the ideas of right and wrong which they convey. Nevertheless, they teach us that we cannot keep those commandments, after which we are taught that in lieu of them we may be saved, so far as works are concerned, by performing those acts that involve the support of the priesthood. A careful examination of the exact things that we must do will show that those things cannot be done without the service of pastor or priest, and consequently without a proportionate contribution to his support. And it will also be found that it is only upon those acts requiring such service of pastor or priest that the church is exacting. Many of its false virtues consist in that which necessitates making use of those officers and many of its false sins in ignoring them. To those who will follow its false virtues, it is very indulgent as to their actual wrongdoings with their fellow men.

The necessities of the situation oblige churchmen to insist that a high sense of honor and moral-

ity will be the natural result of the practice of their sentimental requirements, and failure therein exposes the uselessness of such practices. For this reason church authorities will usually pass over in silence the dishonorable conduct of communicants rather than advertise their failure by trial and expulsion.

On the other hand trials for heresy magnify the pretended importance of their doctrines and glorify them by the exhibition of a seemingly delicate sensibility to piety. Hence in such cases churchmen are prompt and merciless. The men who condone offenses which religion is intended to prevent will fill the world with their disputes regarding conditions prevailing in a future existence of which they know absolutely nothing. The Presbyterian church just now supplies a notable illustration of this in its trial of Dr. Briggs for heresy and in its ignoring charges of fraud and perjury made against an equally well-known clergyman. These charges were revived and printed in the *New York Sun* on or about March 2, 1890.

Keeping the Sabbath day as directed by the church is a virtue wholly within the system; but those who comply with its directions therein are seldom disturbed by it in any dishonorable acts of which they may be guilty. The pecuniary interest of the church would be injured rather than advanced by such discipline and it therefore silently ignores wrongs of the latter nature. In the fol-

lowing instructions we are directed to the church's chief source of pecuniary support.

Question 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

Audiences are as necessary for the support of churches as for the support of theaters; without them the priesthood's salaries would not be paid and the whole system would become extinct. How to secure audiences, therefore, became a question of the greatest magnitude and has gradually grown to be the chief one to which its efforts are directed. In these last several answers, attendance upon

church service is made to be of more importance than keeping the ten commandments. The church grants its absolution to those who fail to keep the latter, provided they will observe its ordinances, which it represents in substance to be attendance at church. It even claims that attendance to be the only exhibition of faith in Christ.

The church thus teaches that which simply amounts to an exaltation of the priesthood, to which end devotion to Christ has always been a secondary matter. Not that any body of men within it necessarily deliberately adopted such a policy for personal ends. The church felt the pressure and involuntarily sought its own worldly welfare, in doing which it became diverted from the true object of religion and gradually centered all its discipline upon that which secures the pecuniary and social interest of those who make its doctrines.

In Acts v, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, is recorded the fable of Ananias having been struck dead for withholding some of his property from the church by denying to Peter any knowledge of part of it. The gospel states that only a few weeks before Peter himself had lied by denying with oaths any knowledge of Christ (Mat. xxvi, 70, 72, 74). These two events are located near together as to time, but the authorship of them is separated by about two hundred years. Peter's denial was written at an early day by a more honest writer, who, no doubt, believed the tradition he was recording and was in-

tent upon exhibiting Christ as a prophet having supernatural knowledge of all events attending his coming crucifixion. But the story of Ananias was written when two centuries had developed as numerous officers and as great personal interest in church property in proportion to numbers as exist to-day. These officers were already diverting the superstition that made their religion into channels that exalted themselves. Though representing Ananias to have been punished for lying, it is clear that the offense consisted in the effect of that particular lie.

In the case of Peter's triple denial of his Lord (as held in the church) punishment had no bearing upon the idea to be impressed upon the mind of the reader; hence there was no punishment. In the case of Ananias's denial and consequent withholding of part of his property, to show punishment for so doing was the sole object of the story; hence that punishment was made as awful as possible. The inference to be drawn from these two accounts is that those ancient church authorities regarded their worldly interests as not only more sacred than Christ, but that it was the only thing in the system that was sacred.

The catechism is necessarily in accord with the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion as given in the Episcopal Prayer Book, the latter adding in substance (Art. XIII) that good works performed by an unbeliever "are not pleasant to God" because they do not spring from faith in Jesus Christ,



“*neither do they make men meet to receive grace,*” and further stating that “we doubt not but they [the unbeliever’s good works] have the nature of sin.”

Those articles have been prepared with extreme care and the phraseology was critically studied by large numbers of men who were particularly skilled in language. This fact gives a significance to the words “we doubt not” that their ordinary use would not convey. If they really did not doubt, it was not necessary to make use of those words. Those men were carefully presenting their, to them, all-important articles of religion, the confident, unquestioning, abounding belief in which is the burden of all their teachings. In others of those articles they had designated a *lively* faith as especially desirable, and now they themselves studiously and weakly express an important article of that faith, which article is an unavoidable conclusion to the doctrine upon which Christianity is founded. If faith in Christ be indispensable for salvation, then the virtuous, upright, honorable conduct of those who repudiate him must be defined, and it must be defined as wicked or the only value in faith is lost. This service, though disagreeable, was insurmountable; it could not be shirked; but the words “we doubt not” show that in their enforced labors those many ecclesiastics felt the shame they ought to have felt in the disgraceful and wicked position which the logical necessities of their doctrines obliged them to take.

What is religion for if it be not to make men

virtuous and honorable? If there were but one God there could be no such complications, but in ancient times there had been for two or three generations a tradition among a very few ignorant men that a certain obscure man was also God, and it was to sustain the truth of that tradition that those men stultified themselves and decried and pronounced wicked the exact service for which God created the religious faculties.

The circumstances that caused the promulgation of those articles of religion and the chain of circumstances that led to the deification of Christ were almost distinct from each other, there being but slight connection between the two. The last has been enumerated in the last part of Chap. x, while the former was the growth of time, they being, as stated, but enforced explanations which have been rearranged from time to time as the necessities of the age demanded. The divinity of Christ and the comfortable places of his ministers must stand or fall together, and history shows that the priesthood have never hesitated at any act of shame which by sustaining the one would equally sustain the other.

A proclamation of rules and regulations, followed by a notice that they cannot be kept, is equivalent to granting a license for what might not otherwise have been thought of, and is, therefore, worse than no proclamation at all. It is as though the park authorities had posted notices requiring visitors "To keep off the grass, to pluck

no flowers, to not stone the swans," and visitors had then been instructed by the park police that none could keep all those rules. Such a notice would be a license to pluck the flowers and would suggest stoning the swans to boys who otherwise might not have thought of so doing. Those rules also would command still less respect and be the more violated if they were encumbered with some that were useless and unnatural, such as "That visitors are not to admire anything belonging to others." And if these latter rules were supposed to be the only ones the authorities had in mind in noting that none could keep all the rules, such notice would none the less lead to violation of all the others. If, furthermore, the park police should instruct visitors that, instead of observing those rules of the higher authorities, it was only necessary to employ them (the police) in certain trifling service calling for fees, we would in this have an exact parallel with the Christian system as taught by the Westminster Catechism and the church generally.

Every commandment that ought to be kept may be kept, and it is folly to obscure such with useless and unnatural commandments that none obeys or is expected to obey. Resisting temptation requires an effort of the mind often involving intense mental labor. If the temptation is not resisted it will in all cases be an injury to the man himself or to somebody else. The reason for resisting is always because of the clearly recognized

evil consequences that will follow if the temptation be yielded to. But those who believe in *justification by faith* will have less fear of the consequences of yielding to temptation and will have correspondingly less power to resist.

Religious works are of a negative nature. They do not consist so much in what a man does as in what he resists doing. Wherein a man's natural disposition leads him to do his duty, he has no occasion for further incitement through religious motives. It is only where certain mental faculties are below what they should be, and consequently expose him to temptation, that he has chief cause to strengthen his weak powers by a realization of the greater consequences that may follow his contemplated wrong than are apparent in this life alone. The exact point where religion is wanted is where there is temptation, *and religious work consists in resisting temptation*. To teach, therefore, that faith is superior to works is equivalent to teaching that it is better to believe in Christ than to resist temptation. It is equivalent to teaching that a man may ruin his neighbor and escape all consequences through *repentance unto life* and faith in Christ. The church does teach this.

Only wrong acts—that is to say, wrong works—cause evil consequences and mental pain. If it could be possible that for a time there should be a total failure of a faculty—for instance, the faculty of honor—such temporary suspension would make no difference either to others or to ourselves pro-

vided that during that time we committed no act calling up that faculty. Or, on the other hand, if we are tempted to violate our honor, but finally resist the temptation, that faculty will have done its duty even though our minds long dwelt upon the question of doing an act that honor required we should not do. The temptation comes through a desire to gratify other faculties, which, in their respective branches, are also important; honor is simply a check upon those faculties when their exercise or gratification trenches upon the rights of others, and, if at such times those rights are duly respected and protected, the faculty of honor will have done the exact service for which it was created. The temptation, therefore, is not unnatural, nor always seriously reprehensible, and, if resisted, no sin will have been committed; but, on the contrary, those are the very acts that are especially designated as good. We admire them and call them good because of the self-control or sacrifices that were necessary to perform them. Such works are religious works, and there is no object in having the religious faculties, except to insure their performance.

The church defines religion to be but a sentiment, a mere matter of belief, and represents its outward manifestation to consist in ceremonies presided over by those who hold themselves up to be divinely appointed agents of God; while the all-important duties of the religious faculties are left to a simple inference that those duties are

inseparable from a belief in Jesus Christ. The Christian system thus becomes a license to wrongdoing because it substitutes an easy thing to do in place of that which it is hard to do and because it addresses itself to that which is to be done after the wrong is committed rather than before. Repentance *unto life* and faith in Christ are its panacea for all moral evils in the past and an implied preventive for all in the future; and even that simple recipe is narrowed by defining such repentance and faith as consisting in church attendance and compliance with its ceremonies. There has always been a consideration, a *quid pro quo*, involved in accepting this license. At first it consisted in gratifying the ambition of Jesus, but since his time that consideration consists in the consequent pandering to the love of power and social glories of his ministers.

But when James wrote his epistle the latter interest had not as yet been developed. The few believers were still intent upon the coming of the kingdom of heaven which was daily expected and were held by that only. James's opinions upon faith were natural, as his opinions of the Gentiles were local, and both conflicted with the interest of the church. The structure had not sufficiently progressed to expose these faults of his; at least he did not see them and he had to be suppressed. He would have ruined all if he had been permitted to run on as he did, and he was accordingly sharply cut off in the midst of his epistle without the

courtesy of annexing the usual benediction. How much is suppressed we can never know, but we can plainly see the cause of that suppression and can see that it was done in the interest of the ancient hierarchy, and not in the interest of religion.

But, on the other hand, if a man can be saved by good works alone, if he can escape punishment simply because he has done nothing calling for punishment, then there is no necessity for believing in Christ; or, as Paul put it, "Then Christ is dead in vain." Or, if both good works and faith in Christ are necessary for salvation, then is faith simply an added burden to doubters who could have been good without it; and, in either case, how is Christ a savior? If faith partially wipes out wickedness and good works complete the process, then who is to draw the dividing line and show the proportion which each should bear to the other?

That little ambition of Jesus, to be believed to be the Messiah whose coming John the Baptist proclaimed, has cost the world a vast deal of trouble. There must be a consideration for that belief which he demanded or there is no object in believing. He himself is represented to have promised everything if they would believe his assertion, and the church, from very necessity, has been obliged to promise as much and make faith a virtue so great as to be an offset against wickedness. There can be no half-way work about it; if belief in Jesus Christ cancels any wickedness, it cancels all.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

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THE various steps in the progress of the church came in such natural order that they can be nearly as well traced in the usual working of the mind as they could have been in history. A connected account of those steps is not supplied by history, for the reason that the difficulties by which the church was surrounded and the compromises that followed were such as to make their publication seriously objectionable. Particularly is this the case with the circumstances that led to the production of the Fourth Gospel.

The original and all-important organization of the church was at first of but a local nature, consisting mostly in regulations with regard to the care and disposition of the common property; but the enforced departure of many from Judea led to the formation of colonies in other countries. Those colonies grew in wealth and numbers, and each naturally established branches in neighboring towns and cities. Necessarily, the organization in each colony became more complex and the powers of the chief officer (early called a bishop) increased. When time had brought forth a curiosity to know the personal history of Jesus, none



would be so much interested in writing it as the various leaders of those colonies, and probably most of the uncanonical gospels were written or caused to be written by them. Each colony would then have its own gospel, which, in a few generations, would become sanctified in the minds of its members as the inspired word of their already long-dead founder. Thus those somewhat widely scattered colonies, each under the direction of an autocrat of its own and teaching its own ideas as to the nature of Christ, together with other attending theories, created a divergence of doctrines within the church greater than has ever existed since.

When one hundred and fifty years had passed since the crucifixion, some of those colonies had grown to great wealth and their bishops to great power, a power and social position so desirable as to raise an interest in Christianity much more intense than could be produced by religion alone. Naturally, those positions drew in a more intelligent class of men, and, under their more critical eyes, the conflict in the sentiments of the various colonies would be more serious. Those varying views annulled one another, and, if the church and the power of the leaders were to be further augmented or even its acquired power assured, its organization must be extended, so as to embrace all the colonies and place them under one head. There could be no difference of opinion as to the advisability of this step; nevertheless there was

a great difficulty to be overcome in bringing it about. That difficulty lay in the pride of the bishop of each colony. Even if there were a few who did not aspire to be the chosen head, there was none who would not feel averse to parting with his independence and submitting to a rival. This and the attachment of each colony to its own gospel and doctrines were, necessarily, two great obstacles in the way of consolidation. They were so serious that a complete unity never was attained; but most of those colonies did unite, and it is clear that their consolidation was secured, as is usual in all such cases, by a compromise.

That there should be a gospel upon which the whole church should unite is a simple idea that would suggest itself to every churchman; but that there should be more than one such gospel is an enlargement of that idea that only circumstances could have suggested, and when once raised it would naturally attach itself to the idea of having a gospel from each of the twelve apostles. But the church adopted neither. Its adoption of the four gospels was a compromise with the leaders of the most influential colonies. Evidently, three stubborn, prominent bishops would not yield, and it was finally agreed to include the gospel of each with certain interpolations and that unitedly they should write a new gospel, with a view to covering the questions and objections that time had exposed, which objections could not be met by any gospel then extant.

Nor is the origin of the four gospels, as thus traced through the workings of the human mind, wholly unhistorical. The only important part that is hypothetical is that those four gospels were adopted under a compromise and that those bishops themselves wrote the Fourth Gospel or caused it to be written. Near the end of the second century, there was a time, as narrow as fifteen and possibly ten years, before which the Fourth Gospel and the association of the four gospels were unknown and after which they were widely known. Within that short era not only was this great change made, but the church was consolidated under the leadership of the bishop of Rome, though of those important events the church gives us no account. That it should be silent about those compromises is natural and particularly is it natural that it should, to the full extent of its power, obscure its own authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

The wide difference that now exists in our ideas of the canonical and uncanonical gospels has been the growth of time. Canonization, as now understood, was an idea those bishops had not advanced to. The Christian ideas both as to the extreme sacredness of the person of Christ and the sacredness of the gospels were unknown in the lifetime of the one or of the authors of the other. In each instance, their generation had to pass away before that sacredness could become a part of Christian faith. Time was needed to obscure their gross outlines and permit the imagination to build up

ideas of sanctity and venerableness of person that were not possible with their contemporaries. It had been the same with the apostles, who looked upon Jesus as only a prophet, and it is doubtful if there was a man of his time remaining on the earth when the doctrine was advanced that he was equal with God.

So with the four gospels. Their disagreements, as, for instance, the two genealogies of Jesus, show that when those bishops *canonized* them they did not anticipate the extremely sacred character which time would attach to each word. It is doubtful if they did more than to indorse those four and pronounce them to be the most reliable, but not necessarily strictly accurate, gospels. The spirit with which they were put forth did not require perfect agreement, except upon the points the bishops strove to build up; and, though they claimed divine inspiration, their wildest flights of fancy could not have anticipated the degree of veneration and awe with which those gospels came to be regarded in after ages.

If Jesus had been all that was claimed for him, his utterances would never have raised difficulties calling for compromises and phenomenal gospels. On the contrary, time would more and more have confirmed his divine wisdom by making it manifest that he had foreseen and protected the church from troubles that would otherwise beset it in later times. Coming generations would find themselves but overtaking his ideas, instead of discovering

that they were only adapted to the narrow intellect of the few followers of his time.

But when, after one hundred and fifty years had passed since the crucifixion and the bishops assembled to reconcile their various gospels, this fact was conspicuous, that Jesus had not foreseen the condition the church was then in, but that, on the contrary, his sayings had created their most serious difficulties, those bishops would not necessarily be influenced by this and abandon the church. Whatever may have been the motives which originally drew them into that service, there would by that time have been an accumulation of interest foreign to religion that would hold them superior to all other considerations. When a ship is floated into a dock and the water is drawn off, there are blocks and stays that continue to support the ship even more rigidly than when floating in the water. So with Christianity, the ideas of Jesus and the apostles, that originally floated it, had long since been drained away, but only to leave it far more firmly upheld in the vast personal interest of its many officers.

The deliberations, therefore, of those men were wholly with reference to defeating their opponents, to supporting their own wishes, and to their continuance in office, and were not with reference to getting at the exact truth as to the divinity of Christ. That was something they were determined to sustain under any and all circumstances, and, if his words did not meet the condition of

their times, they must be made to do so. Under a general organization they would have the power to enforce the support of their own doctrines and gospels, and that power was worth the sacrifices made to obtain it. Necessarily, therefore, those bishops would exercise that power immediately after securing it. Consequently the union of the Church under one head, the issuing of its authorized gospels, and the suppression of all other writings seriously conflicting with them would be three events that would naturally occur at about the same time, the first of the three being necessary to the accomplishment of the other two.

All three of these events were taking place in the latter part of the second century. The supremacy of the Church of Rome was then established; the four gospels suddenly sprang into existence, and many gospels and other writings known to have been in use at that time promptly disappeared. Many of those works were important and would have thrown light upon the matter in the four gospels if there had been no interest in conflict with them. From the time of this more perfect organization the preservation of those works ought to have been assured, if the truth was all that was desired, but that which ought to have saved them insured their destruction. Naturally the Church would suppress accounts of these suppressions, but failed to do so in the one important instance before referred to. The Gospel of Peter should have stood higher with them than any other, but he

represented Christianity to be for the Jews only and his gospel was destroyed. It will be noticed also that this was taking place about the year 190.

It is well understood in our own time that important public measures are carried out, not for the glory of the individual, but for the public good. Men attain distinction by the ability they exhibit in the service of the people, and, instead of receiving honors for simply striving to advance their own positions, they are brought into discredit by so doing.

But this has not always been so. In ancient times those in authority often made wars simply because they had the power to do so and used it for their own renown. The people would submit to their rulers without looking into the motives that governed them. The followers of Jesus proclaimed him to be the expected Christ, and he promised safety from horrors of his own invention to all Jews who would believe that he was the Messiah he said he was. But no reason was given why believing in him should be necessary. He had no other object than to gratify his own ambition and his followers were too ignorant to ask for any such reason. But the importance of a reason for Christ's appearance upon earth, and also for believing in him, became apparent as more thoughtful men joined his followers. Those bishops had progressed far enough to see this, and they met those questions by originating that which gave to Jesus the title of "savior." He had come

to save the world and it was necessary to believe in him in order to be saved. But this led to an equally troublesome question, How was the world lost? What were the circumstances that made such an extreme measure necessary? This question had not as yet penetrated the minds of those churchmen, and hence they made no attempt to solve it. Such explanation as Christianity gives in the fable of the atonement is unsupported by the four gospels.

Questions of this character would naturally embarrass those bishops more than any other, for there could be nothing in the original gospels to answer them. They could not have been raised but for the failure of Christ's prediction of the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and it had taken the intervening time to make that failure manifest. In their solution, much could be done by a few interpolations and eliminations in the most acceptable gospels, but the objects to be accomplished were too numerous and important to be allowed to rest only on such slight alterations. There should be at least one gospel in which such new explanations as they would make could be clearly stated.

Those church officers greatly needed such a gospel as the Fourth Gospel, and all the facts and attending circumstances are confirmatory of the proposition here made, that they themselves caused it to be written. It was unknown before the time mentioned. The first knowledge we have of it is



that it was coupled with the other gospels and was issued as an authorized gospel of the church. It represents its author to be the Apostle John, *whom Jesus loved*, and hence to deny his authorship was to deny the gospel itself. This, taken in connection with the certainty of its late appearance, is now a source of much embarrassment to the Church. Its improved and widely different style and the many important doctrines dependent upon it have caused much to be written in efforts to sustain it. It is the favorite gospel, and well it may be, for it was written exclusively in the interest of those supported by the adherents of the church.

The author of Supernatural Religion has given all the evidence bearing upon the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, about one-third of his second volume being devoted to that subject. He proves conclusively that it was not only written at a very late date, certainly after the time of Justin Martyr, but that its author was undoubtedly a stranger in Judea. He shows, for instance, that the writer made two or three geographical errors, alludes to certain Jewish customs as *your customs*, and mentions *the Jews* in a manner and with a spirit that would have been hardly possible with the Apostle John. He states that "the Jews are represented as continually in virulent opposition to Jesus; they are not spoken of as the favored people of God, but are denounced as children of the devil."

"The Apocalypse is also said to have been written by the Apostle John. The contrast between

it and the Fourth Gospel is so great that no candid man can believe they are both by the same author." He (the author of *Supernatural Religion*) further states that the contrast in the original Greek is much greater than it appears in English. He says that

The external evidence that the Apostle John wrote the Apocalypse is more ancient than that for the authorship of any book of the New Testament, excepting some of the Epistles of Paul, and there is probably not another work in the New Testament the precise date of the composition of which (A. D. 68, 69), within a few weeks, can be so positively affirmed.

Christian writers have given this general knowledge of the Fourth Gospel at the end of the second century as an argument in favor of its earlier production. One writer,<sup>1</sup> as an illustration, says that the first account we have of Thebes is a statement in Homer that "It could send a hundred armies from its hundred gates," but none would assume that that was the beginning of Thebes. So, he argues, with the Fourth Gospel, the general knowledge of it at that time indicates an extended preceding existence.

But the nature of this argument shows the poverty of evidence of an earlier appearance. It contains an admission of the absence of a previous knowledge of it, while its sudden widely extended appearance is not only accounted for in the hy-

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<sup>1</sup> Norton's *Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*.

pothesis just given, but is important evidence confirmatory of it.

The following few extracts are taken from Strauss's examination of this gospel:<sup>1</sup>

In the first three gospels, Jesus closely adapts his teachings to the necessities of his shepherdless people, contrasting, at one time, the corrupt institutions of the Pharisees with the moral and religious precepts of the Mosaic law; at another the carnal messianic hopes of the age with the purely spiritual nature of his kingdom and the conditions of entrance therein. In the Fourth Gospel, on the contrary, he is perpetually dilating, and often in a barren, speculative manner, on the doctrine of his person and higher nature; so that, in opposition to the diversified doctrinal and practical materials of the synoptical discourses, we have in John a one-sided dogmatism.

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But according to the above supposition [not quoted], the fourth evangelist came as a gleaner after the synoptists. Now it is certain that all the discourses of Jesus having a practical tendency had not been preserved by them; hence, that the former has almost invariably avoided giving any relic of such discourses can only be explained by his preference for the dogmatic and speculative vein, a preference which must have had both an objective and subjective source, the necessities of his time and circumstances and the bent of his own mind. This is admitted even by critics who are favorable to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, with the reservation that that preference betrays itself only negatively, by omission, not positively, by addition.

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Jesus, by Dr. David Friedrich Strauss.

The style furnishes no guidance, for this is everywhere the same and is admitted to be the evangelist's own; neither does the sense, for in it also there is no essential difference whether the evangelist speaks in his own name or in that of Jesus. Where, then, is the guarantee that the discourses of Jesus are not, as the author of the *Probabilia* maintains, free inventions of the fourth evangelist?

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We, therefore, hold it to be established that the discourses of Jesus in John's gospel are mainly free compositions of the evangelist; but we have admitted that he has culled several sayings of Jesus from an authentic tradition, and hence we do not extend this proposition to those passages which are countenanced by parallels in the synoptic gospels. In these compilations we have an example of the vicissitudes which befall discourses that are preserved only in the memory of a second party. Severed from their original connection and broken up into smaller and smaller fragments, they present when reassembled the appearance of a mosaic, in which the connection of the parts is a purely external one and every transition an artificial juncture. The discourses of Jesus in John present just the opposite appearance. Their gradual transition, only rendered occasionally obscure by the mystical depths of meaning in which they lie—transitions in which one thought develops itself out of another and a succeeding proposition is frequently but an explanatory amplification of the preceding—is indicative of a pliable, unresisting mass, such as is never presented to a writer by the traditional sayings of another, but such as proceeds from the stores of his own thought, which he molds according to his will. For this reason, the contributions of tradition to these stores of thought (apart from the sayings which are also found in the earlier gospels) were not so likely to

have been particular, independent dicta of Jesus as, rather, certain ideas which formed the basis of many of his discourses and which were modified and developed according to the bent of a mind of Alexandrian or Greek culture. Such are the correlative ideas of *father and son, light and darkness, life and death, above and beneath, flesh and spirit*; also some symbolical expressions, as *bread of life, water of life*. These and a few other ideas, variously combined by an ingenious author, compose the bulk of the discourses attributed to Jesus by John, a certain uniformity necessarily attending this elemental simplicity.

M. Renan, on the other hand, treats all the gospels as equally genuine; but I infer that his concessions are hypothetical, for the reason that he passes the weakest points of those gospels without giving reasons for those unnecessary concessions. These concessions are seemingly indifferently made in the first few lines of the first chapter of his *Life of Christ*. They were unimportant in the position he had taken and he waives them with the least trouble to himself. As elsewhere stated, if all the gospels were perfect in their unity and written under the dictation of Jesus himself, it would still be but an imperceptible advance in proving that Jesus was what the church represents him to be. The faith of Christians and their ideas of the gospels are inherited, and it is a strong argument in undeceiving them to show the evidence of the unreliability of those gospels. In that field only is the question of their authenticity important; but that field is a wide one and the material M. Renan supplies therein will be worth more to

the priesthood than his theories to the contrary. Those theories and so-called concessions show the author to have still been more of a believer in the Christian system than an unbeliever, and it is doubtful if the Christian world would have objected so much to his work if it were not that it was worth more to them to represent his admissions as the *enforced* concessions of a learned agnostic than to let them rest as the simple statements of a Christian.

The various differences between the synoptic gospels and the Fourth Gospel betray the thoughts of those who composed it, as well as the difficulties they had to overcome. Those differences show what the synoptics did *not* contain, and an examination will show that without the changes then made there was nothing upon which to build a religion. *The entire Christian system stands upon the gospel which those bishops then originated and the few interpolations they made in the other gospels.* What their eliminations were we can never know, but those interpolations are, in each instance, condensed in a few words and are usually in direct conflict with the other matter in those gospels. A very important item is sharply stated in a few words, such as could be inserted at the bottom or top of a manuscript or interlined at some convenient place or substituted in place of an erasure. The short and explicit characteristic of those interpolations is in sharp contrast with the usual style of the New Testament.

Each one of those alterations was to cover objections drawn out by the more intelligent criticism of those later times. Naturally the doctrines of the church would be supposed to be founded upon the gospels; but those doctrines were, as stated, simply necessary explanations, and, instead of being founded upon the gospels, the gospels were made to conform to them. This was the work of the Fourth Gospel, the others being simply made, as far as possible, to agree with it. The evident anxiety of the writer of that gospel to represent John the Baptist as acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ has already been shown, as also the desire to add much needed testimony that Jesus died upon the cross, which it does through an inconsistent story that admitted of drawing in the words *he was dead already*, and by representing that he was pierced in the side, and by referring to the wound after the resurrection.

The words "Son of God" are used but little in the synoptic gospels and may not have been in the original at all. In the time of Christ they simply meant a religious person.<sup>1</sup> Those gospels did not state with sufficient clearness the nature of the divine attributes of Christ. The consequence was that at an early day there began to be differences of opinion and various theories advanced as to the relative position he bore to God. Before the Fourth Gospel was written, "the Ebionites, and possibly the Nazarenes of Jerusalem, revered Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Waite's History of Christianity.

as the greatest of the prophets, endowed with supernatural power, but rejected his divine perfection as the Son of God." <sup>1</sup> This is consistent with the slight use of those words in the synoptic gospels and is suggestive also of their having been inserted at a later date. The great Arian controversy in the time of Constantine was upon this question and it has been revived in our time.

To represent that Christ came to save all nations, to make it appear that the Baptist acknowledged Christ, to show forth Jesus as equal with God, and to deify faith were evidently the greatly desired ends to be accomplished through the Fourth Gospel. It was important to suppress the very existence of the second question, but its testimony on that point is strongly addressed to a party the existence of which they have since hidden from us. We see there was such a question as we see the shadow of an unseen object. The author was deficient in the art of story-telling and his original accounts are therefore weaker than they need be. The desired interested testimony is, as usual in such cases, too promptly set forth, the first five chapters covering all the most important points; otherwise this gospel was no doubt made up from other gospels and writings of those times, but rearranged in accordance with the doctrines which the church wished to promulgate. The seemingly somewhat better intelligence of the author may be owing to the fact that he wrote in the light of

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<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.



one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty years' experience of the church.

Upon the great question as to how much divine power Jesus possessed, this gospel has much to say, and as far as was in its power it establishes his equality with God. It is first clearly brought forward in the fifth chapter, as follows:

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

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22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.

The direct application of these words to the controversy then going on shows the thoughts that actuated its author or rather the council that directed its author. The same assertion is repeated throughout the work, and so far as it is concerned it turns to the man Jesus that feeling which we should have for God only.

One of the most ruinous things exposed by the synoptic gospels was the fact that the ideas of Jesus did not extend beyond Judea and the Jews. A few of the numerous quotations showing this

have been given. They were too voluminous and probably too well known to be suppressed. This, however, is abundantly covered in their own gospel, while in the synoptics those writers contented themselves with the implication that Christ's words at the time of his crucifixion were more important than they had been on former occasions. They interpolate a very few words in that part of those gospels which is in sharp conflict with his previous teachings. The most marked examples of this are in Mark, as follows:

## XIII.

10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

## XVI.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

Reference to those chapters will show that in each instance those verses are wholly disconnected from the matter in the verses which precede and follow them. The first-quoted verse, in particular, is a palpable break in the words of Christ. It not only does not make sense with the matter it is found with, but the spirit of it is the opposite from that of the accompanying verses. The two verses first quoted are intended to counteract in the fewest possible words the Jewish exclusiveness of the previous utterances of Christ. The last verse expresses with equal conciseness a

point that experience had shown it was desirable to make. Salvation was promised from the first to all who would believe in Jesus Christ, but damnation to those who did not believe had not been set forth with sufficient clearness. Their fears could only be acted upon through the latter, without which very many might be indifferent whom terror would otherwise drive into the church. Hence the assertion that unbelievers would be damned became coupled with the promise of salvation to those who believed and was exclusively the work of those who originated the Fourth Gospel. The following words are often quoted and are looked upon by believers as an exhibition of love. But, if true, it was a terrible doctrine to promulgate to an unbelieving world, and terror was the feeling which they were intended to produce. They are in the third chapter and are as follows:

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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18 He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Also in the eighth chapter, 24th verse, Jesus is made to say:

For if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

And again, xiv, 6: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Notice, also, that in the last quoted verse from Mark baptism was made a *sine qua non* to salvation. This also was a new doctrine. Even at that early day, the church had discovered that a believer should not be allowed to be such undemonstratively at home. They therefore made it a requirement that, in addition to faith, there must also be baptism, a ceremony that could be performed only by officers of the church, who could, consequently, dictate the conditions under which that service should be rendered.

In Matt. xv, 24, Jesus states in language that cannot be misunderstood that he was "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"<sup>1</sup> and his instructions to his disciples in Matt. x, 5, 6, are equally concise and clear. But between these two accounts there is an interpolation, xii, 21. The remaining instances in Matthew are xxiv, 14, xxvi, 13, and xxviii, 19. The last verse is as follows:

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

If in the place of *all nations* the words had originally been *the Jews*, they would not have been per-

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<sup>1</sup> Much is said about the good construction of the language of the Bible, but surely this language in Matthew really says the reverse of what it means when it says: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep," which would mean that he was sent to others besides them.

mitted to so remain. The whole verse, however, is probably an interpolation, as it contains the desired admonition to be baptized and that it be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, a direction that had grown out of the contention with the followers of John the Baptist.

The only instance in Luke where the Gentiles are included is in the thirty-second verse of the second chapter, but the word *Gentiles* was probably originally *Jews*, whom the same verse designates as *thy people*. The words are:

A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

The Fourth Gospel endeavors to make the career of Jesus as many years long as the others do weeks by representing his attendance at several passovers, which occurred but once a year, and also by dragging in the words "Thou art not yet fifty years old" (viii, 57), it having been stated in the other gospels that he was about thirty years old at his baptism. His taking possession of the temple is represented to have been during the first of his several pretended visits to the passover, and thus the one act that more than any other caused his crucifixion is disconnected from that event as much as possible. This important variation is inserted in the second chapter.

It omits the account of taking the ass in entering Jerusalem, christianizes the character of Jesus, and omits all his upbraidings and other-

wise modifies the accounts of him, even to omitting the word "hand" in dipping into the dish at the last supper. (Matt. xxvi, 23; John xiii, 26.) It omits Christ's characteristic expression, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Every difference, whether in adding or omitting, points the same way and all were of a nature to obscure the truth in the interest of those bishops. On the other hand, the questions that had been troubling the church at that time *could not have arisen if this gospel had previously existed.*

Reverting to Christ's Jewish exclusiveness, one instance requires more attention than it has received. In Matthew x, 5, 6, he says:

Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The Samaritans were neighbors of the Jews and had nearly the same religion, the chief or only difference being that they had a temple of their own and revered Mount Gerizim as the Jews did Mount Zion. They were bitterly hated by the Jews, as is common with rival and similar bodies. This passage shows that Jesus fully sympathized with his countrymen in that local feeling. In this he was human, and not at all like a god. If the Samaritans were excluded from salvation, what could be said for those distant Gentile cities where the church was mostly domiciled in those later times? Such a record as this was almost

ruinous to the Church, and it was indispensable that it be counteracted by a full and emphatic statement of an opposite nature.

It was for this, no doubt, that the incident of the woman at Jacob's well was inserted in the fourth chapter of the bishops' gospel, which incident must have been a creation of their own. It filled the double purpose of representing Jesus as making no discrimination against the Samaritans, and, consequently, none against the people of any country. It is too inconsistent with the synoptic gospels, too much in the interest of its authors, and first brought out at far too late a date to be authentic. Furthermore, if this account be true, then the New Testament represents Jesus, when disposing of food and drink for the soul, to have directed his disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans; but, when he wanted food and drink for the body, he sent those disciples into a Samaritan city for the one and solicited the other from a Samaritan woman, who taunted him, being a Jew, for having done so.

Strauss states that this incident is unhistorical and shows it to be an exact parallel with the Old Testament account of Eliezer and Rebekah at the same well. He says:

Thus the interview of Jesus with the woman of Samaria is only a poetical representation of his ministry among the Samaritans narrated in the sequel, and this is itself a legendary prelude to the propagation of the gospel in Samaria after the death of Jesus.

It may be of some interest to the reader to note, in passing, why it is that, considering how numerous the Jews are, there should be no Samaritans in our day, as they were quite the same people. The explanation for this is that scarcely five hundred years after this time they were exterminated, or nearly so, by Christians for refusing to accept the Christian religion. The Emperor Justinian would not tolerate even silent unbelief. Suspected persons were subjected to an inquisitorial examination and were given the alternative of conversion and baptism or banishment. This hard alternative was presented to the Samaritans. But belief in Christ was impossible with them. To worship him would seem as sacrilegious as to worship an image, for they regarded the divinity in each case as the work of man. They were too honest to pretend to comply and too manly to tamely submit. To resist the officers sent to enforce the emperor's command was necessarily rebellion, and Christian writers refer to that rebellion and the attending destruction as the sole cause for their subsequent misfortunes, the cause for that rebellion not being always mentioned by them. Even Gibbon says that "under the standard of a desperate leader they rose in arms and retaliated their wrongs on the lives, the property, and the temples of a defenseless people." But no people were ever given a more unjust and cruel alternative, and in the rebellion they chose they could not have been otherwise than on the defen-



sive. They risked death and slavery in defense of their homes and the right to worship the one and only God.

They must have fought heroically, for 100,000 government troops were killed as against 20,000 killed of their own number, and the remainder—20,000 more—were sold into far distant slavery in Persia and India. A writer in the *Biblical Cyclopædia*, edited by Mr. McClintock and Mr. Strong, relates a few instances where a small body of Samaritans were subsequently mentioned in history as still being in their own country, and probably a few did escape or succeeded in after times in returning to their old homes. The same writer states that as late as 1872 there were still dwelling at the foot of Mount Gerizim 135 Samaritans, 80 of whom were males. He represents them to have been; in personal appearance, much superior to the people in the country about, being tall, well formed, and intelligent.

We honor the heroes who have bravely fought in battles and survived, but too soon forget the still greater heroes who gave their lives in those battles. So with the Samaritans. The Jews have come down to us through ages of persecution, but the Samaritans died at the point where heroes died, at that point where life could have been purchased only by hypocrisy and shame. They waded through a red sea, not to a land flowing with milk and honey, but to a land flowing with their children's tears. Only their enemies remained to

write their history; but the slight glimpse they give us of them, coupled with the attending circumstances, indicates that it was not on account of their vices, but because of their virtues, that our songs of Zion are not now rendered discordant by notes from Gerizim.

The reader will not find this account in Fox's Book of Martyrs, but is referred to the forty-seventh chapter of Gibbon's Rome for that and many other items of Christian history with which it might be well to refresh the memory at the present time.

The author of the Fourth Gospel felt that there should have been some supernatural event at the arrest of Jesus somewhat in keeping with the powers that ought to have been at his command. He therefore represents that, when Jesus spoke to the men sent to arrest him, "they went backwards and fell to the ground" (xviii, 6). This incident seems to have been unknown to the writers of the other gospels.

Though the church had advanced in intelligence, these men were still ignorant and superstitious. Some of their inconsistencies were owing to this and some were owing to matter added to the New Testament in later times. That book continued to grow during at least two centuries after their time. The ascension was not thought of by them and they did not recognize the importance of giving more witnesses to the resurrection. The increased testimony on this latter point was inserted

long afterwards (evidently) in I Cor. xv, 6, where Paul is made to say that Christ was seen after the resurrection by *above five hundred brethren at once*. That this is an interpolation is further evidenced by the words, *according to the scriptures*, which are inserted in the 3d and 4th verses. There were no scriptural records of Christ in Paul's time, not even uncanonical, and hence it was an expression he could not have used.

When this gospel was written, Christ was already worshiped by a large number as equal to God and by a still larger number as but little less than God. It was therefore written under different circumstances from any other book in the New Testament. The writers of the others could not have had the least conception of the attention their writings were to receive. They did not even think of future generations, but led a comparatively small number of people in a movement that was expected daily to end in the millennium.

But the author (or authors) of the Fourth Gospel wrote in a knowledge of the work to be done. Not that even he knew the full extent and success that was to attend the Christian movement; but the success was already so great that a full knowledge of the future could not have further excited thought and care in all his statements. It is the only book in the New Testament written for future generations and with some apprehension of the criticism it would receive. Under such circumstances every new statement would be carefully

weighed and necessarily inserted for a purpose. No matter how slight the statement may be, whenever it conveys information not given in the synoptic gospels, such information was carefully studied and inserted to accomplish some desired effect. This fact needs to be taken into consideration in noting the following incident related in the last chapter. In the 19th verse Jesus is represented as saying to Peter, "*Follow me.*"

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; (which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?)

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

When we consider the time at which this gospel was published and the greatly interested and questionable source whence it emanated, the object of the information contained in those verses is apparent. The author did not venture to state directly that John would live until the second coming of Christ, which was still regarded as being in the near future; but he said enough to convey that belief to the most credulous and to

impress upon the minds of others the idea of John's living to a supernaturally great age. The pretense that he was the disciple whom Jesus specially loved is peculiar to this gospel only. It is brought in with a labored reference to the Lord's supper, where this partiality is represented to have been a fact recognized by the other apostles.

Those men who caused this gospel to be written knew that the reputed author would at that time have to be nearly two hundred years old, but they also knew the credulity and superstition of their followers and played upon those qualities so as not only to warmly attach them to this gospel, but to make it seem to emanate more directly than any other from Jesus, through a beloved disciple left upon earth for that purpose. They intended to cause the very existence of this gospel to be looked upon by many as miraculous, but have ingeniously so worded it that a Christian may believe much or little of the implied supernatural part, according to the extent of his superstition or credulity.

In this they have been successful, for there is every variety of opinion concerning John, from a belief in a supernaturally great age to belief that he still lives and is designated (in this latter case) as the "wandering Jew." Well-drilled believers in the virtue of faith are not much affected by the late appearance of this gospel. They have much more improbable things to swallow than to believe that the Apostle John lived some two centuries.

This effort of the author is all the more marked if, as some suppose, this gospel originally ended with the preceding chapter, this last having been annexed at a later date. If so, it was for the reason just given, which had probably been suggested, if not necessitated, by criticisms made upon this point: This last chapter is the only one in the New Testament in which Christ is represented to have appeared in Galilee after the resurrection. This appearance, however, is made to agree with the synoptics by a line in Matt. xxvi, 32, and Mark xiv, 28, wherein Christ is made to foretell the event. But a late discovery of a part of a gospel older than Matthew or Mark goes to show that the verse in question is an interpolation inserted to force an agreement between the synoptic gospels and this last chapter of John. The words are: "But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee."

An account of this archæological discovery was published in the *Chicago Tribune* July 11, 1885, from the Vienna correspondent of the *London Times*, and is as follows:

Professor Karabacek has been good enough to show me the papyrus which has lately been discovered among the El Fayum manuscripts and which is alleged to be the fragment of a gospel older than those of St. Matthew and St. Mark. It is a very small fragment, measuring three and a half centimeters in length and four and one-third in width, and contains seven lines, having one hundred and five words. Of these ninety-six can be plainly deciphered, but nine are indistinct.

Some lines are mutilated at the beginning and end, and it is supposed that from ninety-one to ninety-eight letters are missing. The number of deficient letters can be reckoned by comparing lines three, four, and seven with the others. The seventh contains but four letters.

The writing is in Greek, and Dr. G. Bickell, of the University of Innsbrück, who discovered and deciphered the fragment, concludes, from the form of the letters and the abbreviations, that it was written in the third century; but from the style of the composition he infers that it dates originally from the first century, and this is also the opinion of Dr. Edward Harnack, editor of the *Theologische Literatur-Zeitung* of Leipsic.

Here is the translation of the fragment, line for line. As already reported, its parallel is to be found in Matthew xxvi, verses 30 to 34, and Mark xiv, verses 26 to 30:

- 1 But after supper, as they went out.
- 2 You will all take offense this night.
- 3 According to the Scriptures, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."
- 4 Then Peter spake.
- 5 And if all, not I.
- 6 He said to him,
- 7 The cock will crow twice, and before that thou shalt deny me thrice.

The omission of the words, to be found both in Matthew and Mark, "But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee," is noticeable. Dr. Bickell, reviewing the fragment in the *Zeitschrift für catholische Theologie*—a periodical printed at Innsbrück for private circulation—lays stress upon the importance of the manuscript as being the earliest fragment of a written gospel, not canonical indeed, but yet no pseudograph or heretical composition. Dr. Bickell's views are set forth and approvingly commented upon in an article by Dr. Harnack, which appears in the last

number of the *Theologische Literatur-Zeitung* of Leipsic. Dr. Harnack, who is a fervent Roman Catholic, distinguished for his Greek scholarship, remarked that, so far as he can judge, Dr. Bickell has taken no liberty with the text, having only added five letters, which it could be plainly guessed were the missing ones, but which simply mended broken words without altering the sense of a line. The antiquity and genuineness of the fragment are, he argues, beyond dispute, and he concludes:

“It is strange that a small strip of papyrus, containing about one hundred words, should be able to raise so many important questions with regard to the originality of two of the gospels, but it would be too easy to dispose of these questions by saying that the papyrus is not genuine. Having given our opinion as to the genuineness, we must, in the interest of truth, maintain that there is no explaining away the omission of our Lord’s prophecy as to his going into Galilee, except by supposing that the author of the manuscript wrote from memory. But what probability is there that, writing from memory, he would have left out the most striking and important passage in our Lord’s conversation with his disciples? Let critics more learned than we are endeavor to account for the omission more satisfactorily than we can. For ourselves we must submit that it goes far toward suggesting a doubt as to whether the Gospels ascribed to Matthew and Mark were, in the form in which we know them now, composed by those disciples.”

It will be seen that the fragment has the verses preceding and following the verse quoted, but that verse is “conspicuous by its absence.”

This discovery and the brevity, directness, break in the sense, and importance of the verse



quoted establish a reasonable certainty that it is an interpolation, intended to fraudulently confirm, not only the Fourth Gospel, but its most questionable chapter.

The original authors of the synoptic gospels no doubt believed what they wrote, their fault being in their judgment rather than in their honesty. The Fourth Gospel is the only one in which that mental condition of the author was reversed, and by his arts it has been made the most popular gospel of them all.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE QUESTION AS MET BY MODERN AUTHORS.

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IT is commonly assumed that in any controversy those who make the best argument, supported by abundant proof, will win over to their views the persons addressed. But this is the case only where such persons are either disinterested or undecided upon the question at issue. When there are settled convictions in opposition, the feeling which good arguments raise is not one of conviction, but one of contention, and this feeling will be bitter in proportion to the strength of the argument. It is this peculiarity which holds large numbers of citizens so persistently to their political parties, regardless of changed circumstances. Having once enlisted upon one side, any superior position of the other party only increases the feeling of opposition, which is often carried to such lengths that men will support candidates and measures that they otherwise would have opposed. Those who do finally change to opposite views do so very slowly and seemingly voluntarily.

A noted writer says that the great changes which the public mind undergoes come through new ideas of new generations rather than from any change of those living. The mind is like

paper upon which, with many, certain ideas are too strongly stamped ever to be erased, no matter how strong may be the proof of error. A few are capable of listening to the argument and proof of an opponent and being convinced, and this is always an indication of intelligence. It is even then the work of their own reasoning faculties in part, though acted upon by others.

Those who take the trouble to write books in support of Christianity must necessarily be more devoted to it than the average, as the matter of their works always shows them to be. Their writings exhibit a strength of belief too great to admit of reasoning from a disinterested standpoint themselves or of listening to it from others. It is natural enough that they should write, but they should not labor to produce an impression that they were recording convictions arrived at through unbiased opinions. But this is now frequently done either by the author or the Christian public. One of the most notable instances of this kind is the work entitled *Testimony of the Evangelists*, by Simon Greenleaf, LL. D. It is made manifest that the author was an eminent jurist, and as such particularly capable of examining evidence, and, after such exhaustive investigation as the magnitude of the work indicates, it is implied that the conclusions were irresistible and should be accepted by his readers.

But, upon inherited opinions, lawyers, like everybody else, are incapable of reasoning disin-

terestedly. Their experience enables them to present their own views with superior skill, and that is all the advantage that experience gives them. Lawyers often have to advocate a cause where the facts are all against them, and for that reason they take more pride in successfully advocating a weak cause than a strong one, for it is the greater test of their ability. In doing this their experience has taught them certain peculiarities of human nature of which they often take advantage. One of the most common, as previously stated, is to raise false issues when they are weak on the true one. Experience shows that the mind is easily misled in this way and will mistake a settlement of the false issue for a settlement of the whole question. Even in common conversation two men differing upon any subject will more frequently than otherwise run off on to questions quite foreign to that originally raised. It requires considerable thought and skill on the part of a debater to hold the debate strictly to the point under consideration.

Another deception often practiced, of a similar nature, is to argue wholly upon the one point upon which the most evidence can be brought and ignore all others. Lawyers will also at times make great display of books and papers and by outward appearance try to create an impression of thorough study upon the question under consideration.

The first and last named features are conspicu-

ous in the work just mentioned. It is a ponderous volume. Every verse in the New Testament is seemingly compared with corresponding parts in all the gospels, and it was certainly a great labor. A reader would naturally be impressed with a belief that the work covered all the grounds of Christian faith and that the author's conclusions were irresistible. But the work is of a microscopic nature. It has not taken a comprehensive view of the truthfulness of Christianity, but has simply magnified an infinitesimal fragment of that question.

If the gospels differed much in their accounts of Christ, believers would be obliged to adopt one as the truth and reject all parts of the others wherein they differed from it. But, if the gospels may be shown to harmonize (and Mr. Greenleaf's great labors were upon that point), then believers may base their faith upon the assertion of four simple, credulous disciples, instead of but one. If we should admit that those gospels were not written until from one to two hundred years after the birth of Christ and that it was known who Matthew was, and that John was the author of the Fourth Gospel, and should admit that the author of each gospel was with Christ every day of his life and noted down his sayings at the time, and that all the accounts agreed to the letter, it would still be an imperceptible advance toward proving the divinity of Christ. Those who have been taught in their youth to look with awe upon the writings

of the apostles cannot realize how trifling and unimportant their testimony is. If not only the four, but the twelve, or even the seventy had repeated the same account, it alone would still be unimportant evidence.

The author points out that the question he is about to discuss will be argued by him as a lawyer, under the rules of evidence usual in courts, and he necessarily proceeds at once to state what that question is. This he does in his dedication, giving, in a few words, both sides of that question, one of which is as follows:

The religion of Jesus Christ aims at nothing less than the utter overthrow of all other systems of religion in the world, denouncing them as inadequate to the wants of man, false in their foundation, and dangerous in their tendency. It not only solicits the grave attention of all to whom its doctrines are presented, but it demands their cordial belief as a matter of vital concernment. These are no ordinary claims, and it seems hardly possible for a rational being to regard them with even a subdued interest, much less to treat them with mere indifference and contempt. If not true, they are little else than the pretensions of a bold impostor, which, not satisfied with having already enslaved millions of the human race, seeks to continue its encroachments upon human liberty until all nations shall be subjected under its iron rule.

A man unwilling to admit the divinity of Christ upon the simple ground of the virtue of credulity, and seeking for evidence of that divinity outside of the system, would feel that, in the above, he had found the exact and long-sought-for issue and

would now learn, from one particularly capable of teaching, why it was that the religion of Jesus Christ was not based upon "the pretensions of a bold impostor." It is the root of the Christian system, and, necessarily, the point was soon reached. It was not only soon reached, but passed, in the following few words:

The proof that God has revealed himself to man by especial and express communication and that Christianity constitutes that revelation is no part of these inquiries. This has already been shown in the most satisfactory manner by others, who have written expressly upon this subject. Referring, therefore, to their writings for the argument and proofs, the fact will here be assumed to be true.

When a body is forced into too small a space for it, something must give way, and an examination will show the exact point of greatest weakness. It is the same with a truth and a falsehood upon the same subject, one or the other must yield. As before stated, the sacredness of the Bible and of every doctrine of the Christian system is but the logical conclusion or necessity following the one great pretense, the divinity of Christ. If that be false, the entire system falls to the ground; and yet, upon that one point, there is not an item of proof or argument to be offered, none whatever. The Bible is no evidence, for its sacredness is to be proven by Christ. With his divinity established, the Bible is all that believers claim for it, but otherwise it is nothing.

The utter absence of any evidence of the divinity of Christ is conspicuous to those who will investigate. Some *divines* meet this by saying that, if his divinity could be proven, there would be no virtue in faith, which is very true. Its exaltation was necessary in the absence of any evidence. Few, however, awake to this absence of evidence, because of their accompanying belief in the sacredness of the Bible, or, rather, in ancient conclusions derived from it.

When, therefore, a learned man, but a constitutional believer, sets out to discuss the evidence upon which that belief was founded, it becomes interesting to observe his collision with that one point. It is like a ponderous body entering a space too narrow for it. Either his learning or honesty must yield and the truth of the disputed point be established or the encounter must be avoided. We have seen how Mr. Greenleaf met that one all-important question, after his implied power to confirm it. With the admission that "God has revealed himself to man through Christianity," a wide field is opened for the learned to try to give that revelation a semblance of even moderate intelligence. With that established, there is latitude for argument forevermore, but until then there is but the one question as to Christ's divine authority.

People grow up having a vague idea that proof of *the truth* outside of the Bible was originally taught them in Sunday-school or somewhere else



in their youth; that it was so simple as to be of a primary nature, like the multiplication table, and could be turned to, if necessary, at any moment. Ideas of this nature are so common that a constitutional believer will enter upon a discussion of the truth of Christianity and be face to face with this one point before he discovers that he cannot, just at the moment, bring to mind those evidences he supposed he had long since learned. Something like this must have been the experience of the author of the Testimony of the Evangelists. He stated in his bill, "If not true, they are little else than the pretensions of a bold impostor," and, therefore, to show that they were not the pretensions of a bold impostor was his self-appointed task. But when he reaches the question of impostor or divinity he seems to fail to remember just where that overpowering evidence was, and avoids the contest by stating that it was no part of his inquiries.

An indispensable requisite for unquestioning faith is that the believer, on questions of his religion, shall hold his own intelligence down to a level with that of the writers of the gospels. Every part of the Bible must be sacred with them; they must revere every word of it. For instance, in Matthew i, 17, is the following:

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

This is a low degree of superstition and one that, in any other connection, would not now receive the least notice from even quite ignorant men. But so learned a man as the author of the *Testimony of the Evangelists* treats this passage as worthy of pious thought and gravely stops to count up those generations and show the statement to be true. This he seems unable to do without some little rearranging or explanation, after which he gives three columns of names, showing each to be fourteen.

Paley's *Evidence of Christianity* is a work wherein the author is actuated by quite the same idea as the author of *Testimony of the Evangelists*, expending his labors, however, upon Paul's epistles rather than the gospels. The author seems to be laboring under the impression that showing Paul's epistles were not the production of unknown authors, but that they were actually written by Paul himself, was evidence, outside of the Christian system, of its truth. There is no necessity for questioning most of the points these gentlemen argue upon, but, on the contrary, what is now most demanded of them is that they admit the truths as to those writings, and not indirectly deny them in efforts to explain them away.

There never has been a time when the truth of the divine pretensions of Christ was so widely disputed among Christian-reared people as now and never a time when faith was so fast losing ground. The church itself is rejecting some

and quietly ignoring more of its old doctrines, and thousands repudiate them wholly. The net amount of belief in the whole system is probably 50 per cent. less than outward appearances indicate. This century, particularly the last half of it, is the beginning of the end of that superstition. Mr. Froude stated in 1863 that "The truth of the gospel history is more widely doubted now in Europe than at any time since the conversion of Constantine." Under these circumstances ecclesiastics now frequently avoid that one great question by affecting a lofty disdain of it, asserting that its proof has been so long established by both time and numbers as to place it above further discussion.

It was believed to be a fact, through a lapse of time longer than the Christian era, that the planets were possessed of retrograde movements. To doubt those movements was to doubt the evidence of one's own eyes, for they could be witnessed by any who would patiently observe them. All could see that the planets stopped, turned back on their course, again stopped, and then renewed their true course with temporarily increased speed. They could see also that the time between those retrograde movements was not the same in any two planets and could occur in any part of their orbits. This phenomenon was a puzzle to learned men through long ages, and they advanced deeply studied theories in explanation of it. But when at last we came to know that the earth re-

volved around the sun we then discovered that the retrograde movement of the planets was an optical delusion growing out of our own movement around the sun. No matter how learned or distinguished or numerous the men were who had supported those theories, nor through what long ages they had been sanctified, the simple truth wiped them all away. Neither time nor numbers can ever make a falsehood true.

Some three hundred millions of Chinese, through two or three thousand years, have asserted that their emperor was cousin to the moon. This is a far more modest assertion than the one about which it is insisted there shall be no further argument, and there is exactly as much reason for demanding that the truth of the Chinese assertion be admitted without question.

When we are reviewing the works of God we must try to comprehend distance, size, and time as understood by him. We must not look upon space with the eyes of a surveyor, nor upon time with the eyes of a historian. As we look back over the past we find that the further we get from our own time the less are we interested in the contentions of the people and the more are we interested in the development which those contentions begat. That which is our Creator's only object in our life-long struggles becomes in time the only history of interest to us. It is not the history that man's work makes that we seek, but that which God's work makes. The rise and fall of nations

become but small matters of local interest as to time and unimportant as compared to a knowledge of the intellectual advancement that God is working in us. It is the laws which made that development rather than the human laws of the times that we need to know.

There will come a time when the whole Christian era will have no other interest than the illustration which it supplies of the never-failing evil consequences that attend an ethical government based upon that which is false, whether that government be by the whole world or by but a single individual. This illustration will show that with advancing intelligence both the importance and the labor of separating truth from falsehood become greater and that our best efforts at all times should be devoted to that end.

Henry Ward Beecher was one of those who recognized that the strongest position that can be taken in support of the divinity of Christ is to affirm that time and numbers have placed that question above further discussion. In his *Life of Christ* he objects to the argumentative nature of such works, and certainly his is not argumentative, nor does it pretend to be. However liberal he may have been otherwise, he was a constitutional believer in the divinity of Jesus Christ and his work is simply his own prolonged adulation of him.

The same can be said of all the various *Lives of Christ* and of the different apostles written by

Christian writers. The New Testament contains all that is known of any of them, and, to enlarge upon their career, the authors from their imagination depict extended details based upon a sentence or even a word in the gospels.

The History of the Christian Religion, by Chas. B. Waite, A. M., may also be said to treat of the testimony of the evangelists, and it does so in a more thorough manner. But the author, at the close, has a fault similar to that of Mr. Greenleaf. In his summing up he adds a conclusion, of the subject of which he had not treated in his work. He stated:

In conclusion, as the result of this investigation, it may be repeated that no evidence is found of the existence in the first century of either of the following doctrines: The immaculate conception, the miracles of Christ, his material resurrection. No one of these doctrines is to be found in the epistles of the New Testament, nor have we been able to find them in any other writings of the first century.

As to the four gospels, in coming to the conclusion that they were not written in the first century, we have but recorded the convictions of the more advanced scholars of the present day, irrespective of their religious views in other respects, with whom the question as now presented is, How early in the second century were they composed?

Discarding, as inventions of the second century, having no historical foundation, the three doctrines above named, and much else which must stand or fall with them, what remains of the Christian religion?

All that is of value, all that is in harmony with

the immutable laws of the universe, still remains. We have still the divine teachings of Christ. The more important of these, though more or less interpolated and corrupted, have been preserved and handed down, both by tradition and in writing, and, unlike the books referred to, can be traced back to well-authenticated records of the first century. Those teachings impress upon the mind and heart the highest and purest form of morality. They have never been improved upon by any theological speculations. After all the systems of theologians shall have passed away, they will stand forth, shining brighter and brighter even unto the perfect day.

The question of Christ's superior teachings was not touched upon in Mr. Waite's book and certainly there is nothing in the New Testament to sustain those assertions. Such an admission embraces the pith of the whole question. The false standard of virtues and sins of the Christian system constitutes one of the greatest evils of that system. It wastes the best impulses of mankind upon its worthless ethics, while it is too often silent upon those duties which the religious feelings would otherwise cause a person to perform. It is far easier to keep within its false standard than it is to resist those temptations which, if not resisted, will bring loss or sorrow to others, and hence dishonorable people follow the church's simple standard and thus secure its influence in giving them respectability in the midst of their corrupt acts.

Evolution and Christianity, by J. F. Yorke, is

a work that treats in part of the same subject as does that of Judge Waite, while the latter's book is otherwise similar to Supernatural Religion, though each occupies a field of its own.

All three of the authors just quoted write seemingly as Christians, for they credit Christianity with that which involves crediting Christ with having been sent upon a divine mission and with having been the author of supernatural teachings; yet collectively their various rejections leave him without a history, without recorded sentiments, without a supernatural presence upon earth, and without a reason for his coming.

The canonical gospels were the church's choice of all that were written, added to which are its many interpolations inserted to improve the records of Christ. They not only include all that was known of him, but much more, and a child's primer could contain every recorded word of his; and, if he gave any such wonderful teachings or even uttered one valuable sentiment that the world would never have had but for him, it will be easy to point out to us the exact words.

This last lingering admission of superiority in Christ is the result of early associations coupled with deference to public opinion. It is the wound that remains after the tumor has been removed. It is an exhibition of the one greatest power that supports the Christian system in our day. It is a power so great that, even after the individual's eyes are open to the vast mental delusion of the



system, he will still make this one admission, which, if true, confirms the truth of those dogmas which he has rejected.

The supposition that there must have been intelligence of a high order behind a movement that grew to such magnitude as Christianity is one of the greatest errors connected with it. We know nothing of God himself. We can only wonder and imagine as to the personality of the great Being who created the universe. We see his works only, but as for him our imagination must take the place of knowledge. So, if those feelings which we have for God are to be transferred to Jesus, it is of the utmost importance that we be equally ignorant of the personality of Jesus. That combination of circumstances which originated a belief in the divinity of Christ and almost totally obliterated any personal knowledge of him was the one greatest indispensable requisite to success in establishing those feelings of veneration for him. The belief that Jesus was equal with God, without any knowledge of how that belief originated, was what was wanted. The accounts of him, slight as they are, still give a knowledge of him that is the church's greatest weakness to-day and will yet overthrow it.

Dr. Doellinger, in his *First Ages of Christianity*, piously explains how it happened that there was a following of John the Baptist separate from that of Jesus by stating that the reason why John's followers did not accept Christ was because it was

their nature to cling to that which was low rather than to that which was higher.

We know of late years that man has advanced from a very low degree and, if it were human to prefer the low and if he were naturally depraved, that this advancement could never have happened. Man is the exact opposite of what Christianity has been teaching. He is naturally kind and honorable and the existence of every government has always depended upon those qualities predominating to a very great degree. Men greatly deficient in them become at enmity with their race, and it is a law of nature that such will work their own ruin and death. Man is always seeking for further enlightenment and is the only animal that will improve alone under the working of his individual mind.

The doctor's explanation amounts to representing that it was low to join the movement of John the Baptist, which the ancient Christians so anxiously and fraudulently absorbed into their own system. Furthermore, the relative positions of the Baptists and Christ were, at that time, the reverse of what this explanation implies. Christian books and sermons are full of little statements of this nature. They do not admit of the least criticism, nor are they expected to be criticised. They are given as exhibitions of piety, and their acceptance is expected as is that of other exhibitions of piety. Within the system it is indelicate to point out their inconsistencies and falsehoods, even

though, as in this instance, that falsehood is an insult to the Creator.

The author of *The Testimony of the Evangelists* did not pass, without careful thought, the place where he should have given arguments outside of the system in proof of revealed religion. He refers, in a note, to Horne's *Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, an old English work which, in its first few pages, does offer a few ideas upon that point. The manner in which this reference is made indicates that the author's mind ranged far and wide for the much needed evidence and that he felt the poverty of quoting but one book, for he couples it with a reference to a lecture by Prof. Hopkins and then withdraws the latter, giving as a reason that Mr. Horne refers to all other writers upon the subject. But Mr. Horne makes no reference to others offering such arguments, nor could I find any arguments in Prof. Hopkins's published lectures. The truth is, comparatively nothing has been written to prove the truth of the divinity of Christ that was not based upon belief in some dogma that grew out of it. People are blinded to this fact by the great breadth of the system; they grow up in the faith and are argued out of it, never into it. With the truth of some one of its doctrines admitted, an argument can be made to sustain others, and thus that which is within the system seems to have a fulcrum outside of it, and, therefore, to have a bearing upon the whole question.

For example, Mr. Horne wished to defend the doctrine of the fall of man both from unbelievers and from those within the church, some of the latter having resorted to the usual method of getting rid of its most glaring follies by asserting that the Mosaic account is allegorical. To do this he puts in small capitals what he calls an **UNDENIABLE FACT**, "the evident ruined condition of the human race," in witness whereof he cites labor, sorrow, pain, death, nature of social life, and origin of evil.

But belief that the evils of life did not originally exist is as much a doctrine of the church as is the doctrine of the fall of man; it is a part of that doctrine. Every step of progress that man has made has been through his efforts to overcome the troubles of life, and if released from that necessity our race would return to a state of ignorance and idleness. The troubles of this life are the result of our own incapacity, and we shall yet overcome them all. This life is but one condition of an existence that may be eternal, and those who presume to pass judgment upon its success or failure need to take into consideration the proportion of time that this life bears to the whole.

If eternity might be limited to as short a time as one million years, the duration of this life would still be such a small part of the whole that existence might be an immeasurable blessing, even though this part of it should be passed in poverty, sickness, and wretchedness. Those evils can be

only an insignificant item in an eternal existence, and, considering the service they render, cannot be called a misfortune, even though seemingly borne by innocent people. We send our little children to school and make them rack their inexperienced minds over simple problems, the solution of which renders us no service. This is often a sore trial to them, from which they would gladly be released. But, as we know the great advantage of their schooling, none would for a moment presume to pronounce that enforced attendance at school a cruelty. And yet in one day our little children will experience grief at this enforced attendance which bears an immeasurably greater proportion to the time of their whole lives than do the troubles of this life bear to eternity.

The seemingly unjust distribution of the blessings of this life has attracted universal attention in every age. Nature sometimes seems to never tire of loading some grossly unworthy object with every blessing, not only to the neglect, but even at the expense, of the purest and most deserving of their generation. This discrimination has frequently done such violence to all human ideas of right and justice as to cause some to assert it to be evidence of the nonexistence of God, while others offer this fact as proof of the existence of a devil. But the extremes of the joys and sorrows of this life sink into insignificance when measured by the life to come. We cannot stake off the distance to the stars with chains and links. We have

no use for hours and minutes in measuring eternity, nor can we, from the narrow field of this life, comprehend God and criticise his laws regarding us. The existence of his never-varying laws indicates that he is not omnipresent and the experience of the past points to the fact that those evils for which so many have been ready to "curse their God and die" have their base in either our individual or collective ignorance.

Punishment seems to be a primary law of God. If we do wrong we suffer and that suffering turns our attention sooner or later to its cause, and consequently to its correction, and consequently tends to human progress. It is one of the faults of Christianity that it prevents speculation as to what the future life may be. Having asserted that the Bible is the sole authority for belief in a future life, it is, from necessity, confined to the crude and ignorant ideas of its authors as to what that future life actually is, and those narrow ideas not only do not admit, but prohibit a study of the objects of this existence and of the great and important bearing it has upon the life to come.

Mr. Horne's work is a voluminous one, but upon the point in question there is, as usual, but little said. Part of the first chapter and all the remainder of his great labors lie wholly within the system, and as an argument to unbelievers it is much like one's effort to lift himself by his boot-straps. He begins with the proposition that

“Divine revelations are possible, probable, and necessary.”

For the probabilities he refers to what was only the workings of natural mental faculties as manifested in old superstitions and cites the curiosity of the ancients as to future existence, implying that that curiosity must necessarily be gratified and that it was done through Christianity.

He gave eight reasons for the necessities of divine revelation, as follows:

*1st. The ideas of the ancients respecting the nature and worship of God were dark, confused, and imperfect.*

The united voices of all the Christians that ever lived, solemnly proclaiming that God lost partial control of the human race, constitutes the greatest insult that humanity can offer to the Creator. Not in history, not in even the most ancient superstition known, is there an exhibition of darker, more confused, and more imperfect ideas of God than this.

*2d. They were ignorant of the true account of the creation of the world.*

That is to say, it was not until we had the Bible that we knew that the world was made in six days, that the sun was incidental to it and made in one day, and the stars—compared to which the world is like a pebble on the seashore—were also made in a day, and that all, sun, moon, and stars, were set “in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.” Mr. Horne does not explain what use the people made of this knowledge, but

churchmen claim that civilization was owing to Christianity, and probably in his opinion this important information has much to do with it. It is about all of geology and astronomy that we have in the Bible.

*3d. They were also ignorant of the origin of evil and the cause of depravity and misery which actually exist among mankind.*

Christian ideas upon this subject are of the lowest order known, and the cruelties which they practiced upon one another through centuries of the Christian era are the greatest exhibition of misery known in history.

*4th. Equally ignorant were the heathens of any means, ordained and established by the Almighty, by which a reconciliation could be effected between God and man.*

This lies within the system and is of no interest to an unbeliever. The pretense that there needs to be a reconciliation between God and man is part of Christianity's great insult to God.

*5th. They were ignorant, at least they taught nothing, of divine grace and assistance towards our attainment of virtue and perseverance in it.*

This is not true. It has been shown that the church had no originality in that respect. It was its practice to destroy anything that conflicted with its pretensions. This fifth reason also implies the usual claim of the church that everything good has come through Christianity.

*6th. They had only dark and confused notions of the summum bonum or supreme felicity of man.*



Heaven, as described in Revelation, would be a place of endless mental suffering, and Christians hope to reach it by treating the enjoyments of this life as a branch of human affairs under the especial control of Satan, and therefore to be avoided.

*7th. They had weak and imperfect notions of the immortality of the soul.*

Belief in the immortality of the soul is not at all dependent upon the Bible. Neither would our immortality be any reason for believing it, if without it (the Bible) there were no evidence of our immortality. Our hopes do not supply evidence that we shall have the thing hoped for.

*8th. If the philosophers were thus uncertain concerning the immortality of the soul, their ideas were equally confused respecting the certainty of the eternal rewards and punishments of a future state and of the resurrection of the body.*

Here, again, he is within the Christian system, and upon points, too, about which its believers greatly differ.

In his argument upon his various propositions he cites the views of opponents and considers it strong evidence against them that they do not agree. But their disagreement is no proof of the truth of Christianity, nor is their disagreement any greater than that within the system.

According to Christian ideas the opponents of Christianity ought to be very bad people. Therefore Mr. Horne endeavors to show them to be bad. Mr. Blount, for instance, he states, wanted to

marry his deceased wife's sister and Voltaire was wicked enough to want his book read whether it was believed or not. In short, outside of the system Mr. Horne could make no argument or offer the least evidence. His extended work supplies another illustration of the fact that, to make an argument in support of the many doctrines consequent upon belief in the divinity of Christ, at least some one or more of them must be accepted as true before anything can be said at all.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### INERTIA OF IDEAS.

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OUR thoughts move quickly only over grounds which they have traversed before. The wires or track must have been previously laid, otherwise the mind is the slowest of the slow. Originality is far less common than seems to be generally supposed, and it also nearly always consists of but the least advance into that which was unknown before. All great improvements of every nature are results of the but slightly new ideas of many different people. The man who thought of placing the eye near the point of the needle showed, in that, one of the chief originalities in the sewing machine. The true inventor of reaping and mowing machines was the man who thought of the zigzag scythe, working like a saw between extended fingers. Honor should, consequently, be given to originality according to the effect it produces, no matter how simple the idea may be. Injustice has often been done through not recognizing this fact. Railroad companies, as an illustration, lost millions of dollars through the want of a connected rail, but when that object was accomplished by the *fish-*

*plate* they could not bring themselves to give the inventor his due credit, because the idea was so simple.

Original ideas are not always of a nature to advance mankind. Those who have them are few and those who give the public the benefit of them are fewer still. A man may never have had an original idea in his life and yet be an intelligent and successful man. There is the same difference between original ideas and those in common use that there is between the civil engineers and plodding laborers who slowly survey the route, lay the rails, and work the construction train, and the great commerce and travel that afterwards pass over it. Individuals may have passed over the ground before and let valuable original ideas die with them, for at best they are seldom favorably received and their introduction is laborious.

The rarity of new ideas is well illustrated in the present manner of constructing the breech-loading rifle. Men have gloried in their firearms, and, since their introduction, some of the best minds in every age have given them their careful study. Wealth has awaited those who could improve them. And yet the breech-loaders, but recently introduced, are so simple that we can but wonder they were not thought of at the first use of the original blunderbuss. But it has taken over four hundred years for the slowly moving mind to advance to the present perfection of that much-thought-over instrument.

The tardiness in the discovery of the art of printing also illustrates this natural human tendency to follow closely the beaten track. For a number of thousand years only the most intelligent could write, and large numbers of this class, during all that time, were copying vast numbers of manuscripts, before the simple idea of printing, as first employed, was thought of. Even the simple improvement in writing of leaving a blank space between the words was not thought of within a lapse of time longer than the Christian era.

It is well understood that those in authority must feel their way carefully in introducing new measures of government. The importance of this is so great that, in many instances, men whose abilities would have otherwise made them desirable officers have been rejected because of their too great precipitancy in employing untried measures. Human progress requires even more care in this respect. Every step needs to be carefully considered before adoption, and the more ignorant we are the greater is the necessity for this caution. A vessel among rocks and shoals may not spread its canvas as confidently as upon the high sea, and it would better remain stationary than not go right when it does move. So in human progress, its guidance was far above the intelligence of man at a time when he most needed that guidance. But our Creator so constructed the mind as to secure that end. We are made to cling to the old ideas we are familiar with until we shall clearly

see the better ideas that should replace them. *It is more important that public customs and laws should possess a certain amount of stability than that the ideas underlying them should be correct.*

Nor is it practicable for ideas to advance in one branch of knowledge and remain stationary in all others. For instance, if prehistoric men should have advanced to modern customs and ideas of humanity, but should otherwise have remained as they were, their humane treatment of captives would then have worked them more suffering than their cruelties did. Many acres per man were then needed for his support, and it was far better that the population be kept down and their physical and mental powers stimulated to exertion by frequent wars than that that depletion should be the work of famine and pestilence.

In the government of a nation no questions arise that will not, in their simple forms, be found within the competency of one person, but large numbers magnify and complicate questions to a degree that often carries them beyond the power of the authorities to solve. A simple walk, for instance, of a few miles, becomes a question that calls for superior experience and executive ability when a hundred thousand men are to be marched the same distance. Questions of state are but magnified questions of trade, protection, morals, health, etc. Time also has the same magnifying effect. A simple notion, that influences us in some one act, becomes an important question

when it is to be carried into execution throughout our lives, and if transmitted from generation to generation the operations of its undetected errors will become a serious evil.

If, then, time and numbers so greatly complicate even simple questions, how great must be the wisdom that faced our race one way and guided us onward and upward through all the vast ages of the past and through all the depths of our own ignorance and failures. Changed conditions on the earth's surface would call for and develop in animals different powers, but not necessarily superior intellectual powers. On the contrary, it was possible in some instances for the mind to retrograde. Nevertheless, from the remote past mental changes have been in the direction of higher intelligence. This highly important result has been effected by two laws of the mind, whereby the young in every age adopt the governing ideas of their progenitors and hence secure such slight increase of intelligence as may have been acquired.

One of these laws consists in causing the mind to be impressed with varying degrees of power. We know, for instance, of the accidents with which we are liable to meet upon steam cars, but are not deterred thereby from traveling in them. If, however, we pass a place where an accident has just occurred and see the bodies of those who have been killed, our confidence will be much shaken. But those who have passed through an

accident remember what they saw with horror, though the scene was of but short duration, and they are often so keenly alive to such dangers that for years thereafter they travel on the cars with dread. In all these instances it is the same fact impressed upon the mind with varying degrees of power.

The mind may be equally deeply impressed through pleasant associations, and also by time, as well as when a number of mental faculties all tend to the same end. A thing will be more powerfully impressed upon the mind when learned through two or three senses than through one. A man may witness the operation of some machine and feel confident that he could work it, but one short trial at the time would fasten the knowledge in his mind in less time than is possible through observation alone.

The other law referred to consists in making our minds most impressible in youth, at which time we receive our ideas from our elders. We thus not only inherit ideas, but the largest part of our daily acts and sentiments are governed by them, and by them the public mind, through all time and in all conditions of development, has been made homogeneous and continuous. Like the sweepings in a gold-beater's room, all that experience should teach is preserved for the modicum of gold or of truth contained therein, and like that gold the truth will be extracted by a higher and different process. After physical superiority, the



greatest power will be with those whose governing ideas are the best. These ideas are often unalterable through many generations; they may never have been wholly correct, but so deeply and, above all, so generally impressed upon the mind are they that reason affects their errors as little as the waves of the sea do the rocks, though, like those waves, each will in time wear respectively errors as well as rocks away.

Time and numbers will magnify the many errors these inherited ideas contain; their evil effects will accumulate and become conspicuous, and, like the moraine at the foot of a glacier, be a growing obstruction to further progress until they are overcome. The impressive power of inherited ideas will be weakened in the minds of the most experienced and thoughtful, and under their widening influence those errors will be slowly corrected. These corrections must not only have the approval of the most advanced men of their times, but they must have quite general approval. Thus it is that nature's conservation is effected by an arrangement that retains all progress and winnows out errors by the slow process of hard experience, supplemented, in an advanced state, by reason.

The greatest power of inherited ideas lies in their universality, and, however erroneous they may be, they will go on forever if reason or the lessons of experience are in any way suppressed. The truth or falsity of ideas so impressed has no

influence on this mental law. Errors may be so strongly impressed upon the mind before we know they are errors that after learning what should have undeceived us we will still cling to them because of the lighter impressive power of our later though better knowledge.

Our reliance upon the value of gold is an illustration of the great power of universally inherited ideas. Comment has often been made of the fact that gold, except as money, was of but little use and that its great value existed only in the mind. Nevertheless that seemingly baseless belief in the nature of the value of gold causes by its universality this metal to possess by far the most substantial and unchangeable value of any property known.

These universally inherited ideas are superior to the laws of any nation, and they could not be obliterated by any united action that could be brought to bear upon them. Neither is it possible for any nation by its laws to hold the public mind with a power equal to the power of inherited ideas that are quite universal.

The superior impressive power of inherited ideas is responsible for much that is inconsistent in our conduct. Reason and facts that we learn later in life (and which ought to demolish certain inherited ideas) do not immediately have that effect, the consequence being that we either act a double part or admit the truth of the one while being governed by the other. The Christian re-

ligion supplies by far the most numerous illustrations of this, for the reason that all our ideas connected with it are inherited and brought from such a remote past as to cause a wider divergence between old and new ideas than can be found upon any other subject. A conspicuous illustration is exhibited in the difference between the effects which its adherents claim their religion has always begot and the real effects as set forth in history.

A further illustration is shown in our inherited ideas of the sanctity of hearing "the word of God" as promulgated in the church, as contrasted with studying the works of God as revealed by science. Simple, unsupported assertions, which are insulting to the intelligence of the Almighty and enlarged upon by a preacher who is often illiterate, are placed far above the acquirement of awe-inspiring facts discovered in the actual works of God.

Christian doctrines possess the mind with greater power than the facts that disprove them, and these doctrines are removed but slowly even under the most convincing evidence. They became associated with so much that is dear to us, during those years when our minds are especially intended to be overpoweringly impressed, that no power of reason can for many years displace them and with some those erroneous impressions are never effaced. This law of the mind has not only taken the most prominent part in perpetuating

Christianity, but it has also taken a prominent part in sustaining certain doctrines within the system and is, also, responsible for the inability to resuscitate old doctrines that have been rejected, even though well supported in the Bible.

The doctrine of the Trinity is an illustration. The church has come down to us firmly seated in that faith, but the thousands who weekly bow their heads in conformity to it do not realize the fact that they are Trinitarians simply because the Emperor Theodosius was baptized in that belief just fifteen hundred years ago. He then and there prohibited any further discussion upon that subject by making that belief the law. Arianism, which did not include the Holy Ghost, nor admit the Son's equality with the Father (Arians were Unitarians), was much the more popular belief in the church and predominated in Constantinople the capital. But Theodosius happened to be much away and accessible to Trinitarians, by whom he was converted to and baptized in that belief, at which time he issued the following edict:

It is our pleasure that all the nations which are governed by our clemency and moderation should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans, which faithful tradition has preserved and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the discipline of the apostles and the doctrines of the gospel, let us believe the sole deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity. We

authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of Catholic Christians; and, as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the infamous name of heretics and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of churches. Besides the condemnation of divine justice, they must expect to suffer the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them.

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The Catholics of Constantinople were animated with joyful confidence by the baptism and edict of Theodosius and they impatiently awaited the effect of his gracious promise. Their hopes were speedily accomplished, and the emperor, as soon as he had finished the operations of the campaign, made his public entry into the capital at the head of a victorious army. The next day after his arrival, he summoned Damophilus to his presence and offered that Arian prelate the hard alternative of subscribing to the Nicene Creed or of instantly resigning to the orthodox believers the use and possession of the episcopal palace, the cathedral of St. Sophia, and all the churches of Constantinople.

The zeal of Damophilus, which in a Catholic saint would have been justly applauded, embraced, without hesitation, a life of poverty and exile, and his removal was immediately followed by the purification of the Imperial City. The Arians might complain, with some appearance of justice, that an inconsiderable congregation of sectaries should usurp the hundred churches which they were insufficient to fill, whilst the far greater part of the people was cruelly excluded from every place of religious worship. Theodosius was still inexorable; but, as the angels who protected the Catholic cause were only visible to the eyes of faith, he prudently reënfirmed those heavenly

legions with the more effectual aid of temporal and carnal weapons and the church of St. Sophia was occupied by a large body of the imperial guards. If the mind of Gregory was susceptible of pride, he must have felt a very lively satisfaction when the emperor conducted him through the streets in solemn triumph and with his own hand respectfully placed him on the archiepiscopal throne of Constantinople. But the saint (who had not subdued the imperfection of human virtue) was deeply affected by the mortifying consideration that his entrance into the fold was that of a wolf, rather than of a shepherd, and that the glittering arms which surrounded his person were necessary for his safety, and that he alone was the object of the imprecations of a great party, whom, as men and citizens, it was impossible for him to despise. He beheld the innumerable multitude of either sex and of every age who crowded the streets, the windows, and the roofs of the houses; he heard the tumultuous voice of rage, grief and astonishment, and despair; and Gregory fairly confessed that on the memorable day of his installation the capital of the east wore the appearance of a city taken by storm and in the hands of a barbarian conqueror.

About six weeks afterwards, Theodosius declared his resolution of expelling from all the churches of his dominions the bishops and their clergy who should obstinately refuse to believe or at least to profess the doctrine of the Council of Nice. His lieutenant, Sapor, was armed with the ample powers of a general law, a special commission, and a military force, and this ecclesiastical revolution was conducted with so much discretion and vigor that the religion of the emperor was established, without tumult or bloodshed, in all the provinces of the East.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Trinitarianism was thus forced upon the church and when a few generations had passed there naturally ceased to be further feeling upon the subject. There was no opportunity for renewed discussion for more than a thousand years, during which time, under the working of this natural law of the mind, that doctrine became as firmly seated in the church as Christianity itself.

Our various mental tendencies drive us to the performance of necessary duties, and the strength of our inclination to perform those duties varies according to their importance and the difficulties to be overcome. Some of the commands of Christ, came in conflict with certain of those qualities of human nature too great for even his most devout followers and were therefore ignored, or, rather, they were followed for a time and then abandoned, and, though those commands are set forth in the Bible in language that cannot be misunderstood, yet having once been suppressed they have, under the inertia of ideas, remained suppressed and dishonored to this day. One of these commands was that his followers should be noncombatants. No other order of his is so full or so clearly stated. It is in the Sermon on the Mount, which churchmen affect to so much admire, and is a part of those teachings which Christianity claims as particularly its own. Christ said (Matt. v):

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

When Christ commanded men to believe in him and be saved, he gave an order that was a matter of indifference to those who did not believe and but a question of supposed safety to those who did; but, when he ventured to order that men should not resist a blow in the face, or protect their property, or fight for their country, he simply exposed his human weakness. Wherein he played upon and exaggerated the natural mental faculties, he succeeded; but when he took direct issue with an important one he failed.

The feelings now manifested toward John the Baptist supply another illustration of the mental law referred to. Even under Christian ideas, he was the next most important man to Christ. He is credited with having received his divine authority direct from God and with having been guided by him in designating Jesus as the Christ.

He uttered the first words in the Christian religion. He baptized Jesus and is referred to by the other apostles as their superior. After him should come Peter, then Paul, then the Apostle John. This is the order in which they would naturally be placed, according to their own account. But, on the contrary, the Baptist is apparently placed below them all. *St. John* always means John the Apostle. At times some second or third



rate church is named in honor of John the Baptist, but in such instances it must be so stated in full and when churches are so named it is because there is already a *St. John's* in the vicinity. There had been an angry contention about the Baptist during a number of generations in the beginning, and that contention engendered sour feelings towards him and consequent neglect. But, though that contention or even a direct record of it has long since disappeared, yet that neglect under this law of inertia of ideas has been inherited from generation to generation to the present day. The Church is governed by those inherited ideas of the Baptist rather than by the ideas of him conveyed by the words of the New Testament.

The undue study of the Latin and Greek languages further exemplifies this mental law. They became dead languages at a time when Europe was sinking into ignorance, and they necessarily remained the written languages for several centuries, during all of which time those who aspired to any degree of learning were obliged to learn Latin at least. For several hundred years it was the only channel through which knowledge could be sought, and, as all those possessing any education understood Latin, and possibly Greek, a knowledge of those languages came in time to have a dignity peculiar to learning itself. The service of the church was also in Latin, which gave it some degree of religious reverence. In

this manner education and those languages became associated in the public mind as substantially one and the same thing; and this idea, once thoroughly established, has continued long after the conditions that brought it into existence have passed away.

I have undertaken to show that through superstition gold was elevated in the mind to the highest position as to its value. Subsequently there never was any reason for changing public ideas regarding it, and for many ages this law of the mind took part in holding those ideas unchanged, until, through barter, it grew to be valuable as a medium of exchange.

When, therefore, investigation is stopped, by law or superstition or falsehood, or diverted by false issues, the original ideas, no matter how absurd they may be, will go on from generation to generation until the incubus that prevented independent thought is removed.

Ancient theological questions, that were such only through the less enlightened minds of past generations and were settled at the time through false issues, have, through this law of the mind, been fastened upon all generations since. Christians have obscured the question of the divinity of Christ by their own endless wrangles over imperceptible trifles of certain articles of their own credulity, which are of no possible interest to any one until he is first convinced that Christ is the Son of God. When, fifteen hundred years ago,

the then quite powerful Church agitated throughout the Roman Empire their doctrine of the Trinity, it naturally left an impression upon the mind that the divinity of Christ was a long-settled thing, about which there could be no further discussion. The uproar and extent of that issue obscured the true and important question, and, as Christianity then became both the law and the road to official favor, the people following that controversy generally embraced Christianity and safety from seizure of property in one and the same act.

The power of the emperor was without limit. It extended over the lives and property of the people. The following incident, related by Gibbon, illustrates this power, as well as the character of the man who both extinguished Paganism and forced the doctrine of the Trinity upon the Church:

The fiery and choleric temper of Theodosius was impatient of the dilatory forms of a judicial inquiry and he hastily resolved that the blood of his lieutenant should be expiated by the blood of the guilty people. Yet his mind still fluctuated between the counsels of clemency and of revenge; the zeal of the bishops had almost extorted from the reluctant emperor the promise of a general pardon; his passion was again inflamed by the flattering suggestions of his minister Rufinus, and after Theodosius had dispatched the messengers of death he attempted, when it was too late, to prevent the execution of his orders. The punishment of a Roman city was blindly committed to the undistinguishing sword of the barbarians and the hostile preparations were concerted with the

dark and perfidious artifice of an illegal conspiracy. The people of Thessalonica were treacherously invited, in the name of their sovereign, to the games of the circus, and such was their insatiate avidity for these amusements that every consideration of fear or suspicion was disregarded by the numerous spectators. As soon as the assembly was complete the soldiers, who had secretly been posted round the circus, received the signal, not of the races, but of a general massacre. The promiscuous carnage continued three hours, without discrimination of strangers or natives, of age or sex, of innocence or guilt. The most moderate accounts state the number of the slain at seven thousand, and it is affirmed by some writers that more than fifteen thousand victims were sacrificed to the manes of Botheric. A foreign merchant, who had probably no concern in his murder, offered his own life and all his wealth to supply the place of *one* of his sons; but while the father hesitated with equal tenderness, while he was doubtful to choose and unwilling to condemn, the soldiers determined his suspense by plunging their daggers at the same moment into the breasts of the defenseless youths. The apology of the assassins, that they were obliged to produce the prescribed number of heads, serves only to increase, by an appearance of order and design, the horrors of the massacre, which was executed by the commands of Theodosius. The guilt of the emperor is aggravated by his long and frequent residence at Thessalonica. The situation of the unfortunate city, the aspect of the streets and buildings, the dress and faces of the inhabitants, were familiar and even present to his imagination, and Theodosius possessed a quick and lively sense of the existence of the people whom he had destroyed.

The polytheists of those times had but little feeling upon the question of accepting Christian-

ity. They courteously acknowledged the gods of other nations and would as freely accept the Christian religion, the most objectionable feature being the necessity of rejecting their own superstition with it. But even this was comparatively a small matter, and when the edicts and feelings of the emperor demanded their conversion it was a simple matter for them to embrace Christianity; for, unless this course were pursued, there was not a man in that vast empire who was not at the mercy of some church officer or any party whose interest could be advanced by persecution and seizure of property. Furthermore, the church was then doing nothing to convince the pagan population, for at that time all the intellectual power it could bring to bear was expended upon such questions as *the single or double nature or incarnation of Christ, transubstantiation, images, etc.* These were elevated into questions of the highest magnitude and the bitterness of feeling engendered by them often led to riots and bloodshed. But none of these enigmas has the least bearing upon the question of the divinity of Christ or of religion or of morality. They are false issues in every sense and have through long ages been an imposition upon the public by misleading them into a supposition that in those controversies was witnessed a great display of learning and piety. So vast has the accumulation of such matter become that even the word "learned" as applied to churchmen is largely such only within the system.

Among the many edicts issued by Theodosius in the interest of the church was one by which he finally made Christianity the religion of the state, and this was issued the same year as the massacre of the Thessalonians. This edict of Theodosius was enforced with great vigor by Justinian nearly one hundred and fifty years later. That emperor finished the work by seeking pagans in out-of-the-way places and obliging them to accept Christianity. In one mountainous district alone 70,000 pagans were thus forced to profess Christianity and be baptized. He also vastly increased the personal interest of that religion by placing all municipal governments in the hands of bishops and other church officers.<sup>1</sup>

The power of any general government and the importance of its measures so greatly overshadow any one of its municipal governments that we naturally underrate the importance of the latter; but, with the exception of a comparatively few statesmen of national reputation, every citizen has greater personal interest in the affairs of his municipality than he has in the general government. The powers of those many local governments are divided among so many officers, each of whom has jurisdiction over so little territory, that the magnitude of the importance of the whole is lost sight of. When Justinian put all municipal governments into the hands of the church he delegated to it greater power and far greater official

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<sup>1</sup> Guizot's History of Civilization in Europe.

patronage than he retained for himself. Few citizens ever had occasion to come in personal contact with the emperor, but this new power given the church did reach each and all, and through its local tyranny and the edicts of the emperor there could be no safety for the pagan population, of which the largest part of the empire was still composed.<sup>1</sup> It was immediately following these edicts that the pagan population turned to Christianity, not from any spirit of loving kindness or any new light going to prove that Christ was the Son of God, but from personal interest and fear of church authorities.

This was success enough to have filled their wildest ambition; there hardly remained a power for churchmen to ask for, and it ought to have been the dawn of their promised era of love, enlightenment, and peace; but actually it extinguished the dimming twilight of mental liberty and inaugurated a reign of hypocrisy and fear. It placed over the Roman people a far-reaching, bigoted tyranny, under which Christendom sank into the night of the Dark Ages. This retrogression of civilization occurred in Christian countries only. The Mohammedans during that time advanced from a semisavage state to a high degree of intelligence and refinement.

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<sup>1</sup> Gibbon estimates that at the conversion of Constantine, about two-thirds of a century before the baptism of Theodosius, only about one-twentieth of the inhabitants of the Empire were Christians.

The power over the public mind which was given to the church by the edicts of Justinian has been not only successfully retained, but increased, and throughout all the succeeding centuries, until within about one hundred and fifty years, has been sufficient to insure death to any opponent of church government. Even Charlemagne, about four hundred years later, by an edict pronounced the pain of death against those who refused baptism or even ate flesh during Lent.<sup>1</sup> This was four hundred to five hundred and sixty years after the birth of Christ, and, though the church was large, its success up to that time had not been extraordinary. This was its great start and made so under a combination of false issues, indifference, and the power of the emperors. Christianity was largely imposed upon the people within the empire, while outside of it its acceptance was often made a consideration in treaties. As late as the year 918 France ceded Normandy to the Normans for certain considerations, one of them being that the Normans accept Christianity.<sup>1</sup> This was only a little over one hundred years before William the Conqueror was born.

One of the self-imposed duties of Christians is to spread the gospel in every land. They are educated into a double motive for so doing: It is falsely held to be the command of Christ and they are also taught that Christianity and enlighten-

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<sup>1</sup> State of Europe in the Middle Ages, by Henry Hallam, LL.D., F.R.A.S.



ment go hand in hand; that it is the true way to civilize any people. Under this double incentive they have expended through many centuries vast sums of money and have also endeavored by force to support and extend it. If the Christians' claims be true, it also had for its help the power and favor of God. But, with these actual and supposed advantages, they have not been able to extend their religion beyond the succeeding nations and their offshoots covered by Theodosius's edicts. They have not even been able to retain all of the territory they then occupied.

Taking their wealth and power through long ages into consideration and their own professed most cherished duty, they have no cause for pride in the spread of Christianity. Excepting in the extreme north of Europe there are no Christian believers to-day but the descendants of less than half of those who accepted Christianity at the extinction of paganism in the Roman Empire. They have since lost the territory in Asia and Africa embraced in that empire and gained the then barbarians in the extreme north of Europe. Of course the numbers have vastly increased through increase of population and the territory has been greatly extended by the discovery of America, Australia, etc. During all this time believers in Christ have been made so only by impressions made upon the mind of youth in countries where that belief has been general. In the great majority of cases the belief must be inherited to ob-

tain a footing at all. Reason, from first to last, has not only not been appealed to, but it has been suppressed. The experience of Dr. Wallace while living with savages led him to question "whether the mental and moral status of our population has not on the average been lowered, and whether the evil has not overbalanced the good."<sup>1</sup>

But, if the magnitude of effects produced by a pretense is proof of its truth, then we ought all to be Mohammedans, for the imposition of that superstition upon the people was far more successful than that of Christianity. It originated over five hundred years after the birth of Christ, and in two hundred years it had become the greatest power in the world and threatened the extinction of Christianity.

Confucius, also, has had in time probably more followers than Christ. He lived six or seven hundred years earlier, and though the number of his adherents in any one generation were not so great they have been numerous enough in its longer career to swell the grand total to a number rivaling Christianity.

Nothing will so intensely enlist a man's feelings in a cause as to fight for it. No cause was ever fought for under more romantic and exciting circumstances than Christianity was in the crusade wars. Communication between the different countries then was much more difficult than in

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<sup>1</sup> Malay Archipelago, by Alfred Russell Wallace, LL.D., F.L.S.

our time. A journey from western Europe to Palestine was as great an undertaking as a trip around the world would be now. Manners and customs also were in greater variety than in the same countries now. Under those circumstances the love of adventure would alone be a powerful inducement to thousands to join the crusade. Absence from those we love will draw out the most tender feelings, which will be intensified when to long absence are added both great distance and danger, and those feelings would become attached to the cause that drew them forth. Those far distant campaigns extended over a space of two hundred years, a time long enough to make its hardships and glories a part of the history of every family in Europe.

The romance and adventures attending those campaigns supplied causes for excitement and enthusiasm such as have never been known in history. Generation after generation of youths grew to manhood with their minds filled with the exploits of their ancestors, some of whom, to the last crusaders, would seem to be so remote as to be quite in ancient times. To have been a crusader was the highest glory of a soldier. Palestine became associated in the mind as second only to heaven. It then became "the most Holy Land" and was doubly endeared to the people through the suffering and death of the many hundred thousands who threw their lives away in efforts to secure its possession.

It is well known that, when the mind of a

mother is intensely occupied with any subject for a number of months preceding the birth of a child, such child will have a great development of those mental faculties then excited in the mother. The great Napoleon is one of the most notable illustrations of this. His mother had an unusual experience in a military campaign preceding his birth, during which time her mind must have been filled with the various details of the campaign.

During those crusades there was every reason for the minds of hundreds of thousands of mothers, so situated, to be most intensely occupied and excited about Jesus Christ and Christianity, and the history of those nations of Europe whence the crusades issued shows that that superstition developed at that time into a monomania.

But, while these several causes operated to intensify a devotion to that superstition in vast numbers, other causes had a contrary effect upon another smaller class of men whose minds were enlarged and whose knowledge was increased by the wider experiences which those campaigns gave to them. This divergence in ideas made the later contentions and cruelties of the church possible. Guizot<sup>1</sup> says:

Though begun under the name and influence of religious belief, the crusades deprived religious ideas, I shall not say of their legitimate share of influence, but of their exclusive and despotic possession of the human mind.

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<sup>1</sup> History of Civilization in Europe.

During the crusades Rome became a halting place for a great portion of the crusaders, either in going or returning. A multitude of laymen were spectators of its policy and manners and were able to discover the share which personal interest had in religious disputes.

Those returning crusaders who were enabled to tarry at Rome must necessarily have been of the wealthy class and limited in numbers, though large enough to sow the seed of those liberal ideas that culminated in the Reformation.

The sky looks blue, not on account of what we see in the far distant space, but because of the air immediately around us. So it is with Christianity. Its history, though seemingly full preceding the first crusade, is nevertheless quiet as compared to its history since. Those wars, under this combination of causes for excitement, gave that religion an impetus that neither its crimes and cruelties, nor discoveries in science, have as yet been able to overcome.

Those crusades, however, would not have been possible but for the feelings growing out of the wars and encroachments of the Mohammedans within the preceding four hundred years. One feature of the superstition of the latter was that its believers should extend it by means of the sword. Those who died fighting for that cause were made to believe that they would go at once to paradise with all their sins forgiven. With such an enemy and such sentiments there was no hope for Christianity under noncombatant princi-

ples. There were no longer any pagans to fight for it and those unnatural principles had to be abandoned. And yet Christians had a double motive for respecting them, for they were not only the commands of Christ, but the success of their religion had originally been owing largely to them. Rome had absorbed all the civilized nations of the world, and it could not be otherwise but that the love of country, as applied to that empire, would, for at least a few generations, be exceedingly small, if, indeed, it existed at all, among the inhabitants of the recently conquered countries, particularly as Roman citizenship was elevated into a kind of nobility. The disposition to fight for the empire would be small and even not possessed at all by many. To all such, the noncombatant principles of Christianity were inviting, for within the church they could escape a service that was repulsive to them.

The noncombatant sentiments of the early Christians, however, never stood in the way of their own aggressions. There was never much blood shed upon questions of Christian doctrines until they began to shed it themselves in their own internal quarrels.

When war begins argument ceases. Whatever the origin of war may be, the motives that draw in the rank and file of the army are in all instances the same. The love of their religion may have influenced a very few Christians to take part therein, but, whatever the motives were, those

religious wars in later times were seemingly for Christianity, and hence that which was love of glory, or love of country, or love of liberty, or love of plunder is now all credited to love for the Christian religion. For more than a thousand years the most severe wars were more or less connected with Christianity, during which time those who denied its truthfulness were overwhelmed and lost in a sea of passion against which contention was impossible. The religious feeling had but little to do with it. The truthfulness of any part of Christianity could not under any circumstances be proven by wars, but they produced a far more powerful feeling than was possible in any other way. They were a series of false issues (as far as religion was concerned) from beginning to end, under which the divinity of Christ seemed to be proven beyond the possibility of doubt.

On the other hand, there never has been any disposition to combat Christianity simply on the grounds of its doctrines. It has always been a matter of indifference with unbelievers, so much so that even in our time they generally remain silent rather than incur the opposition which those sentiments often create. If they remain silent now for such small reasons, how much less was their speaking probable when to do so was almost certain death. There is not now nor never has been any feeling except on one side of this question, and that is the side where the fear and

superstition lie. Both the excitement and interest have always been the Christian's own. The Romans from the first regarded Christian doctrines with indifference and contempt, and that indifference at least has been a characteristic of all unbelievers to this day. The two or three instances of persecution encountered before the time of Constantine were not persisted in and operated to the advantage of the church. Excepting those short seasons Christianity never had serious official opposition. If at first there had been even moderate interest antagonistic to it, it would probably never have reached success enough to be known in history.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### CONVERSION.

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ONE of the numerous mysteries of the mind consists in its seeming connection with other minds. Its action in such cases is as though there was a *mental atmosphere*—as some have expressed it—through which the same thoughts are telegraphed simultaneously to all. Susceptibility to this varies in individuals, it being so great with some that in times of excitement their minds lose their individuality and are governed by the united thoughts of those with whom they are associated. This phenomenon necessarily can be exhibited only when a number of persons are assembled together and somewhat excited upon one subject. That is all that is required; the subject itself is a matter of indifference. Panics in the army or in the market, or public enthusiasm upon some one subject, or excitement in revivals in churches are all manifestations of this mysterious external control of the mind. The fact of this phenomenon is fully established, but no satisfactory scientific explanation has as yet been given for it. It is governed by some biological or psychological law as yet unknown. In the Mohammedan and Christian religions great use has been made of this

mental peculiarity in establishing confidence in the truth of their doctrines. Those doctrines are well adapted to work up excitement, and the seemingly supernatural effect that follows is readily accepted as an exhibition of divine approval of one's own particular religion. Its action in the church has often stimulated the passive fears of moderate church attendants and led them into a supposition that they had experienced what is represented to them as being a change of heart. Previous belief is a necessary adjunct to the so-called conversion, as it is through the terrors embraced within that belief that the convert's fears are acted upon and his spirits correspondingly depressed. Any depression of spirits, no matter what caused it, will be followed by a reaction. This is a never-failing law of nature. Churchmen take advantage of this, or, more correctly, are misled by this into representing such reaction to be a divine revelation of *the truth* or something of that nature. Large numbers have thus been made to believe they had experienced within themselves a change that was supernatural, not knowing that at that particular hour when they supposed they *experienced religion* they simply experienced a reaction of feeling from previous doubts and fears, coupled with the phenomenon referred to.

Necessarily those so-called converts have received no *new light*; they know *the truth* no better than they did before and have sustained no change

of disposition. They have, to a considerable extent, lost control of their minds, under which they are led to join the church and subscribe to such articles of faith as are dictated to them, part of which they may never have read before. A person who was naturally religious might date his conversion from some particular revival, but he was, nevertheless, not improved thereby, as his natural religious propensities would have held him to what he believed to be his duty. Others, who have been temporarily weakly carried away by excitement at revivals and have made a mortifying exhibition of themselves, often go to the opposite extreme and reject all religious impulses.

The following partial account of one of these mental phenomena at a revival—though an extreme case for intelligent people—is a fair representation of scenes very common at such meetings among the more ignorant.

She would walk up and down the aisles with arms outstretched, eyes rolling, and in the greatest mental and physical excitement. Singling out some one on the outside, generally a man, she would go up to him and with a voice supernaturally grave would point her finger at him and say, "The Lord wants you." This would be continued in some instances for fully five minutes, the victim of her attention during this trying ordeal quaking with embarrassment and shame. When tired of thus harassing her crouching victim she'd return to the rostrum on which the Rev. H—— had thrown himself, and who in the mean time had kept up his agonizing groans and posturings, and clasping him in her arms would endeavor to raise

him to his feet. A singing band of seven or eight women kept things awake by their shouting and singing. Miss K——, during one of these meetings—which, by the way, began at 7 o'clock in the morning, continued all day and sometimes as late as midnight—tore the hat from her head, threw it with great energy upon the floor, and then deliberately lay down on the floor and rolled over it. The unoffending headgear was too gaudy for her now. She had become inspired. A third person who allowed herself to be carried away by excitement was Mrs. W. H——. This lady is spoken of by all who know her as a modest, retiring, and exemplary woman. Her antics were similar to those of Miss K—— and for vehemence and enthusiasm equaled anything of the kind ever witnessed. She was beside herself and was unconscious of what she was doing.

As the days passed and these meetings continued, the frenzy seemed to grow in intensity. No pen can describe the *abandon* and recklessness of the leaders in this farce, and the country people flocked to the building from the surrounding country in such numbers that it was impossible to accommodate them in the hall. The whole town was ablaze with excitement. The cooler-headed church members and all of the outsiders were strong in their denunciation of the sacrilege, but no one felt it his duty to interpose any objections and the "show" went on. Days passed in this way, and the city hall was a pandemonium. The preacher and his leading helpers hardly took time to eat anything, and sleep was out of the question. They had haggard looks and bloodshot eyes, and many of the citizens shook their heads in dismay, wondering where the matter would stop and predicting that the insane asylum would catch some of the performers.

During one of the "spirited" *séances*, when the groanings, lamentations, and contortions of the

pastor had been more vigorous than usual and when Mrs. —, Miss —, Miss—, and Mrs. — had outdone themselves in gesticulating, singing, and posturing, with agonized faces and tear-streaming eyes, a man in the audience was pounced upon by the preacher as a fit subject for "wrestling." This was C—. He is wealthy and never squanders a cent for any purpose whatever. As he was sitting there in the audience Pastor H— espied him. Going to C—, H— said: "The Lord says for you to give up all of your possessions for the good of the church. Will you do it?" C—, who had by this time come somewhat under the spell of fanaticism himself, responded in a feeble tone, "Yes." "Louder," demanded H—. "Yes," responded C— with a slightly increased accent. "Louder yet," cried H—. "Yes, I will," answered C—, "all but my two ponies." By this time C— was standing in the aisle, while H— was literally "weeping on his neck." Receiving the last reply H— said, "The Lord commands me to thrust you aside," and, with a motion that would set a prize-fighter in ecstasies of delight, he pushed the submissive C— ten feet away, and he was only kept from falling to the floor by one of the audience, who steadied him as he reeled backward.

The poor, misguided creatures fully believed there would be a Divine apparition, and even the unbelievers were staggered. They saw so much of the supernatural in the conduct of these people that they were prepared to see anything. The night passed, however, but no vision came, although seven of the faithful, including the pastor, got together in one corner of the hall and remained there praying, shouting, groaning, and gesticulating until 2 o'clock the next morning.

The following night the pastor made a statement to the meeting to the effect that Sister H—'s prophecy had been fulfilled; that Christ had in-

deed manifested himself; that in fact he appeared bodily. He explained that Sister C——, whom he characterized as "my child" and whom he clasped at the same time in his arms, was the only person out of that little band of seven who had been permitted to see the dear savior. He explained further that "Sister C—— was kneeling right there in the aisle, and after a while the Lord came down. Right down by that post, wasn't it, sister?" asked the pastor. "Yes, sir," promptly and proudly answered Sister C——, "right by that post. There was a bright light, and out of the light I saw the dear face of Jesus. His form was beautiful and he walked majestically," continued the good sister, and the faithful sighed that they had not been permitted to gaze on this divine picture.

About this time the pastor went to labor with Dr. H——, who was in the audience. Said he to H——: "I have a message from the Lord and he is displeased with you." The doctor calmly replied: "If the Lord has a message for me, I would rather he'd send it some other way." The pastor became furious and, rolling his eyes and towering beyond his natural height, he raised his arms to heaven and bellowed forth: "Send the angel of death to this unbeliever."

The pastor's favorite method of dispersing the meetings was, "The Lord says, Go home." This was the dismissal. One day, when the spirit was rather livelier than usual, he left his house and, taking a position on the principal corner of the town, shouted at the top of his voice: "The Lord says, Come to the hall." This racket was kept up for nearly five minutes. Getting tired of this outdoor exercise, he went into the hall and, raising a window, craned his neck outside and repeated his injunction. "The Lord says, Come to the hall." In the meantime "the faithful" were gathering for another season of rejoicing.

Another illustration of conversion will be found in Senator Blair's speech published in the Congressional Record February 11, 1890:

The religion of the region has in it few elements of power for good. These people are not unbelievers. They believe in God and in the Bible. They may know little about either, and their belief may be only a superstitious regard, but they never doubt the existence of God nor the truth of the Bible. An infidel is rarely heard of among them; I have known of but one. But religion is scarcely thought of as a power making for righteousness. It is a scheme for opening the door of heaven, not for saving the soul from sin. It regards the place of the future life, not the character which fits for it. A dream in some way connecting itself with religion is considered one of the most satisfactory proofs of conversion, and good lung power one of the best means of expressing spirituality.

Once a year it is the intention of each church to have a "big meeting" or revival services. The people gather in crowds from miles around. Three or four or more ministers are present, well supplied with tobacco, but perhaps without a Bible. The preaching is in a peculiar singsong tone, which seems to be regarded as a necessity in preaching. The gesticulation is wild and furious. Preacher follows preacher, each bent on working himself and the congregation into a state of intense excitement, and before long it begins. Then follow scenes which words can not describe. Marching, jumping, rolling on the floor, embracing, screaming, and above all and mingled with all the shrill singsong of the preacher, wildly seeking to raise the excitement to a higher and higher pitch.

In the midst of one of these wild scenes in Northern Alabama a few months since a somewhat un-

derwitted boy in his teens became very happy, and his vigorous shouting and bodily contortions were inspiring others to rise to greater heights of happiness and enthusiasm.

Suddenly there was a lull and the voice of this lad came out clear and strong, and what he was shouting was understood for the first time. The inspiring sentiment which had seized hold of his mind and heart, and which he was shouting over and over in the religious ecstasy was this: "Run, chicken, with your head pecked off; ain't we having a good time?"

As the excitement goes on the "conversions" begin. The converts press forward and take the minister by the hand as a sign of their desire to "jine" him; they "jine the minister" instead of joining the church. They are baptized, and thenceforth are good church members. They go back to their homes when the "big meeting breaks," with no thought of living a new life and with no expectation on the part of anybody that they will. Their religion does not involve morality, and everybody can afford to be religious.

Although much is said of conversion to Christianity and vast sums are expended for that purpose, there are nevertheless comparatively no converts made; for, while those in a Christian country always believed, those in pagan countries can never be made to. The reports of missionary societies show failure in this respect. They have made no progress in their various missionary stations, except as they have been able to control the schooling of children and have them brought up in the faith the same as is done at home. But even by this slow and expensive process the number of christianized pagans is exceedingly small.



There are instances of adults claimed as having been converted to Christianity, but their conversion is often of a doubtful character, it having been to their interest to affect conversion. It has been said that the pagans converted to Christianity would weigh no more than the gold expended to convert them.<sup>1</sup>

Christianity has never had a more convenient missionary field than that afforded by the Onondaga Indians in the State of New York. That small handful of pagans have been in the midst of a Christian country for a hundred years. For the last fifty years they have been surrounded by a dense and rich Christian population, a population that has donated money enough for missionary purposes to make every Indian of the tribe rich. Those Indians have traded and mingled with the whites all their lives and have been brought up almost within hearing of church bells.

The following will show what has (not) been accomplished in converting them. Christian pa-

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<sup>1</sup> That high English Church dignitary, Canon Taylor, asserts that the effort to christianize the pagan world is a dreary, dismal, dreadful, and distressing failure. The disgusted, but candid canon does not content himself with merely making the assertion, but he appeals to the unsympathetic logic of frigid and inexorable mathematics to sustain himself. He shows that at the rate the work is going on in India the natural increase of heathens in 1 year will require for its conversion the Christian effort of 143 years; that in China the increase of 1 year will require 27,000 years of effort to overcome the native belief at the rate the good work is going on; that practically no inroads at all are made against Mohammedanism, and that return to the native religion is nearly as large as are the conversions.—*Boston Investigator*.

tience has been exhausted, as well it might be, for its pretended revelations are too preposterous to be believed even by the simplest adult when unbiased by early training:

Bishop Huntington, of Central New York, is out in a remarkable letter with reference to the shocking condition of things among the Indian population of what is known as the Onondaga reservation, in this State, some seven miles from Syracuse. He says: "Society there stagnates in barbarism; all advance toward civilization is arrested; the motives which prompt men to action and thrift fail; hope is discouraged; the natural indolence of the Indian has no spur; they are virtually no traders; agriculture as a science is unknown; a few framed and painted houses are built by Christians, but the pagans are for the most part content with huts and cabins; fences are rude; roads are scarcely passable; rubbish litters the dooryards; swine roam at large; meals are irregular; the women cling to their heathen style in dress and manners; they are made to work in the field. Their worship is a howling superstition [!] and, worse yet, wedlock is neither respected nor practiced. Yet all this," adds the good bishop, "is right in the heart of the State of New York, and hitherto it has scarcely been alluded to in sermons and appeals and in journals and assemblies, where Christians are besought to take pity on a foreign heathendom and money is given to send missionaries of Christ to all the corners of the earth."

There is now a bill before the legislature which contemplates the breaking up of this reservation and the bishop is decidedly in favor of its passage. The Onondaga Indian is a lazy vagabond, and the bishop thinks it is high time that civil laws as well as Christianity should set him about some useful business, and he does not hesitate to say

that "the sentimentalism which invests his indolence and filth with the romance of a bygone heroism can do him nothing but harm."

Notice that when an Indian has a good house or has advanced a little more than the average he is claimed as a Christian. It is a theory with the church that there is little or no difference between civilization and Christianity, while in practice the latter is placed above civilization which it will hold back rather than that its doctrines shall be shaken. It is willing to grant its diploma of civilization to any who profess Christianity. Those Indians supply the most flattering example that the church can produce of the works of societies whose labors to civilize are based upon the theory that that end may be attained by preaching "Christ and him crucified." They also supply another illustration of the fact that none ever believe unless that belief has been impressed upon the mind by parents or guardians or other instructors in youth.

The Chinese in this country present a still more inviting field for conversion of pagans to Christianity, because of their greater intelligence, and items appear in the papers from time to time that imply that some progress in that respect is being made. But the following account<sup>1</sup> shows that there are no such conversions and also illustrates the fraudulent character of all such pagan pretensions:

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<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 13, 1885.

## CHRISTIANIZED CHINESE.

NEW YORK, Dec. 12—[Special.]—The christianization of the Chinese in this city has had a discouragement. Six separate Sunday schools for Chinamen have been established here, ranging from the fashionable mission of Grace Church to the class gathered by Miraculous Simpson, a faith curer, who operates on his own account in the edifice which the late Salmi Morse fitted up for a production of the "Passion Play." All together about 200 Chinamen have been recruited by these evangelists, and it was supposed from the readiness of the Orientals to assert their firm belief in orthodoxy that the work was highly successful. But this week is devoted by the Chinese quarter to a glorification of Joss in a new temple provided for him. The prosperity of the Chinese in New York is ascribed by them wholly to the benignity of their heathen god and they are worshipping him with intense fervor. Investigation shows that few, if any, of the avowed converts to Christianity have kept aloof from the ceremonies. The truth seems to be, as learned from some of the Chinese merchants and especially from the Chinese consul, that the attendants at the Sunday school are there purely for the sake of getting education in the English language. The consul declares positively that there is not a single sincere Christian among them and that they do not dream of turning from Joss as their great divinity. A few may mix a little of Christian doctrine with their native religion, but they invariably give supremacy to Joss.

Christianity originated among the most enlightened people upon the earth, and it is owing to that circumstance only that it is among that class to-day. Mankind advanced, not because of Christianity, but in spite of it. But true to its custom,

to claim everything and prove nothing, the church claims civilization as its work. In the nineteen hundred years of its existence, it cannot produce an example of one item of human advancement for which we are indebted to doctrines growing out of assertions that Christ was the Son of God. On the contrary, progress in every science has been combated because of the never-failing conflict with the ignorant authors of that assertion. (See Hon. Andrew D. White's late writings upon this subject.)

The church is from necessity confined to the narrow ideas of its founders, the consequence being that churchmen's labors and requirements are confined to an exceedingly narrow intellectual range, and when these simple demands are complied with their work is finished and their labors thenceforth consist in a pedagogical interference with the minds and movements of those who do not comply with their ideas. They are severe only in their denunciation of others. Neither can churchmen originate reforms; the pretended supernatural source of their sentimental requirements does not admit of it, but they unhesitatingly claim all good works as a natural result of those requirements, regardless of their own history connected therewith. We have an illustration of this in the great temperance reform started in this country by five drunkards in Baltimore in 1840. That movement did not originate in the church; but, on the contrary, its greatest opposition was

from within that body and the most powerful arguments against it derived their strength from numerous incidents related in the Bible. Nor are churchmen even now agreed upon that subject, there being quite a difference in particular between those in Europe and in this country. The great merits of that reform, however, are fully recognized and consequently churchmen try to appropriate the credit by coupling it with Christianity and implying that it is the result of its teachings. The American churches' position upon this question is a reflection upon the virtue of Christians in all past ages. The great reformer, John Knox, when he found he was going to die, ordered the head of a hogshead of claret wine knocked in, for the free use of those who came to see him in his sickness. Drunkenness has always been common in the church and it is not uncommon in it now.

Near the Rocky Mountains there are Indians who, as yet, are nearly as unfamiliar with civilization as they were when America was discovered. They have probably never seen a church and missionary accounts of Christianity must have only increased their confidence in their own superstition, for in that, at least, they saw themselves as far advanced as the whites. Their veneration was evidently impressed by the grandeur of nature, and they worshiped God by worshipping it. In doing this, they traveled three thousand miles to perform a ceremony that was traditional with

them, and performed only at long intervals of time, the last instance having been upon the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, two hundred years before. If their ceremonies, as related in the following account, had been performed in a cathedral, with rich regalia and the *pomp and vanity* peculiar to such places, they would not only have equaled, but would even have surpassed, those of the Christian church.

Contrast, also, this ceremony with scenes in revival meetings, and particularly with the one just quoted:

BOSTON, March 28.—The Zuñi Indian priests, who arrived here a week ago and have since been the lions of the town, to-day performed the religious ceremony which is the main object of their visit here, namely, the procuring of water from the ocean of the rising sun for use in their rites at home. They went to Deer Island in the city steamer at the invitation of Mayor Green, accompanied by about three hundred prominent gentlemen with ladies, and on arriving at the island went directly to ten tents, erected at the eastern extremity. Presently the Indians emerged, their faces smeared with paint of various hues and their hands full of feathers and various implements to be used in the observances to follow. Mr. Cushing, their guide, who donned his Indian costume before leaving the boat, came with them, also in full paint and feathers. He wore what looked like a bearskin cap, from beneath which hung down over his shoulders long, flowing hair. His companions wore colored handkerchiefs tied tightly around their foreheads. The old chief of the tribe, the high priest, leading, the others followed after him in single file, Mr. Cushing being

fifth in the line, and with slow steps they proceeded towards the water. There was no levity on their part, but solemn seriousness was in their faces. Directly in front of one tent was a gravelly beach. A short distance to the right, however, there was a low point of rocks, which, as the tide was out, were bare, and appeared, while offering an opportunity for the chiefs to get a little nearer to the deep sea, to be also a more convenient point than the shelving beach from which to dip the sacred water. So they turned in that direction, and a large crowd surrounding them hurried in a promiscuous rush, anxious to secure slightly points for observation. Indians and spectators picked their way along, stepping from rock to rock, till they were out two or three hundred feet from the shore. Then the Indians squatted in a small semicircle, and the spectators, balancing themselves upon the smooth and slippery rocks, formed a larger semicircle behind them. An enterprising photographer set up his camera directly in front of the pious priests, about ten feet in front of them, and prepared for business. The priests had already begun upon their sacred services, each chanting in his turn a prayer to the god of the ocean, the mother of the ocean, and the father of the world. At the end of every sentence were words which interpreted mean, "Make the road of life for ourselves and for our children to be prolonged," and to represent the roads the sacred meal, composed of ground white corn and sea shells, was scattered in rows. Meanwhile the tide was rapidly rising, and so the people on the ends of the semicircle found their position becoming uncomfortable, and, before they were really aware how uncomfortable it was, the rocks on which they stood were surrounded with water and the little waves washing over the tops of them. The photographer was suddenly knee deep in water and one or two waves larger than the others caused a number of people



to lose their equilibrium and step overboard. A general backward movement began about this time, and sedate gentlemen of divinity, professors, and less distinguished personages jumped about with more or less agility to escape from the approaching flood. Finally the Indians were left alone. They were wet, but were filled with deep religious fervor and delight, for they believed that the coming of the waters was to them a marked token of divine favor. Mr. Cushing interrupted the service to suggest to them that they retire to a more comfortable spot, but the high priest turned to him and said: "Be firm. The waters come upon us by the will of the gods. The sun hears us. God hears. This is a beautiful manifestation of the truth of our religion, and you must be prepared for it. Even if the waves rise and take you in it will be well." The chanting of prayers occupied about fifteen minutes, and the Divine Providence may be seen in the fact that the founders of this observance centuries ago did not make the services as long again, or to-day they would all have been drowned by the rising tide. The blowing of cigarette smoke into a trayful of feathers followed, and then the high priest threw the feathers out on the water as tokens of gratitude to the gods of the ocean for the favors bestowed. The two high priests of the Order of the Bow, one of whom is Mr. Cushing, then sprinkled their companions with water, and this closed the second part of the ceremonies, and the procession moved to the tent. The two high priests brought up the rear, swinging the whizzers, announcing to the gods of the ocean that the prayers are complete. A prayer chant was sung and the sacred meal sprinkled toward the west, whither their road lies to home. Then the priest returned to the beach, bearing vessels for the sacred water. Two of the priests, who were barefooted, waded into the water and filled the vessels, and after this

came the most imposing ceremony of the afternoon, the initiation of Cushing into the Order of the Kau Kau. This is the highest religious order among the Zuñis, and by his entrance Cushing will become possessed of the mythology and early history of all the tribe, which is in possession of but four priests. The high priest and Cushing clasped their arms about each other so as to bring their left sides or their hearts together, and the priest called upon the gods to witness that the man is his son. The four other priests followed this example, and Cushing was baptized and his hands washed with the salt water, and the initiation was as complete as possible. It will be repeated on arriving home, and Mr. Cushing will then have his heart's desire, a knowledge, which he is pursuing in the interest of ethnology, of the history of the oldest tribe of men in America.

The following two accounts further illustrate the great depth of superstition that still remains in the church. The Italian Penitents seem to have changed places with the Indians. This occurred near where Christianity was first mentioned in history, and upon the scene of part of Paul's labors, and near the Christian capital throughout the Christian era. There is no place in the world where churches and priests are so numerous, nor where so much money has been expended in its cause, and, consequently, where such a high state of civilization ought to exist, provided belief has the effect to civilize the believers.

The English Catholics, on the other hand, were engaged in precisely the same occupation that the Zuñi Indians were, such difference as there was being in favor of the latter. A pilgrimage to the

seashore and worship of the ocean are a far more intelligent religion than pilgrimage to and worship at Lourdes.

## ITALIAN PENITENTES.

[Naples Correspondence *London News*.]

We are in the Province of Grosseto, which province is notable for being the worst malaria region in Italy. It is near midnight on Good Friday. A procession composed of about thirty individuals passes through the streets, most of them being young men from 15 to 25, the others boys from 10 to 15 years of age. Their bodies from the waist upwards are bare except for a kind of white cape, which is open behind instead of in front and thus leaves the back and shoulders bare. Their faces are veiled by a white cloth with two holes for the eyes. They each carry two instruments of torture, one, called the *sferri*, being a whip formed of many flexible thin strips of iron, the other called the *spilli*, a whip made of many strings of cord with knots at the end, into which are fastened many large and crooked pins. On each side of the procession walk men called *codini*, some of whom carry torches which throw a lugubrious light on the strange procession and some carrying sticks with which they direct and guide the flagellants. These young men and boys walk a distance of at least a mile and a half, now whipping themselves with the *sferri*, now with the *spilli*, the first producing red and livid marks on the shoulders and the last causing the blood to flow from a hundred little pricks and scratches. The signal for changing the mode of torture is given by the *codini*, who strike their sticks on the ground, at which sound the flagellants change the action of their *sferri* for that of the *spilli*, or vice versa, with military precision. After two or three hours of slow walking the procession enters the church and the flagellation is more furiously continued. After this the

sore and wounded backs of the penitents are washed with water mixed with vinegar and salt.

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A pilgrimage to Lourdes, which is to leave London on May 21, is being organized among the Roman Catholics throughout the kingdom. The leaders of this movement are nearly all laymen. The Duke of —, the Earl of —, Lord——and many others, more or less well known, are organizing the expedition, and statements of what the journey will cost by the different routes are being put forth in the Catholic papers. It is supposed that no fewer than 250 persons will take part in the pilgrimage, and that, with the exception of a few servants who will accompany them, the pilgrims will all belong to the upper and upper-middle classes of Catholic society. The avowed object of the undertaking is said to be that England may be freed from the troubles which threaten her with regard to Ireland.

At the risk of a slight digression I would like to call attention to the ideas of the Catholic priesthood as to what constitutes education, particularly as they make themselves conspicuously solicitous on that subject and establish their schools nearly as freely as their churches. If religion has any part in it, it at least cannot affect the elementary studies, for under any circumstances they must be taught in some school and no part of our education requires as much time in proportion as they do. The time now devoted to them in our public schools does not average five hours per day during five days of the week and nine months of the year. This certainly leaves abundant time for religious instruction and bears the smallest proportion

possible to the whole time to do justice to those studies. When, therefore, the Catholic church refuses to accept the free gift of those schools, it in substance says that too much time is given to those studies, for while they are in progress the minds of the scholars cannot be occupied with the subject of religion, no matter in what school they may be taught.

It was recently announced that the plenary council at Baltimore contemplated withdrawing all Catholic children from public schools for the purpose of sending them to schools of their own. The reason given for this was insulting to the management of those public schools and to the people of the country that instituted them. Schools to which the most intelligent and respectable people send their children were not moral enough for children of that class which supplies the largest percentage of the most ignorant and criminal part of our population. This insult was to be accompanied with a demand which, if complied with, would admit of our Government being divided into a thousand petty independent parts. It was to the effect that part of the cost of supporting the public schools should be paid to the Catholic church according to the proportion which their children bore to the whole.

This contemplated demand amounts in substance to this: That, whereas the people of the United States have enacted certain laws of which we do not approve, we now demand that our pro-

portion of the expenses necessary to carry out those laws be transferred to us to be used at our secret pleasure, without accounting to the people who, as citizens, paid those taxes and whose officers collected them. It is in effect equivalent to a demand to be exempt from taxation for the support of such laws as they did not approve.

That church has succeeded in making a large part of the people of Chile all that it wished. It has greater power there than the Government. So powerfully does the church act upon the superstition of the people, whose sole religious ideas were obtained through it, that under the orders of a priest large numbers will inflict degrading punishment and even torture upon themselves and will continue to do so until the priest condescends to release them. The church requires that all marriage ceremonies shall be performed by its priests, for which service a fee of \$25 is exacted. The consequence is that over 60 per cent. of the births are illegitimate through the inability of the poor to sustain that severe tax. The Government has of late endeavored to correct this evil by legalizing marriages performed by its own magistrates. The archbishop has had the effrontery to combat the Government for this proper and necessary exercise of its legitimate authority by excommunicating all Government officers making such laws and all who execute them or are married under them. The fact that the archbishop may issue such proclamations and not be imprisoned is alone

evidence of the great power which that church has in that country. Until recently that Government would not have presumed to enter upon a contest with the superior powers of the church, and even now it is a question if a government founded purely upon superstition will not prove stronger than a Government founded upon patriotism and love of liberty.

That contest proves that the morality of the people is a matter of indifference to the Catholic hierarchy as compared to power and revenue. It also exhibits the secular Government solicitous for the morals of the people, while the church, which assumes *that* to be its own special duty, is shown to be willing to foster immorality in order to secure a high marriage fee.

The great power of that church in Chile is derived wholly through the ideas which the people have as to the divine authority of the priesthood; it is through the impressions they make upon the minds of the youth of Chile in its parochial schools. In those schools the scholars will hear a little of God, still less of Christ, but very much of *purgatory* and of the *holy fathers*, and of their divinely appointed power to stay or increase punishment after death. The most conspicuous outcome of those schools is a population that abjectly, servilely obeys the priesthood and panders to their love of power and comfort.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At the behest of the Roman Catholic Church about one million of the most industrious inhabitants of Spain were

It must be remembered, also, that the Catholic church in Chile and in the United States is under the control of the same autocratic head. Those men in the plenary council in Baltimore receive their appointments from the same central power that appoints bishops and archbishops for Chile, and the same authority dictates the policy for each country. When it is considered that the aggrandizement of its own power and wealth is the real object and end of the higher officials of that church, it will be seen that its different policy here is varied to fit the different nature of the people. It begs more and domineers less in this country, a condition that will be reversed in the exact proportion that it obtains control of education.

Eugene Sue, in *The Wandering Jew*, stated in substance that the Catholic authorities made it a point to pay especial attention to rich, devout Catholics; that they would acquaint themselves with the characteristics of such devotees and delegate a bishop or high officer particularly adapted

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hunted out like wild beasts because the sincerity of their religious opinions was doubted. \* \* \* For the first time there was not a heretic to be seen between the Pyrenees and the Straits of Gibraltar. \* \* \* Not only were the interests of the clergy deemed superior to the interests of laymen, but the interests of laymen were scarcely thought of. \* \* \* The highest nobles deemed it an honor to dress the priest when dressing for mass. \* \* \* The greatest men, with hardly an exception, became ecclesiastics and all temporal considerations of earthly policy were dispersed and set at naught. \* \* \* All over Spain the same destitution prevailed. That once rich and prosperous country was covered with a rabble of monks and clergy whose insatiate rapacity absorbed the little wealth yet to be found.—Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*.



to play upon their natural religious feelings and induce them to donate or bequeath their wealth to the church. Rich women are most liable to yield to this kind of influence. A short time ago the papers were giving accounts at quite the same time of three very rich unmarried ladies who were being thus beset, two of whom actually did add large sums to the vast hoard of the enormously rich Catholic hierarchy. It was painful in one instance to contemplate the great sacrifice made to the greed of that exclusively money-making and power-seeking association. The utter uselessness of this sacrifice is exemplified in the statement lately made that in the Vatican there is more gold in the gold ornaments scattered throughout that vast and useless building than there is of gold coin in all Europe.

Judging from its completed work, therefore, as exhibited in the instances just referred to in Italy and Chile, and from what we see of its work here, an educated man, in the eyes of the officers of that church, is one who believes that a Catholic priest possesses supernatural influence over his welfare in the future existence, who is, consequently, servilely deferential to him, and who will abjectly obey his orders and submit to his extortions, through fears of a purgatory from which he may be saved only through the ceremonies dictated by the church and which may be performed by none but its authorized agents.

It is true that many priests and bishops in that

church are most excellent men and exert themselves for the general good, and many ignorant Catholics may be pointed out who would far better be under the control of a good priest than if left to their own guidance. But this slight curtain of good is the ambush behind which the vast evil of that church is hid. It is the slight mixture of truth that, by supporting the falsehood, makes its evil far greater. The ideas of the heads of that church as to what constitutes education create far more of those ignorant Catholics than they do of good priests; nor is this good a result of their doctrines or teachings. The percentage of those superior men within the church is no greater (if as great) than is found in any association outside of it. The church does not form those virtues, but, on the contrary, it is a parasite upon them.

On the other hand, those Protestants who at times have demanded that the Bible be read in school are equally at fault. The truth is, however, that Catholicism differs from Protestantism only as strong brandy differs from weak. Every fault of the former is found in the latter in a modified degree. Long experience has brought the church—Catholics and Protestants alike—to the exact point where their social, pecuniary, and political interests lie, and gradually all their efforts have been directed to that point alone; and in their eager pursuit of an end which they have mistaken for religion they have arrayed themselves in opposition to advanced education and foster superstition, ignorance, and wretchedness.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### WORLDLINESS.

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If we call good every kind of conduct which aids the lives of others, and do this under the belief that life brings more happiness than misery, then it becomes undeniable that, taking into account immediate and remote effects on all persons, the good is universally the pleasurable. (The Data of Ethics, by Herbert Spencer.)

ONE of the effects of the law of gravitation is that water will run down hill. This is often a serious trouble. We would prefer that it should not stop and make a swamp here and there while on its way to the sea and that it should delay its floods at times and avoid destruction of property. Nevertheless, the certainty that that effect of that law will never vary is worth more to us than any suspension of it could possibly be, while the evils which it incidentally causes may be cured by the same process that made them. Those evils are to be overcome by the removal of obstructions, and not by beseeching the Almighty to suspend His laws.

It is the same with the mental law of selfishness. It causes great moral cesspools of vice and at times gathers force and sweeps all other considerations before it into widespread ruin. Self-

ishness is at the bottom of all human degradation; but for it there would be no temptation and therefore nothing to resist. Our appetites and avarice are but secondary to selfishness.

But every good act of man is also based upon selfishness. We would not attempt the exercise of any of our mental tendencies but for it. We are misled by other faculties into a supposition that the happiness of others is at times an incentive to some of our acts. But such is not the case. Their happiness is secondary to our own, for we have been made by those faculties to take pleasure in their happiness. This most lovable characteristic of human nature is the source of some of the greatest pleasures of life. Under some circumstances and mental deficiencies persons bring pecuniary ruin upon themselves in their undue indulgence of the happiness of giving joy to others.

One of the commonest sorrows of parents is because of the objectionable places of resort sought by their sons. Those disreputable places and the intemperance to which they lead ruin the happiness of thousands, both of the individuals themselves and of all connected with them. The misery bears a great disproportion to the acts that caused it, for those acts were but the slow accumulation of indulgences that at last swept away the victims and all that had built too much upon them. But those young men were exercising faculties that God intended they should exercise. They were simply seeking their pleasure in men-

tal diversion, and they found it in that greatest of all fountains of human happiness, the social pleasures. The fault did not lie in their selfishly seeking those pleasures. The evil was because of the obstructions that stopped the natural flow of those tendencies and left them to stagnate and breed moral miasma and ruin in obscure and hidden places.

Mental diversion is not only a pleasure, but it is a necessity. When that great day does come, when, through more perfect laws and a more perfect knowledge of human rights, the joys of this life shall be more widely distributed, it will be found that diversion, even at public expense, will be an important item in political economy and an expense that will be cheerfully borne because of the great good that will attend it. The mind is renewed by mental diversion, and that we should seek it is as natural as that water should run down hill. It is our duty to know the natural mental wants and bring to bear our highest experience in keeping their indulgence pure, not in vain resistance, but by guiding them through channels that make of them a living stream of usefulness and pleasure.

The places that entice young men to their ruin yield but little pleasure and are managed by persons of a low degree of intellect. But those resorts supply a want that society too clumsily and too infrequently touches upon, and they therefore neglect the one and seek the other. It would

be an easy task to provide a social system that would present daily attractions compared to which those low diversions would sink into indifference and deserved contempt. But in doing so a principle of action is demanded diametrically opposite to that taught by Christianity. That religion is the remote cause of much of that degradation which it claims to be especially adapted to prevent. In its condemnation of the pleasures of life, under the name of *worldliness*, it has dammed up the natural flow of a great human want, the supplying of which rendered far greater service than its merely temporary gratification.

One of the first steps in social and political reform is to give society a certain amount of organization. But the church is a bar to this. It has monopolized that position by establishing itself as the only standard of excellence, and it dictates to society that which society alone should act upon through an organization of its own. The variety of denominations, also, has cut the social system into too many circles, and in this manner the enormous power that organized society could wield for public good is dissipated and lost. Only the church presumes to discipline, and that discipline is devoted to the false sins and false virtues of its own system. It has made itself the doorkeeper to society and exacts for admission that which simply involves priestly service and which secures only its own support.

The club system seems to be the germ of that

which may eventually develop into an organized social system that would accomplish this object. All such associations, whether social or commercial, are invariably rigid in their demands upon the honor of each member, and cultivation of the faculty of honor is the one greatest public need at the present time. Let us suppose, for instance, that the club system be extended so as to embrace whole families, old and young, male and female, and that, instead of a club house of a few hundred thousand dollars' value, a vast structure, costing a few million dollars, be built for a daily rendezvous for all members at stated hours, according to age, sex, and needs. It may readily be seen what a succession of social enjoyments of every nature would accompany such an organization. Every kind of taste could be gratified and at the same time every enjoyment would be of a highly moral character. Illustrated lectures, music, plays, balls, paintings, libraries, special parties, and social life generally, both entertaining and instructive, would be established that would surpass anything now known. The intellectual friction would be valuable and in turn would stimulate study.

Under an organized social system there would be a smaller number of circles than now, though there would still be numerous organizations, or clubs, under different degrees of expense, according to the pecuniary means of the members, even to those composed of laborers. It is more impor-

tant that the poor have those organizations than the rich. Much of that which is now attributed to aristocratic exclusiveness is based simply on the inability of the excluded persons to meet the intellectual or pecuniary requirements of those with whom they cannot associate. Under these organizations there would be social amenities between different clubs, even between the richest and poorest to some extent, particularly in invitations to lectures. The former would in various ways be of much use to the latter, and a better feeling between the wealthy and the working classes would be cultivated.

Men are students always; in fact, properly directed mental culture is one of the greatest of enjoyments, provided it is pursued in a proper manner. The varying degrees of power by which a fact may be impressed upon the mind ought to be acted upon in all educational matters. For instance: If a school boy be informed that the sun is 880,000 miles in diameter and that the earth is 8,000 miles in diameter, an important fact is conveyed to his mind with no more power than would have been the case if he had simply been told that the sun was vastly larger than the earth. If he were naturally skillful in mathematics he might remember the figures, but even that would not insure comprehension. But if the difference in size could be illustrated by a globe  $9\frac{2}{12}$  feet in diameter and a marble 1 inch in diameter, his observation, imagination, and mathematics would all



take part in creating a lasting impression upon his mind of the fact.

Acting upon this principle, thousands of dollars might be advantageously expended in machinery and every variety of apparatus for the purpose of illustrating various scientific lectures. By doing so they would be made intensely interesting and the facts set forth would never be forgotten.

There are many advantages attending such an organization as here proposed that will readily come to the mind of the reader. These suggestions are intended mostly to give an idea of the extent to which the social system ought to be carried, rather than any recommendation as to details. That is a study which would demand and in time draw out superior abilities in developing and in originating new advantages and enjoyments.

Expulsion from such a body would be as serious as failure in business. Memberships would be so desirable that its regulations would be carefully obeyed through fear of the disgrace of expulsion or even suspension. Great power could thus be brought to bear to cultivate the all-important faculty of honor. As it now is, society greatly needs a defined authority to pass upon the question of admission or expulsion. Men are now admitted who are known to have been guilty of that which would cause their prompt rejection on the part of any committee who might be intrusted with that power. On the other hand there are instances where, through competent investigation, a person's

character might be saved that now, under an unfortunate combination of circumstances, is unjustly lost. This in particular is often the case with women.

Ordinarily the average abilities of public officers are above the average ability of the whole people and the honest efforts of the former will secure the confidence and support of the latter. But if those in authority should be corrupt and pass upon the people's rights for personal considerations, the effect would be the same as though the intelligence of the governing authorities were of a low order. Their unwise course would be patent to the whole people and general confidence would be correspondingly lost, even though the dishonesty of the officials might not have been detected. This lack of confidence is the cause of much internal trouble and is a danger to any government. To secure officers whose high sense of honor places them above corruption has always been regarded as of the greatest importance in all governments, municipal or general.

If the faculty of honor with the people at large be low, it will necessarily average low in its officers and public rights will be correspondingly overridden. All the mental faculties must develop in proportion to the enlarged ideas and necessities of more enlightened times. Any tardiness in that respect will sooner or later become a prominent evil and will arrest further progress until it is corrected. Is not a high sense of honor

in public officers the greatest want in most governments at the present day? Everywhere there are officials who are selling the rights and property of the people and there is a general undercurrent of fear in consequence. Contrast the honor of the Romans in the time of the Republic with the average degree of honor now. The natural cultivation of that faculty has been interrupted by the church. In place of the ostracism and shame that the bribed official would meet from society, he is now met by the church with a little sentiment as to forgiveness, repentance, and faith, after which he is absolved from the effect of his crime.

The great power for the discipline of men and women that organized society could wield, and the largest part of the enjoyments it could give, and the better average of knowledge that it would be instrumental in teaching are now all lost through the false sins and false virtues of the Christian system. It is an easy thing for bar rooms, gambling shops, and other places of low entertainment, to give attractions that will draw many from a society whose teachings of what is good and bad are like those taught by Christianity.

Many within the church of late have awakened to some of the evils of the stale and insipid life that attends a strict following of its teachings, and they begin to retract somewhat by drawing fine lines as to what is and what is not worldliness. But these discussions only bring into stronger light the depth of superstition that still clings to

Christianity. The trifling entertainments which it countenances bear a ridiculously small proportion to the wants which the improved conveniences of life have begotten. The poor Hindoo who holds up his arm until it withers differs from an orthodox Christian only in his more intense devotion to an opinion of God that is common to them both. The latter, more intelligently, omits physical torture, but equally uselessly condemns himself to self-denials of harmless pleasures and to consequent mental depression because of the same ideas that induce the Hindoo to suffer his physical pains. Universal brotherhood and peace and good will among men will be soonest reached through an intelligent cultivation of the joys of life. This and the future life are two stages of the same existence and both are equally holy; if it be wrong to seek our pleasure here, it will be equally so to seek it hereafter.

We are told that pleasure will divert our minds from religious matters and attach us too much to this world. There might be something in this if the time for dying were a matter of our own choosing, for in such case enjoyments might lead to a refusal to die at all. God has commanded us to love this life by giving us a mental faculty that makes us cling to it through a lifetime, often, of pain and adversity. If, also, it be wrong to divert the mind for a time from religious matters, then it is wrong to exercise the mind upon any other mental faculty whatever.

In summer evenings, wherever we may be, there may be seen a large part of the population lounging about in a listless idleness that is often burdensome. This is not the result of warm weather, but simply a disclosure it incidentally makes of a dullness in those evening hours which is perpetual and universal. This is rest for the body, but not necessarily rest for the mind, and the latter is the more important of the two. Idleness does not always give mental rest, because of our inability to keep the mind away from the subject that has been occupying it. Even sleep in some instances does not fully accomplish this. Mental diversion alone can do this, and it needs gratifying daily at the close of working hours.

With increasing powers to supply our wants, there should have grown up a wider range of enjoyments. The genius that has developed all other branches should have equally developed this, but the benefits of that growth have been lost to us. We are like a plant part of which has never had the light of the sun.

Those evening hours should be by far the happiest part of the day. They should be so enjoyable as to be looked forward to in pleasurable anticipation throughout the working or business hours. They should be so desirable as to stimulate and enliven our daily duties. It is not a hardship to be hungry, nor even objectionable, provided we can have good food at the proper time. It is so with labor of every nature, whether of the body

or the mind. If each day could be closed with a few hours of unalloyed enjoyment, those labors would cease to be objectionable. It is not that those labors alone wear upon the mind, but it is because there is mingled with them only hopeless *ennui*.

*If our nights could be filled with music,  
The cares that infest the day  
Would fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away.*

So perfectly has nature's system been adjusted to our wants that every duty we owe to others, individually or collectively, yields equally as much advantage to the payer as to the payee. When all are justly treated it will be found that no man need be under obligations to another, for each receives as much as he gives. There will be perfect reciprocity and perfect independence. Some of our educated wants are found in advanced ideas of public improvement, and the amount of those works in progress should be so gauged that at all times workmen could rely on them for work. Though those men may be glad to get the work, they have no occasion to be under obligation to the public, for, in effect, it costs nothing. If the people of a township, for instance, should build a bridge and all the material used were raised, sawed, and quarried in that township and all the workmen lived there, then that bridge costs the people of that township nothing, the money expended upon it having simply been transferred

from one body of owners to another. This transfer would reach much further than simple payment to the workmen, for their many wants would be the more widely supplied with the increased power to supply them. There would be a certain percentage of increase of trade, therefore, caused by this mere transfer or circulation of money. Public works of every nature, state and national, not only cost nothing, but it is such works, public and private, that give life and energy to trade. Money is to the public what blood is to the body; to no other thing does it sustain such a perfect relation. The mere presence of capital is not enough, it is its healthy circulation that is wanted and through that circulation the whole country is prosperous. Trade and commerce live in the construction and not in the completed work. It is the enforced expenses of a new town or country that give it prosperity, and it is the want of such public exercise of energy that causes old countries to stagnate and decay.

But, however great the advantage may be in keeping public improvements in progress, there is a limit to the capital that should be devoted to that purpose. There is enough, however, to secure the construction of all known improvements in a reasonable time and to at all times supply work to the unemployed, provided that capital circulates in a natural manner. Under erroneous ideas, that percentage which trade yields for the construction and improvement of streets, walks,

sewers, parks, roads, bridges, village waterworks, etc., may be diverted to useless ends, and those health-giving and otherwise greatly desired works will be left undone.

The salaries paid to over 80,000 Protestant clergymen in the United States and to other unknown thousands in that close, money-getting institution, the Catholic church, will account for the poverty-stricken condition of those improvements as compared to the needs of the public and the needs of those who would do the work. However numerous and costly the churches may be, they convey but a small idea of the vast cost of the thousands supported within the system. We need go back but a few years into the past to cover a time within which \$1,000,000,000 has been so expended. The fact that the money may be said to have been voluntarily contributed makes no difference; the people were correspondingly weakened. The money was intended for the public good, but through the worldliness of the clergy it was diverted to their own personal uses. Nor was the church's success in obtaining that money wholly owing to the religious feelings. The most of it was raised through the power and ingenuity which it was able to bring to bear through its organization and the vast number of those interested in securing it.

With the progress that has been made in the science of government there should have grown up a knowledge of the great wealth of the united



public. This knowledge the church has intercepted; it has absorbed such a vast amount of public energy that to this day the people do not know their enormous powers in supplying public wants. Each individual has a personal interest in all public works and the convenience and advantages which he derives from them are measured by their extent and perfection. A large part of our daily wants are supplied through public expenses and some of these expenses are of more importance to us than those exclusively private. Particularly is this the case in sanitary and educational matters and roads. However poor we may be individually, unitedly we are rich to a great, but as yet undiscovered, degree.

It cannot be shown that directly and indirectly Christianity does not cost the people of this country *over five hundred million dollars annually*. Think of the vast works for public health, convenience, education, and universal moderate prosperity, this sum would accomplish if employed, as it now purports to be, for public use.

The prevailing unrest of the mass of the people and consequent public dangers are because of the great wealth of the few and the not unnatural inference that the people have in some way been defrauded of their rights. Yet how small a matter the wealth of the few is as compared to this vast annual expense! It is probable that all the wealth of those whose wealth is of national repute would not pay one year's expenses of Christianity and

that the wealth of all the millionaires in the United States would not pay these expenses ten years.

And for all this the clergy expend their brain work upon questions that are shameful in their insignificance. Outside of wrangles over figments of their own credulity, over revelations that do not reveal, their one greatest requirement is the observance of the modern Sunday, which they define to be attendance at church. This is a false virtue of their own construction, but it is conspicuously held up as of the greatest importance. A little reflection will show that their own support and social glories are derived exclusively through compliance with this requirement. Those acts which the public is interested in suppressing are those which should not be committed on any day, but in the suppression of these acts the church is a clog.

Thus it is that we are left with but a small percentage of the improvements we ought to have and the poor are made poorer through the absence of the work those improvements would have given. The greatest burden falls upon the latter. No matter who contributes the money, *only those pay who suffer*. The vast sums which the church intercepts make it the fountain head of extreme poverty.

The most important preventive of crime lies in certain duties before the criminals are born. Their very existence may be largely the fault of our ignorance of certain laws of the mind. The

mental deformities of criminals may be traceable to the mental discipline and experience of parents. Those faculties that make us patriotic and cause us to respect our fellow men and the laws may be blunted and finally obliterated under long-continued poverty and misery. The wretchedness of mothers, smarting under a belief of outrage on the part of the laws, will often result in the birth of children who will not respect those laws. We are all linked together. The poverty of a neighborhood, as well as its sickness, reflects back upon the public at large. It is just as important to secure to the poor their reasonable support by giving them sufficient work as it is to secure public health through sanitary laws.

A machinist may not be able to locate the cause of some irregularity in the running of complicated machinery, but by correcting such faults as he does discover he will find that unconsciously he has overcome the unknown defect. The same course should be pursued in affairs of government. There are extremes of wealth and poverty too great for a perfect system, and yet it is not possible to convincingly locate the cause of that fault, nor is it possible for any man to devise a practicable scheme that would overcome that objection. The principles that underlie this Government have been evolved out of ages of misrule and bitter experience and if we will now devote our attention to the correction of such faults as we may discover we shall find that we gradually increase

the average prosperity of the people and approach a condition of general content.

When more laborers are employed upon any work than the nature of it admits of, those workmen will make an appearance of labor where no service is rendered. They will prolong each item of work and busy themselves about trifles. Too many will take hold to lift or to pull. They will carry their shovels full of dirt to the place of deposit rather than throw it and endeavor to make up in affectation of labor for the absence of any need for the service of part of them.

So with the church. The number of those who would fill its many comfortable places have always been so great as to cause them to tax their ingenuity to the utmost in efforts to make work for themselves. Some of its divisions into numerous denominations made upon hair-splitting points had for their origin only the idleness of would-be laborers "in the vineyard of the Lord." Not that those divisions were always deliberately made for that purpose. They were usually the result rather than the cause. Those hair-splitting points not only gave subjects upon which to display mental labor, but they also conveyed an appearance of deep research and pious sensibility. For this reason it has not been difficult to subdivide the church and thus secure support for larger numbers than would have been possible in a united condition.

Much of the labor within the church also had

its origin in the same cause. Many churches now find some service for every evening in the week, and of late years they are encroaching upon necessary business hours with their noonday meetings and other unnatural and uncalled-for service. This excessive diligence has seldom been based upon piety. It is but the natural result of the superabundance of workmen as compared to the work to be done. Their narrow ideas and useless labors are but so many shovelfuls of dirt with which they run around in affectation of labor.

We would not regard it as a mark of a higher order of intelligence for a band of men to gather by the side of a swamp and there in supplication to God explain to Him that the water was bad because of His failure to keep control of celestial affairs, and to tell Him of the miasma the swamp engendered and the consequent sickness and death it caused, and of the vile insects and vermin that were bred within it, and of the good land it covered, and ask Him to suspend His law of attraction of gravitation in this case and cause the water that produced those evils to flow over the adjoining hills and leave the swamp pure and dry. We now know that its removal is simply a question of work and that in removing it we are cultivating within ourselves those powers which He intended we should cultivate. We know we can get rid of swamps by the same law that made them. If we will remove the obstructions, the water that ran into them will run away from them.

But it is only by supplicating the Almighty to suspend a corresponding law of the mind that the church proposes to get rid of human swamps of vice and degradation. It establishes gospel meetings in the midst of them and asks the Creator to overcome this evil that was caused by obstructions for which it alone is responsible.

Instead of the pleasures of life being a satanic exhibition of worldliness, they are of the greatest importance, and how to increase them is a study of the purest religion. Underneath our natural mental tendencies God has established that universal law that makes us seek our interest and pleasure, and by that law He guides us, through other mental faculties, to such experience as He desires us to have. We can make the same use of the same law. We can draw people away from attractions that are vile by giving them better attractions that are good; and where, through selfishness, the mind now stagnates in moral cess-pools of corruption, there will be *a river of living water* that will make green that which is now barren. It will enliven our too often dull and weary lives and instruct where we now ignorantly suffer. We shall show ourselves most worthy of heaven in the life to come by making a heaven of the life we are in.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SAFE SIDE.

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IT has been shown how naturally belief in *justification by faith* operates as a license to wrongdoing. Forgiveness of sins is a necessary adjunct to such a doctrine. A person who has done wrong and has by any process become justified must necessarily have been forgiven, and hence freed from the future consequences of such wrong. Furthermore, a religious system which represents that all men are born in sin has great need of a correspondingly easy escape from consequences of sins so innocently acquired. Probably, about no feature of the Christian system has so much sentiment been wasted as about this. The system first terrorizes and then plays upon the feelings by the unlimited forgiveness promised to the repentant sinner. This play upon the feelings is all the more practicable because forgiveness among men is a necessity. Our many errors often lead us into unjust acts and retaliation, for which forgiveness often partly makes amends.

But our relations to God in this respect are widely different. With Him all is perfect. He has committed no errors and has no occasion to violate His own laws. In natural religion wrong-

doing is well defined; we shall know it when we come to it and will be held responsible in proportion. It is not obscured by a vast fictitious wickedness, beside which our actual wickedness sinks into insignificance. Men are not born in sin, nor does any one know that God permits any wrong to go unpunished. His laws are so far-reaching that all wrongdoing will probably lead to its own punishment.

There is no originality in wickedness. The same crimes and wrongs of every shade are being committed over and over again. They all come through the same faults and under similar circumstances, and as they have been in the past so will they be in the future. The percentage will be less as average intelligence increases, but all the various degrees of wickedness will be committed as heretofore. If any sins may be forgiven after they have been committed, then they may be forgiven before. Any little ceremony of repentance, actual or affected, does not alter the principle. Some crimes are sure to be committed, and the criminal has been taught before committing them that he might be forgiven. Such a system, therefore, is equivalent to granting indulgences for wickedness before it is committed. It is equivalent to licensing the ignorant and depraved to prey upon those whose conduct is irreproachable.

Salvation is part of the paraphernalia of the Christian system. Having established in the mind



fears of a future existence of eternal torture, it became necessary to balance this with the system's theory of salvation. For nearly seventeen hundred years the church has been playing upon human feelings by elevating and depressing first one and then the other of these two great opposing doctrines. It is through the constant working of this seesaw that all its great financial, social, and political success has been attained. Either one of those doctrines would be useless to the church without the other. There must be the terror, the escape, and the church, the self-asserted channel through which alone safety may be secured.

But when in time we discover the falsity of the basis of all our fears and then turn to examine the system's doctrine of salvation, we find it unworthy of most of the sentiments which we have been wasting upon it and that it had some most seriously objectionable features. It is painful to think that the great crimes and cruelties of this world shall go unpunished simply through a little matter of sentiment, and it is a great public danger to teach such doctrines to those capable of committing them.

We know of no way of preventing a man from being run over by the cars, except by keeping him off the track when the cars approach; nor is it possible to devise a system by which he could be saved that would not be detrimental to public welfare. He must simply leave the track at such times or be crushed. But when we see a vast

bank of fog rolling over the land there is no time nor space to escape from it. It will surely overwhelm us; but if we will but close our eyes to it we shall be unconscious of it. So with salvation. *From the consequences of actual sin there is no salvation. From the consequences of the artificial sins of Christianity there is no need of any.*

When a conscientious person has injured another, he will experience mental pain so long as he can see or know of the unhappy consequences which he caused to the injured party. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that, in the future life, the same conditions on a larger scale will continue, and, under a higher intelligence, those unhappy consequences may be traced to their remote end. There will come a time when it may not be seen that the welfare of any person is then affected by the wrong act, and it may be that only then will the party who committed wrong be wholly released from further mental pain. Thus the wicked may be saved, not through simply superstitious sentiments formed in this life, but through a law of the mind that eventually kindly buries all knowledge of their wickedness in oblivion.

The various mental faculties often conflict with one another, as in the case of love of money and the affections, or caution and those faculties that at times call for its resistance. The best actions of men are to be found in those conflicts. It is only then that the mind labors and the qualities

of the individual are made manifest. Those conflicts are most marked in cases of temptation, but they are going on in a smaller degree daily. When we hold our thoughts to our business or studies or other duties that interfere with our pleasures or liberty, we are resisting other inclinations, and to that degree it is mental labor, and great power and persistency in that respect indicate a superior mind.

That point where there is a struggle between duty and other inclinations is the point where outside influence can have the most effect, and hence it is of the greatest importance that such influence be so directed as to throw its weight upon the side of honor and duty. This effect is not produced by teaching the tempted that their contemplated wrong is a small matter compared with their inherited wickedness, and that, if they yield to the temptation, they may be forgiven. Such teachings are the worst that could be devised. It is as though the Government had carefully taught its soldiers that they were all born cowards so great that any yielding to their fears would add but a trifle to their great load of inherited cowardice and that any exhibition of that cowardice would be forgiven, provided that, when the danger was over, they would express their regrets, coupled with their lasting belief in the perfection of the Government.

Some men are so deficient that nothing will keep them from crime, while others will be honest

regardless of the worst teachings. But by far the largest class of crimes may be prevented under proper instruction. Breaches of trust and defalcations, particularly, will come within the latter class. Responsible positions are often filled by men placed in them through influence before their trustworthiness has been established by experience. Here and there there will be one whose deficiencies will be just enough to make defalcation possible with him. Such a man will feel tempted by the opportunity and often for many months will dwell upon it. His contemplated crime is belittled by the magnitude of his inherited sins and partly justified in his mind by the injustice of holding him responsible for what he could not help, while the easy forgiveness he can obtain takes away nearly all fear of punishment. His only fear would be that he might die suddenly and thus not have an opportunity to repent and be forgiven.

Common sense demands restitution, but many crimes do not admit of it, particularly in that large class of crimes and violation of honor growing out of the sexual relations. Nor does restitution always make amends to the injured person in pecuniary affairs. The history of the agony of mind of many who have yielded to temptation would deter thousands who now fall half leaning upon false teachings of forgiveness.

Forgiveness of sins is a belief wholly within the Christian system. No one knows it to be true,

and as it is contrary to reason and experience it is probably false. An honest man has no use for that doctrine. A penalty is attached to all wrong acts, and the one and only way to avoid that penalty is not to commit such acts. Belief in Jesus Christ or in the Bible, or attendance at church, or compliance with any of the explanatory doctrines of Christianity will in no way stay such penalty. No matter of faith nor any of the false virtues of Christianity will in the least help those who are guilty. There is no object in having the religious feelings but to prevent such wrong acts and there is no religion in just the extent to which they are committed.

Public welfare has been greatly injured by the weak verdicts of juries, caused by the uncalled-for fears of a large percentage of jurymen. These men have been loaded down with inherited ideas of their wickedness and that they must "forgive to be forgiven," and in unmerciful ideas of what constitutes mercy they have retarded the stamping-out of crime and consequently increased the percentage of criminals over what it otherwise would have been. It is probable that this unnatural influence in the verdicts of our many hundreds of thousands of juries within the last hundred years has had a more injurious effect upon public morals than such corruption as there may have been in all our various legislative bodies within that time.

Christianity presents, in substance, these alternatives: believe in Jesus Christ and be saved or

refuse to believe in him and suffer damnation. These are given as the two alternatives of the question, and consequently when in doubt it is assumed to be the *safe side* to believe. These two seeming alternatives are but the Christian presentation of the question; it is one side only. It is their demand to believe in Christ accompanied with what they hold up as an inducement and as a threat. The other alternative can only be presented by those who have taken the other side of the question. But in a Christian country only the Christian presentation of this question is heard and therefore we grow up under the supposition that that presentation includes the two and only alternatives. Hence it is that believing is supposed to be the *safe side* and that vast numbers are held by that error to a partial support of that religion, a religion the first step in which consists in defaming God and which grants an unauthorized license to commit wrong by that which, when traced to its remote end, consists only in supplying with enviable social and pecuniary positions the unnumbered thousands who preach those doctrines.

Those men teach, for instance, that a man failing to control his temper by giving way to profanity is utterly lost in wickedness, even though he may be otherwise a good man. It is important, then, to understand just what it is in swearing that is irreverent to God.<sup>1</sup> Profanity is language only

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<sup>1</sup> Swearing is most common with English-speaking people and this peculiarity probably had its origin in the

and its wickedness must necessarily consist in the ideas which the language conveys. It is at least a display of bad temper and as such will always be offensive. As a rule we do not work our mental energies up to their full capacity. We should not. We are like any other machine in that respect, and have a margin of strength that on emergencies may be called into action. It is by anger that surplus energies are sometimes awakened. When, therefore, a person becomes angry, he virtually admits that he has reached his ordinary limits of mental power and now summons his reserved forces to meet the difficulty before him. Passion too easily raised is thus evidence of weakness. There are times when passion is properly called upon, and in some instances most heroic acts have been displayed under it. At such times many a hero has died with his last word an oath. But such oaths call for no "recording angel to blot them out with a tear;" they show not the remotest disrespect to God nor do they evince an evil disposition.

But Christians assert that God lost control of the world. It is not possible for mere words to be more blasphemous than these. It is not language used in the heat of passion, but it is calmly Cromwell rebellion. Time has abbreviated many puritanical expressions and by robbing them of their sanctimonious character has transformed them into a variety of oaths found only in the English language. For numerous illustrations of terms then in common use, the reader is referred to *Peveil of the Peak*, by Sir Walter Scott.

and deliberately taught as a creed of the church. It is used, too, by those who now have some idea of the magnitude of creation and know how exceedingly narrow it was supposed to be by those who originated this grossest possible insult humanity could address to the Creator. This insult is embodied in the very title of Christianity, for it is its explanation as to how it is that Christ is a savior.<sup>1</sup>

The human mind is incapable of giving as much honor and glory to each of two men filling the duties of one office as it would give to a man who performed those duties alone. If, for instance, the duties of the President of the United States were performed by two men, that office would not be exalted thereby; its glories would simply be divided between the two. Each would have not over half the honors now given to one.

<sup>1</sup>The Roman Catholic authorities recently deemed the following so important as to justify its transmission by cable to this country. Notice the authoritative manner in which God's name is used, and that too with reference only to the worldly welfare of the clergy. Could profanity be worse than this? It is also an example of the intellectual sop fed to their supporters:

EXHIBITION OF JOSEPH'S COAT AT TREVES.

[Special Cable.]

BERLIN, March 2 [1891]. The Roman Catholic inhabitants of the Rhineland and Westphalia are greatly excited over the proposed exhibition at Treves of the holy coat of Joseph. The clergy publishes a report that "God allows the exhibition only when a special triumph of the church is expected." This time the recall of the Jesuits and the restitution of clerical salaries sequestrated during the Kulturkampf are expected. The last exhibition was in 1845. The date for that of this year has not been fixed.



So in religion. There is a limit to our power to reverence and realize the existence of God, and our religious faculties will draw those feelings out to the full extent of those limits. Therefore all the divinity that is given to Christ is taken from God. Christianity does not increase the religious feelings; it simply divides them. In believing in Christ Christians do not exhibit more religion than those who believe in God alone, and, if Christ is not what they claim for him, they exhibit vastly less. In order to make a god of Christ they rob the Almighty of part of the attributes and glory that are His alone.

*In just the degree that a Christian is a believer in Christ, he is an unbeliever in God.*

*In just the degree that Christ is a savior, God is a failure.*

It is asserted that it is the safe side of this question to thus defame and partially ignore the Almighty and to act upon the possible truth of Christian explanatory doctrines, in face of the fact that the crimes and wickedness committed in its cause greatly surpass the sum total of all other cruelties known in history, not alone in the wars it led to, but in the cruelties practiced by Christians upon other Christians because of difference upon trifling points of doctrine, questions that in no way take any part whatever in regulating our conduct for our good. Any attempt to enumerate those horrors would but weaken the account, for they extended through many centuries and reach so near our time

that even now a picture of a man burning at a stake or enduring other torture is recognized as a religious picture. Darwin states that those crimes were so great as to have effected a deterioration in the intelligence of the human race. He says:

During this same period the Holy Inquisition selected with extreme care the freest and boldest men, in order to burn or imprison them. In Spain alone some of the best men, those who doubted and questioned—and without doubting there can be no progress—were eliminated during three centuries at the rate of a thousand a year.

Buckle more fully shows the complete success of the Church in securing power over the minds of the Spaniards, and that in the use of that power the people were degraded and reduced to the lowest degree of poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the cruelties of the Spaniards in the Netherlands, the Inquisition, etc., created a sympathy for the Protestants that obscured their bigotry and intolerance. They were seemingly, though not actually, contending for free religion. Being in revolt against the Catholic Church, they were necessarily usually on the defensive and seldom in a position to be aggressive; but in the few instances in which they were in power they exhibited such a spirit as to raise a doubt whether, upon equal footing in Europe, they would have shown themselves much, if any, less cruel than the Catholics.

Nor do those doctrines in our day give any increased peace of mind where any increase is needed. The unnatural attendance of large numbers at noonday prayer and evening meetings, as well as at two or three services on Sundays, is never brought about by religion alone. Those excessive acts of devotion expose the fact that within the system *fear* still predominates over all other feelings. Although of late years many in the Church are ashamed of their eternal-torture doctrine and try to modify it, yet the words upon which it is based cannot be expunged from the Bible, and those orthodox believers having large caution are haunted with that possibility and in secret fear are driven to those useless exercises. Their conscience may be clear so far as their own acts are concerned, but the book for which they have such superstitious awe has terrible words in it, that no ingenious sophistry of theologians or pretense of loving kindness can wipe away. Many of those dreadful words were the utterances of Christ himself. Few were to be saved and the mysterious allusions to *the elect* throw some doubt upon even the sanctifying effect of faith itself.

A man somewhat wanting in self-esteem, having average or large caution and undoubting faith in the Bible, cannot by the most conscientious government of his everyday life ever free himself from doubts as to his future state, and if his self-esteem be very deficient the doctrines of Christianity will be a lifelong terror to him. To such

men never for a moment have its teachings been "glad tidings of great joy." The very pretense of it is begotten in fear. The heaven of the New Testament is but flattery to the Almighty. It is heaven by not being hell. It is not that it is so much a place of bliss as that it is not a place of torment. Belief in a future existence, accompanied by so much uncertainty and terror as Christianity teaches, brings with it no joy and the mind that is burdened with it would find relief in the conviction that there is no future life at all.

But there are just such saintly deaths and just such unhappy ones as old churchmen delighted to depict, though the respective classes in which they occur are not always as represented. Here again it is that churchmen have claimed as their work feelings that have no basis in religion whatever. The sole cause of happiness and confidence in the future on the part of those believers who do have that confidence is self-conceit. Who are meant by *the elect* is always clear to the self-conceited. They never have doubts upon that point and are equally indulgent to themselves in the certainty of forgiveness for their own constantly recurring shortcomings. Some of the most saintly deaths of which we have accounts have been those of most odious murderers upon the gallows, while on the other hand there are instances of men, whose whole lives had been as perfect as a most sensitive conscience could make them, who on their deathbeds were still haunted by their life-

long doubts and fears as to their future state, fears that were caused by a terrible belief accompanied with a too poor opinion of themselves.

Throughout the Christian era the feeling of self-esteem has at all times taken an immeasurably greater part in the Christian system than religion. The enormous egotism of the ancient Jews<sup>1</sup> was the mud in which the foundation of that system was laid; it was the chief cause of the intolerance and cruelty which Christians practiced upon one another through long ages; and it is the only faculty that admits of a man's believing that he has been "called of God to preach the gospel." It is the most prominent characteristic of the greater part of the priesthood to-day.

The action of men—particularly public men—is seldom, if ever, governed by but one object, even though but one may have first awakened that action. Every faculty of the mind will assert itself when its particular function is touched upon. It is very common for certain faculties to awake action that later becomes governed by stronger faculties wholly disconnected from the original designs. A large part of the laws of every nation at the present time is but the slow growth of

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<sup>1</sup> I do not wish to be understood as representing that the Jews were more egotistic than their neighbors. Egotism was a marked characteristic of the ancients and in the most remote historical period it was the sole basis of some of their wars, the victors sometimes gratifying that faculty by simply exacting a small annual contribution of salt as an admission of their superiority.

regulations made to guard against this mental peculiarity. How often do we see the public spirit or patriotism that excites a man to action become overpowered by more powerful personal motives when his original disinterested exertions have brought him into office.

It is the same with the church: it has at all times supplied as wide a field for ambition, wealth, and social power as any nation could present and necessarily all the various faculties appertaining to those various ends have taken part in conducting its affairs. In that government there have been a larger number of active participants than in any civic government and more thought has been expended upon its regulations than has been given to the laws of any nation. Its dignitaries too have met from time to time in even greater solemnity and pomp than that in use at any court. The minds of those men in every generation of the Christian era have been intent upon an object, and the preponderance of intellect employed must necessarily have secured a due proportion of success, the great age of the system alone proving that. To know, then, the dominating influence that actuated those men, we must look to the nature of their success. No matter of imposing ceremonies, and numbers, and time, and learning, and pious protestations can in the least offset the overwhelming testimony of the actual work turned out. Only the completed work is proof.

Those men have proclaimed that they were

spreading that which was "glad tidings of great joy," but terror has been the one and almost only mental state they labored to produce. They said it was to be "peace on earth," but it has been a constant source of wrangles and wars. They said their religion—their labors—was "good will toward men," but the hatred, tortures, and butcheries within their religious system surpass all known outside of it and make much of its history an appalling horror. They tell us, too, with pious unction, of the *Christian's hope*, but there is no greater hope a man can have than the hope that the state of future existence as taught in that system is not true. In short the failure in the effect it was claimed that system would produce is as great as the number within its teachings is large.

But in face of this failure the clergy have met with unparalleled success in securing wealth and social and political power. It can be said literally that all the wealth of the world has passed through their hands, and they have even been in possession at one time of a large proportion of all the property in Europe. Their success in that respect is equal to the magnitude of their exertions and the intellectual ability employed. This vast wealth and its attending dignity are tangible things, perceptible to the senses at all times, throughout all christendom, and they impress the mind with far greater power than can a mere matter of sentiment or opinion, which is all there is to show for

the pretended effects of Christianity. It is an inherited opinion and exists only in the mind. Their utter failure is obscured by the brilliancy of their success in securing worldly goods and honors for themselves. Whatever they may say to the contrary, the results of their work prove that the personal interest of the priesthood has at all times secretly, often unconsciously, predominated over all other considerations. The lovable characteristics of a moderate percentage of the clergy do not alter the fact that the minds of the great bulk of them have been so intent upon their comfortable places that those comfortable places and Christianity have grown to be to them one and the same thing.

We do not ourselves always know the proportion of the various influences that govern us, and we are often led into unjust acts through an exaggerated idea of the part which some disinterested motive may have taken; hence much that is seemingly hypocrisy is not hypocrisy, but is simply self-ignorance; and it is possible the latter condition may be the state of mind of a large part of those who have mistaken their love of ease and social power for self-sacrificing religion.

A merchant may declare that his inch measure is a yard and that his flimsy cloth is impervious to wind and weather, and vast numbers may believe that only the impure doubt his word. As long as their belief in his integrity is only a question of trade, his goods may be freely bought with noth-



ing to show that his measure is not the true standard. But when in time those goods come to be used no amount of faith in his honesty could then hide the fact that his credulous customers had nothing with which to hide their nakedness.

So with Christianity: history, science, experience, everything has been falsified that its false standard of excellence might be sustained. It has had entire control of education and has successfully made its ethics the standard of purity. In the mere exercise of that wealth and power there was nothing but their assertions as to the efficacy of that standard in proof of its truth.

But every year's experience makes more and more conspicuous the worthlessness of those fictitious virtues in protecting us from wrongs. There are corruption and crime in abundance committed by those who have unquestioning faith in their salvation through Christ. Our penitentiaries are filled with them. From the saintly dying murderers upon the gallows to bribed and defaulting officials, it is being constantly exposed that practicing those false virtues accomplishes nothing. When we would avail ourselves of the advantages which those pretended virtues should give and which have cost us so much, we find ourselves unprotected and exposed to every variety of crime and corruption committed by those whose faith filled all Christian requirements.

Naturally it would be supposed that evils and unhappiness of every nature were the results of

our own acts, and necessarily those acts must be sins, for they beget punishment, and that is all the penalty attending the commission of any wicked act. On the other hand it would be equally reasonable to suppose that there was no sin in acts that produce no evil consequences. If these two suppositions be facts (and they undoubtedly are), it is very important that it be known, for it would then stimulate an examination of the causes of evils and insure their ultimate correction. But it will be impossible to discover whether those suppositions are facts so long as we are governed by present ideas of right and wrong, for there will be no evil consequences following a false sin, while on the other hand serious evils follow some acts not known to be bad in that system. This has produced a supine submission to evils which we could have corrected, particularly as the system has an explanation for those evils by ascribing them to the machination of the *Adversary*.

When it is established that, wherever there is trouble or unhappiness of any nature, some one or more human beings are at fault and that only such faults are sins, it will still be a great study to fully recognize our responsibility for much of the evil that exists. This is in part because some consequences are so remote, in part because our remedies develop other faults, and also in part because we are made to suffer for errors of the public as well as for our own. Some faults of government, for instance, are exposed and corrected

through the misfortunes which they work upon innocent parties who are made to suffer for the public good. The discipline that thus advances the people is necessarily more important than that which simply advances the individual, and the seeming injustice that accomplishes this by punishing a few for the incompetency of the many may be amply compensated for in the vast ages of a life to come. The operations of nature's laws clearly show that all acts are wicked that produce evil consequences, and only such acts are wicked.

Measured by this law, it is one of the greatest sins to violate our reasoning faculties, for the consequences of so doing have been among the most serious evils of life. It is clearly demanded of us to exercise all our mental powers in the light of the highest intelligence which we can bring to bear. The question of the divinity of Christ cannot be dismissed under the indolent plea that it is the *safe side* to number credulity among the highest virtues. As between the two alternatives of that question it is the *safe side* to reject it.

## CHAPTER XX.

### IMMORTALITY.

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IT is natural that the hundreds of thousands of ecclesiastics who are comfortably ensconced in their various agreeable places should like to point out where there is adequate return for the vast cost of their support. In doing this they greatly exaggerate the effect of belief in immortality, a boon which they pretend is given only by Christianity.

But so far as they have taught us of immortality it has been mainly through their representations of the horrors of hell rather than the happiness of heaven. If this question could be definitely settled, it would make but little difference in the conduct of large numbers of people; if it were settled in the negative, it would be a happy relief to more worshipers in that "religion of sorrow" than if the contrary were proved. A little reflection will show that it would not do to know of that future life too clearly. The duties of the one we are in are proportionally important to those in the life to come, and a too vivid contemplation of the latter might unfit us for the former. That there is a future existence, the nature of it, and the bearing this life has upon it may be reasoned out with as much certainty as is either practicable or de-

sirable. It is knowledge that is dimly given us. To many it is clear enough to brighten this life and to stimulate them to a careful discharge of their duties; to others it is doubtful enough to prevent them from throwing their lives away.

The point is often made that, if the Bible be not the word of God, then we are without evidence of a future existence. But if it were the fact that only the Bible points to a future life that circumstance would not have the least bearing upon the question of the divine origin of that book. It would simply be a reason for *hoping* that it was true, but should make us even more critical in its examination. A man may say that he owns all the country for miles around and that he will deed us rich possessions, but his title to the property would not be in the least enhanced by our desire for the promised wealth. However desirable it may be to know that the soul is immortal, we do not make it so by making a God of one who is traditionally reported to have implied that it was so. Christianity and the immortality of the soul are two separate and distinct questions, the truth of the latter not being dependent upon the truth of the former. But it is the custom of churchmen to claim the latter as a doctrine peculiarly their own. They try to make it appear that none can believe in immortality and not believe in Christ. One writer calls it "a remarkable concession" when such a belief was expressed by a theistic author whom he described as "an advanced and able thinker."

Napoléon Roussel says of Renan :

Our readers, then, need not be surprised if M. Renan, adversary of Jesus as he is, should, nevertheless, think it wise to preserve a certain faith in a future life.

Such expressions as these are common within the system and indicate the deficiency of reason which is characteristic of orthodox Christians.

Christianity gave us no new ideas of immortality or of God. Its only originality consists in its ideas as to the divinity of Christ and the complications consequent thereto; but it has so successfully blended those complications with the naturally religious feeling as to produce a mental delusion and cause those two widely different things to seem to be but one. It is like a vine covering a fruit tree, which through eighteen hundred years has been credited with fruit that was borne by the tree alone.

The evidence of a future existence from a philosophical point of view has of late received much attention. Perhaps one of the best courses of reasoning upon that subject is in a German work, *Phaedon*, by Moses Mendelssohn. The author puts into the mouth of Socrates some highly interesting ideas, tending to prove immortality. Carlyle writes in the highest terms of this work and says: "Socrates, to our mind, has spoken in no modern language so like Socrates as here by the lips of this wise and cultivated Jew." An English translation of the reasoning referred to is

published in the Democratic Review, vol. 22, pages 59, 124, 225.

The work entitled *The Unseen Universe* contains the most original ideas offered in late years upon that subject. Its two authors show that we are seeing but a short process in creation. It is as though we saw laborers passing lumber and brick, but did not see or know of the building that was being erected. All the energies of nature are devoted to the building up of a universe we do not see. Profs. P. G. Tait and B. Stewart are said to be the authors.

If this life ends all, then for what purpose were all these great worlds made? However vast and numerous they may be, their creation and government are not so incomprehensible as the creation of the human mind. Measured by our capacity to understand, the latter is the greatest work of God and the world must have been made for its development. That which involved incomprehensible intelligence could not have been incidental to that involving comprehensible intelligence. Consequently, this and all other worlds were created for purposes connected with the mind, for no other use is made of them, as indicated by the world in which we live. If the world was made for man, the plan of creation could not have stopped with this short, struggling, laborious life. From its narrow field no object has been disclosed commensurate with the vast extent and grandeur of creation. There must be more than is seen here. *Our*

*Creator's designs regarding us must be measured by the extent of all his works*, and, hence, the wider our conceptions of the universe become the greater those designs must be and the greater the probability that this life is but a part of the process of our creation. The fact that our knowledge of a future existence is obscured is consistent with the proposition just given, for our inexperienced minds would be incapable of comprehending those designs and any attempt to do so would undoubtedly unfit us for the duties of this life, duties that are, necessarily, as important in proportion as any we shall have in the life to come.

Our feelings of humanity were given us by our Maker, and those feelings would prompt us to say that, if this life were all, it would have been better for most of the human race if they had never been born. He would not mock us with feelings and understanding that taught us that existence is a cruelty. He has given us powers of the mind with especial reference to our pleasures and otherwise, by His laws, shows that under them He intended happiness to be the natural state of man. The same Being who through so great a time prepared for us does not now unnecessarily load us with trouble. It is all for a purpose, and as none is made manifest in this life it must be in one to come.

A belief in a future existence is the basis of all good and honorable acts. There have been many heroes and heroines who have lived and died in



obscurity, but their heroism was such only in the light of a life hereafter; otherwise their self-sacrifices and struggles were foolish. Much of that which is now honorable and good would be but weakness, if all ended with this life.

Mankind does not freely accept isolated facts. One item of knowledge needs to be connected with others to be believed. The mind supplies numbers of such isolated facts to which too little attention has been shown. They cannot be explained and as yet stand alone, part of an unknown science. One of these facts has often been offered as evidence of a future life. It is known that the matter composing our bodies changes many times over during our lives, but in all those changes the mind keeps along with us unchanged and accumulating knowledge. We remember even trifling things that occurred many years before, though every ounce composing our bodies at that time had long since disappeared.

The idea has been advanced in explanation of this phenomenon that with each thought a grain of brain matter is formed which during life keeps in the mind that particular item of knowledge. Necessarily the amount of matter thus deposited would be infinitesimal, as the mind is constantly at work, and yet a lifetime does not supply evidence of such an accumulation. This brain matter would also have to be replaced from time to time through the circulation, and this, too, without reproducing the thought that caused the original deposit.

People are killed by thoughts sometimes. They die from no hurt or fault of the constitution, nor fault of their own minds; they die simply because of knowledge of certain distressing facts and are otherwise untouched. People also sometimes become violently insane through an impression made upon the mind in a few moments of time.

If the above theory be correct, then this infinitesimal portion of matter deposited with each thought is, at times, the most powerful poison known, for without this deposit the knowledge that produced those effects would not have remained in the mind. There would still remain, under this theory, equally as great a phenomenon to be accounted for in the fact that, while some deposits kill, others give pleasure. If brain matter with such surprising powers of pain and pleasure were thus deposited with each thought, it would be as great a wonder as the one for which it is intended to account.

Our whole experience here is with reference to mental exercise and discipline. This all-important part of us, it is shown in the facts just stated, has an existence separate from our bodies, and, as it can separate in detail, it is reasonable to suppose that it can at death separate from the body wholly.

This is one of the chief points made by Mendelssohn. He showed, in substance, that under the laws of nature it is not possible to annihilate an atom of matter; that all things are subject to

change and are no moment without change; that all changes are gradual; that the body is dying from birth, death being but the culmination of that which has long been in progress; that the mind throughout this time increases in knowledge and all experience has been with reference to it. At death, therefore, the mind must continue to exist or be annihilated. The doctrine of annihilation would do violence both to the laws of nature and to the changes that have been gradually taking place.

Another feature of the mind is even more mysterious than the one just mentioned. It seems to possess powers entirely disconnected from our own guidance or else it is acted upon by some invisible power. The mind of a person, as an instance, will involuntarily call up some acquaintance who has long been absent and long out of mind, and that person will immediately thereafter meet the latter face to face. Incidents of this kind are in the experience of thousands under circumstances that are often very surprising. People will sometimes write letters answering questions that, as it afterwards turned out, had been asked by the correspondent in a letter that was on the way when the answer was written.

A person's eyes will fall upon some word while walking or riding, the meaning of which is so applicable to his thoughts as often to be startling. Some have this experience repeatedly throughout their lives. The dreams of some are often most

perfect allegorical pictures of their affairs and acts at the time. They will be, in most instances, superior to the capacity of the dreamer to formulate when awake.

A few such instances as these may be called simply coincidences, but they occur very many times during life, and calculation will show that the chances of so many such events happening to the same person are but as one in many hundreds of thousands, and that therefore they cannot be so explained away. For the same reason more notice should be given to seeming coincidences. More attention to these phenomena will prove both interesting and instructive. Possibly more would have been said of them but for their seemingly superstitious nature. But the superstition, if any, lies in the explanation; the facts themselves are (at least most of them) well established; but they are isolated facts, as yet unexplained. It is possible that experience of this nature is more common than we are aware of and that by its study an important law of the mind may be discovered.

The secret of success in life is not fully known and may never be. Intelligence, honor, energy, etc., ought to secure success, and they do enough to stimulate their cultivation, but they do not assure it and are often the marked characteristics of men who are unsuccessful. Neither are successful men always especially distinguished by the possession of those qualities. It would not do to let it be known precisely upon what success could al-

ways be obtained. If, for instance, it be purely a question of intelligence, if people were known to be successful in the exact ratio of their wisdom, then the opinions of such men would be sought for and their advice followed upon all questions. Their power would be too great. Less successful people would employ them to do their thinking for them and would be discouraged by the wide difference in intelligence as indicated by difference in wealth and honors.

Or, if success were purely a question of honesty, that circumstance would obscure honesty, as there would be no temptation to be otherwise than honest. The same principle applies to any faculty or combination of faculties. As it is, different men are successful in some instances from opposite qualities, and the causes of success with one are the causes of failure with another. When we come to follow out in detail the causes of a man's success, we find that the combinations to which he owed it were partly mental and partly circumstantial, and often wholly the latter. There is nothing strange in one fortunate combination of circumstances, but the biographies of successful men in every rank of life show that with a certain percentage of them fortunate circumstances happened repeatedly during their lives. A calculation of the chances of many circumstances attending the same person always to his advantage will show that the probability is but as one to many thousands.

These peculiar combinations of circumstances

are rarely noticed except in successful men, but that is because their success makes them prominent. But those whose attending circumstances are as constantly to their misfortune are equally as numerous, and together make this kind of experience very common. Among these external influences affecting various persons' welfare the most common one consists in the opinion which others have of them as to their capacities. Later experience sometimes proves this judgment of character to have been wide of the truth, and therefore fortunate or unfortunate to the individual, as the case may be.

This feature is not always confined to the opinion formed by one man. On the contrary, favorable opinions seem to mysteriously accompany some men and even to impress everybody that hears them. Such men in business never want for customers and in politics never lack votes. In some instances the public persistently seek individuals who are wanting in ambition, while other more competent men unsuccessfully devote a lifetime to courting public favor. Because popularity so often attends social, congenial people, we too readily assume that that is always the reason for it; but in many instances a popular man does not possess those qualities and in the case of some public men their popularity would be lost if their personality were better known.

We are blinded to these various peculiarities because they are not always marked features of

successful men. But they are the sole cause with some, while the opposite extreme is never an attendant with any of them. A person possessing them is called lucky or unlucky, and this condition has been so marked as to have been an element of superstition in all ages. For this reason in part it is now looked upon as unintelligent to attribute anything to chance. But the peculiar fatality so marked in many people is a conspicuous though isolated fact, none the less true because it is unexplained. Those men, also, who owe their successes to this peculiarity naturally prefer to have it credited to their intelligence and hence do not make known the many fortunate circumstances to which they owe those successes. Only recently a man died in New York who had made a fortune of many millions of dollars, of whom it was said that "he had a reputation of being clairvoyant in all that pertained to the investment of capital."

This peculiar fatality that accompanies some people and the seemingly separate intelligence before mentioned may both be a manifestation of the same power. They are of the same nature and it is possible that the law that governs them may be discovered. They at least indicate an outside influence or power of some unknown nature and to that degree supply evidence of another existence.

Animals are born with certain items of knowledge. They know where to find their food and

understand the meaning of certain signs or sounds. This knowledge is indispensable at their birth, and hence the Creator has planted it in their minds without the necessity of experience or instruction. Those animals will never have to look higher than to their progenitors, and supernatural knowledge is given them sufficient to enable their progenitors to give them due care. May it not be that our higher destiny is also designated by an item of supernatural knowledge of a God given us for the guiding effect that that knowledge will have upon us? The presence of that faculty in the mind (for there seems to be one) may be with that intent and points to a future existence.

Darwin<sup>1</sup> says:

I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for His existence. But this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits only a little more powerful than man; for the belief in them is far more general than in a beneficent Deity. The idea of a universal and beneficent Creator does not seem to arise in the mind of man until he has been elevated by long-continued culture.

The evolution theory does not seem to draw sufficient distinction between physical and mental development. The latter is apparently assumed to follow the former as a natural consequence and to be of a secondary nature. But that theory has been made clear only as to physical

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<sup>1</sup> The Descent of Man, p. 612.



evolution. The far more important parallel evolution of the mind is still an unexplained mystery. If the acquisition of each new mental faculty called for some new physical power, the evolution of the mind could then have been as clearly traced as it has been for the body. But there has been but slight connection between the two. The physical powers, for instance, of the lowest quadruped would not have unfitted it for possessing the mind of the highest, nor has it been shown that there had been any great degree of mental development up to the highest animals next to man. Prof. Huxley shows that there is more difference between the lowest and highest apes than there is between the highest apes and man. But this applies to the body only. Mental development seems to have taken its greatest start after that time.

The superior mental powers of man *did* require certain physical powers not possessed by any animal and it is clear that those physical powers were being slowly evolved *before the mental powers were developed that would require them*. Savages possess quite the same mental faculties that we do, for they may be educated, and neither man nor animals can learn matters requiring a faculty which they do not possess. We have numerous examples of educated Indians and also of negroes. The human hand, power to walk erect, and organs of speech were physical powers necessary for human mental powers, and those physical powers were being slowly evolved by animals not possessing

the faculties for which those physical powers were being created. There the thread is broken, but when next taken up we find the earth covered with men, though they were still living quite as low as the higher animals, but possessing the mental power to learn that which cannot be learned in the absence of the higher mental faculties. They were making use of the organs of speech, which organs had been fully developed in the ape.<sup>1</sup>

Mathematics could not have been practiced without the physical powers of the human hand and no condition is known that could have developed that mental faculty before that time.

Darwin admits that he could not account for the presence of the musical faculty and some other faculties are not satisfactorily accounted for. Nor does it follow that, because we can see the circumstances by which any particular faculty is evolved, such faculty is an incident of those circumstances. On the contrary, those circumstances or conditions were made to cause such evolution as they produced, as is evidenced by physical development preceding the mental development that would require it. Hence it was intended that we should have the faculties we do have, and hence that instinctive knowledge of God and a future existence is absolutely supernatural knowledge, even though it may have been evolved from ignorance and superstition. All of our faculties are at first igno-

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<sup>1</sup> Descent of Man, p. 89.

rantly used, but with higher intelligence the plain uses of each are none the less apparent. Belief in cruel and malignant spirits was but the ignorant use of a faculty through which we were to be made to know that there is a God.

The power to stand or to walk erect is dependent upon some involuntary action of the mind. We are usually unconscious of this, but let us, while standing or walking, be suddenly called upon to endure some unusual mental strain and we will then feel the relief that sitting will give. A criminal, while undergoing examination, is more liable to break down if made to stand than he would be if permitted to sit. This is suggestive of the possibility that much of the action of the body, such as the circulation, breathing, and digestion, is dependent upon some unknown, mysterious, and involuntary mental power. The mind is everything, the body comparatively nothing. The body is like a scaffolding, by which the structure is built; it is the umbilical cord by the severance of which we are launched upon our true and actual existence.

All the works of nature are with reference to some result; nothing is lost. It has been shown that our experience here is just what our Maker intended. We are guided by and exercise our mental faculties for just such duties and trials as we do have, and, as the all-important existence is the one to come, it follows that the experience of this life is with especial reference to the one to

come. Furthermore, we have evidence that such is the fact.

We often hear old people say that it has taken one life to learn how to live. This is an important fact, that nearly all feel as they become old. We then discover that, at the expense of great loss of both time and property, we have learned lessons that would have been invaluable to us when young, but which we cannot make use of again. Our lives seem largely to have been devoted to learning that which when learned we cannot use. But the experience we had was just what our natural mental qualities led to, and, therefore, the lessons we learned it was intended we should learn; and as we cannot make use of the knowledge thus acquired in this life it must be that it was experience with reference to the life to come.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Soon after the preliminary edition of this book was issued Dr. Wallace's last work, *Darwinism*, was published in London. It was a source of great satisfaction to me to discover that unconsciously I had run parallel with so distinguished a writer. The following is the closing paragraph of that book:

We thus find that the Darwinian theory, even when carried to its extreme logical conclusion, not only does not oppose, but lends a decided support to, a belief in the spiritual nature of man. It shows how man's body may have been developed from that of a lower animal form under the law of natural selection; but it also teaches us that we possess intellectual and moral faculties which could not have been so developed, but must have had another origin; and for this origin we can only find an adequate cause in the unseen universe of Spirit.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SUPERNATURAL SUPERVISION.

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HERBERT SPENCER says that "we everywhere see fading away the anthropomorphic conception of the Unknown Cause."

Coincident with the loss, one by one, of all former ideas of God, there has grown up a knowledge of his works that magnifies the wisdom and grandeur of a Creator far beyond all former conception of him, and particularly far above the capacities of the so-called inspired writers. Our inability to understand how there can be a Supreme Being proves nothing. The reasons for believing that we are under the guidance of supernatural wisdom are much greater than ever known before, while the reason for unbelief has its base in that ungratified curiosity that cannot accept isolated unexplained facts. The sum of all arguments against the existence of a God and of our own immortality amounts to but an expression of disbelief. Because men cannot comprehend how there can be a God, as viewed through the small number of nature's laws that have been discovered, they do not believe. Even much of that which we think is explained is not explained. We have in many places linked many facts together and built

up quite a system; nevertheless that system will have its imperfections and will border on the supernatural.

We do not know, for instance, enough of the laws governing the bodies of our planetary system to account for their exactness in all the details of motion, distance, heat, etc. The range of temperature in which we live is comparatively very narrow, and but a slight variation in any of several of nature's laws would vary that range sufficient to destroy every living thing upon the face of the globe. In numerous other regulations life is dependent upon equally as delicate a balance, nor do we know that such exact balance is wholly secured by natural laws. It is probable that, while the laws do most, supervision is still necessary.

The Christian system is itself the cause of much unbelief in a God on the part of those who have rejected its doctrines. It has so blended the name of Jesus Christ with God and impressed upon the mind its false virtues and false sins as religion that when an unbeliever can no longer accept that system he does not awake to the broad distinction existing between belief in God and belief in Jesus Christ. Through association of ideas the absurdities of that system seem alike to be attached to belief in a future existence and in a God. The truth has been degraded by that which is false, and all has been rejected together. That "peace has no history" is true only so far as history relates to war.

It is the same in a controversy; we have nothing to say upon the subject in dispute to those who agree with us. I regret the necessity of objecting in any way to the sentiments of Col. Ingersoll, the leader in the liberal movement of the past twenty years. Within the Christian system it is held that only through it are we made to believe in a future existence and in the Deity, and, *per contra*, that all evidence favoring that belief is equally evidence of the truth of Christianity. But Christianity presents no evidence upon that point; it simply demands that we credulously accept the traditional implications of the gospels as sufficient confirmation. Outside of that system there has been but little written pro and con upon that subject. Hence the argument which Col. Ingersoll makes upon the negative side of that question is quite the only one I can quote. He says:

I cannot see why we should expect an infinite God to do better in another world than he does in this. If he allows injustice to prevail here, why will he not allow the same thing in the world to come? If there is any being with power to prevent it, why is crime permitted? If a man standing upon the railway should ascertain that a bridge had been carried off by a flood and if he also knew that the train was coming filled with men, women, and children, with husbands going to their wives and wives rejoining their families, if he made no effort to stop that train, if he simply sat down by the roadside to witness the catastrophe and so remained until the train dashed off the precipice and its load of life became a mass of quivering flesh, he would be denounced by every good man as the

most monstrous of human beings. And yet this is exactly what the supposed God does. He, if he exists, sees the train rushing for the gulf; he gives no notice. He sees the ship rushing for the hidden rock; he makes no sign. And he so constructed the world that assassins lurk in the air, hide even in the sunshine; and when we imagine that we are breathing the breath of life we are taking unto ourselves the seeds of death.

Rev. D. H. Hamilton, in his work upon Mental Science, states that—

Nature alone [meaning without God, as though that were possible] in the universe is dark, greedy, and ghastly; a monster and an atheist, knowing nothing and proof of nothing; ever living by breeding and devouring her own offspring; a most unnatural nature, to which life is death and death life; a nature which is not nature at all, because alone and without God and man.

The first of those writers, as is well known, is not convinced that there is a God, while the religion of the latter is a quadripartite complication, in which the control of human and animal nature is represented to have been usurped by the devil. Between blankness in ideas of the Creator and ideas that are insulting to Him, those men both stand upon the same platform in their opinion as to God's supervision of terrestrial affairs. Those who presume to criticise His laws must remember that all of them were not made solely with reference to our individual wants or the wants of a single generation. Our love of life and the humane ideas which it engenders are of a purely local nature; though common to all, they are for



the good of the individual only; but the comments just quoted illustrate the fact that those natural but local ideas seem to conflict with other more important laws made for the far-distant future, which is as much under our Creator's care as the present.

We know that sooner or later we must die, but no one holds up that certainty of death as a cruelty. Death is not acceptable to us, whether in old age or by accident, the difference being only a question of time, and the cruelty, therefore, if any, consists in God giving us less of what he might have given more. We speak of death by old age as a natural death; but, now that the great law of the survival of the fittest, in the struggle for existence, is understood, it is a question whether death by old age is any more natural than death through man's incompetency; and with the lower order of animals—as fishes, for instance—the most natural death is to be swallowed by their progenitors or other large fish. Even with animals, the struggle for existence is not wholly physical, and with increasing intelligence the proportion of intellectual competition increases until, in our time, that competition is mostly intellectual. Those people who die by disease before old age die as much through human ignorance as those who lose their lives by accidents, and the same reason which accounts for God's noninterference to prevent such deaths also accounts for His not interfering to prolong the lives of those who lose

them through man's neglect to acquire the knowledge that is within his reach. Death from old age renders no service to human progress, but death through man's incompetency exposes that incompetency and stimulates to its permanent correction.

The fact that much of the effect of our ignorance falls upon innocent parties only makes our general responsibility the more marked. We are responsible, individually and collectively. The evil effects of public errors strike promiscuously among the whole people and stimulate the whole to their correction. However serious sorrows and misfortunes may be to the individual, they are, nevertheless, serious only as viewed from the narrow limits of this life. In the light of an eternal future, they sink into insignificance and, considering the advancement they superinduce, they cannot be called misfortunes. We are reaping the benefits of the troubles of past generations and we must bear our proportion for those to come.

The supposed omnipresence of God is a part of the Christian system, those within it having no discretion upon that question as it is taught in the gospels. The guiding nature of the laws by which we are developed ought to be satisfactory evidence that by those laws are we mostly guided in that development. It is not necessary to be shown the way when the route has been so laid out that the great body cannot go astray. There may be—probably is—supervision, not, necessarily, to al-

ways prevent trouble, but to temporarily increase it at times for the purpose of precipitating a needed reform; but it is questionable if there is near, at all times, a supernatural power capable of preventing accidents, even if so disposed. Spiritualists do assert that supernatural information, in such cases, has often been given, many instances of which are related by Robert Dale Owen in his work *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*; but, even if those accounts could be satisfactorily shown to be true, they still would be far too infrequent to affect the rule.

There are still other reasons why this law should be enforced. Every living species upon the face of the globe, on land or in the sea, could, in a comparatively short space of time, overrun the whole world if its increase were not held in check. The same Creator that made the law whereby they procreate their species also made other laws that hold their numbers down to a certain proportion. In the case of some of the animals, the latter law is seen as clearly as the former, and the human race is, undoubtedly, held in check by similar laws. We multiply fast enough to have overrun the whole world beyond its power of support even within the historical period, and yet the human race at all times, like all other animals, bears an even proportion to the facilities for its support. It would be a horrible thought for our race, at some future time, to be obliged to take into consideration the question of depleting the population because of its

having nearly reached the world's limit of support. And yet such a condition would be reached if even one of the several laws that keep the population down should be suspended. Its suspension would be a far greater inhumanity than its enforcement, even though it were the law that makes our incompetency lead to death.

A better knowledge of the laws of health has increased the average duration of human life, and the percentage of loss of life through ignorance must be much less, and these facts have set some men to speculating upon the possible overpopulation of the world. Speculations of this kind spring up from time to time, but they are idle and useless. That part of our government does not appear to have been left in our keeping, any more than the movement of the world itself. The question of overproduction of human beings will never be presented to us for solution. As far as we are concerned, we must have all the human feeling we do have and protect life to the best of our ability. Developments of late years exhibit God's far-reaching oversight in this, for as the loss of life through ignorance decreases with intelligence the births also decrease. We need not fear an overpopulation of the earth, for the laws that prevent it keep our intellect bright and clear through our efforts to counteract them.

Every being that walks is living, breathing evidence that there is a God. The knowledge of man is not equal to even understanding our own

mechanism, and it is surprising that any can believe that the laws that made us were not made by a Supreme Being for that purpose. There have been at least two lines of development quite distinct from each other that were necessary for man's existence and both reached the necessary development at the same time. While man has been progressing from a low degree, the earth has also been fitting for his habitation. The promptness of man's appearance when the earth was ready for him is as yet an unexplained mystery.

It is a law of nature that nearly everything shall expand with heat and contract with cold. But water expands from both heat and cold (as usually expressed) and without this deviation in that law the earth would be quite uninhabitable. If, when water congeals, it contracted instead of expanding, it would sink as fast as ice was formed until the entire body of water was solid ice. The quantity would consequently become so large as to greatly reduce the temperature of the atmosphere. The effect of this would be to bring the frigid zones much nearer the equator and reduce the habitable part of the globe to narrower limits, if indeed life could exist anywhere.

How wide the range of heat may be, from a total absence of caloric to the opposite extreme, may not be known, but it is a number of thousand degrees; and life is only possible within a narrow range of scarcely one hundred degrees each way from the freezing point and is confined to only

about half those limits. That degree of heat where water will expand into steam and that other degree where it will expand into ice are very near together as compared to the wide range of heat and cold; the range is but little wider than that of the temperature necessary for our existence. This deviation from nature's usual laws at such a delicate point could not have been by chance; it must have been an especial regulation of a Supreme Being, and, therefore, made with reference to human life.

It is true that the expansion when ice is formed is very small, but this fact only increases the probabilities of its being a special deviation made to overcome the objection referred to. The expansion is barely enough to make ice float and prevent water from congealing to any great depth.

We see to what enormous proportions animals may be developed both in the sea and on land. There is no apparent reason why there are not equally as powerful birds. In the Oölitic period there were varieties of the pterodactyls, a species of bat, that had a spread of wings of twenty-seven feet, and it is supposed there were some much larger. The atmosphere was then, probably, denser than it is now, but that can be no reason why such animals do not grow to great size in our time, for our largest birds fly the highest where the air is thinnest. Size, at least, has nothing to do with any physical difficulty to be overcome. There could have been monsters of the air capable of

picking up a man as easily as a hawk does a chicken. But if there had been such they would have possessed a power over man that would have made human development impossible. Even in our time, with firearms, such animals would be a constant terror, involving precautions in work in the field and all isolated positions that would be serious enough to greatly cripple us in all the affairs of life. The fact that there are no such winged monsters as powerful as animals found on land and in the seas indicates an especial variation in nature's laws, made immediately preceding the advent of man for our especial safety.

The originators of Christianity treated the future existence as one exclusively of rewards and punishments for acts done here, and all its followers since have consequently been obliged to look upon it in the same light. Those men were incapable of bringing their imagination to comprehend more than a moderate length of time and hence would not notice the absurdity of placing this comparatively trifling existence over one that is to be eternal. If there be a future life, then it must be the all-important one. It must also be that only in that one shall we be completed beings. We are in process of creation here. This life must be a test in which we are tried and fitted for the all-important duties of the true existence, upon which we only enter when this life ends.

The few years we live here may be more important than many times the same number in the life

to come and yet be insignificant in comparison to the importance of the whole. So, too, with all the ends and aims of this life; there are no values it can give in health, pleasures, and glories that could offset some slight advantage that is to continue for many ages. It is not reasonable to suppose that our acts here can cloud our eternal future.

Such ideas as the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days, an eternal existence of torture, and the omnipresence of God are all such as could only emanate from half-civilized man, and only through a superstition that makes those ideas sacred do they find supporters in the present day. If God were omnipresent there would be no occasion for some of His laws, for He could then guide each and all in detail. That "He numbers the hairs of our head" and "every blade of grass that grows" is an idea in exact keeping with the one that represents Him as making the world in a day.

This life must naturally be and undoubtedly is a reflection of the one to come. We see here a wide range of conditions of adversity and prosperity in close proximity. Therefore, in the next world we shall see similar conditions on a far more extended scale, and in those widely different positions there will be abundant room for all the rewards and punishments that this life calls for. If a man can struggle so much and work up so much feeling here for positions of wealth and honors that



can be enjoyed but a few years, then how great can our interest be in a life that is eternal and where the range of those positions is vastly wider. Sentiments of this nature will have all the stimulating and restraining effect that the religious faculty can give, and that is all it is required to do.

When we reflect upon the possibility of there being inhabitants upon other planets than our own in the solar system we are obliged to base our conclusions upon what we know of nature's laws upon the one world in which we live. We are confined to an equally narrow limit in our speculations as to a future life. If there be such an existence we shall be guided by the same Creator who guides us here, and we may reasonably infer that plans which He found necessary here may be duplicated there. In this life individuals are sometimes born with certain physical defects. They may be deficient in a limb or be blind or deaf and dumb and still live. Others again are born dead because of the absence of some organ without which life is impossible. There may be physical defects, but a certain combination is indispensable to secure life. It would be an exact parallel if a future existence were dependent upon a certain combination of mental faculties. There may be mental deficiencies affecting the individual only, but it is possible that a future life is dependent upon the possession of those mental faculties that would insure the rights and safety of others. This re-

quired development would naturally be applicable to the human race only.

If the Almighty should set forth His works and will in characters that men could read, He would not in doing so discriminate in favor of any language, people, or age. His book would be accessible to all people in all times, the only requirement being that reasonable intelligence be exercised by those who read it; and with increasing knowledge it would become more and more intelligible to the reader. His imprint would be in this, that the discoveries of later generations would never conflict with those that preceded them.

Such a work is awaiting readers. In the rocks He has bound a careful and minute account of creation, many chapters of which mankind even now has read. In that awe-inspiring work we find great reason for—not humility—but pride, in noting the vast ages that were employed to create man, and in that pride we are stimulated to try to make ourselves worthy of the love and power that have so carefully and patiently made us.

But, however instructive and important that knowledge may be, it is yet but a history of the past and is not sufficient for our wants in the future. We see by it the paths that have led to the present wonderful results; but, to follow these paths and carry out the yet-to-be-developed designs of our Creator, we need that which will in part take the place of a knowledge of those designs, and this we have in the guiding nature of the va-

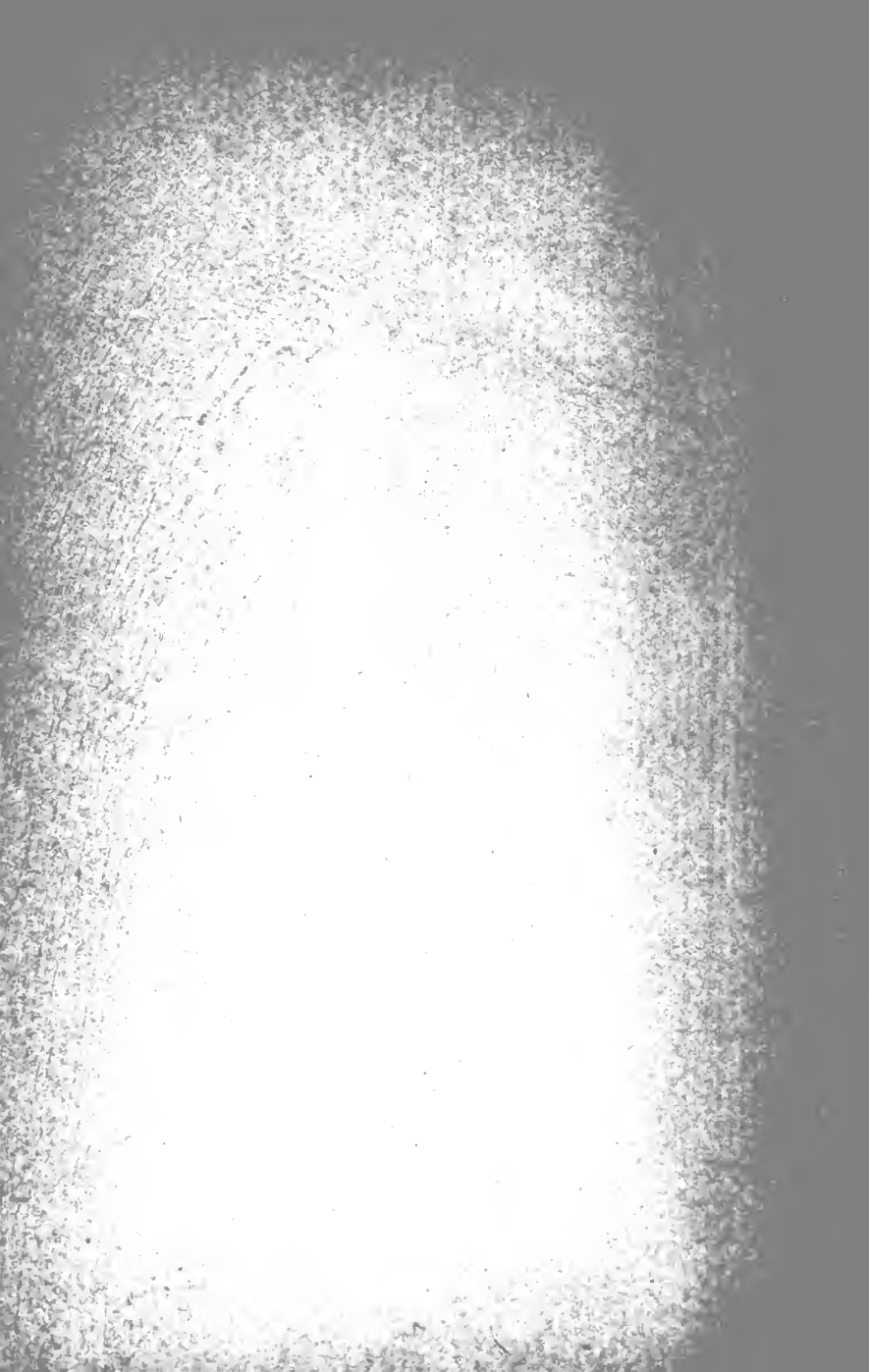
rious faculties of the mind. It is the only way that that knowledge could be given us and only a God could so give it. Without them mankind, even in one generation, would be annihilated, but with them the human race, like an army, is held in rank and file and being led step by step to the great uses for which he has designed us.

The superstition that retards this progress by decrying and misconstruing the meaning of those especial mental tendencies, and substitutes therefor false virtues, false sins, and false histories, is in direct enmity with that Being whom its followers pretend to worship; and one of their greatest crimes is in teaching that even if wrong it is the *safe side* of the question to follow them. There is safety only in a correct interpretation of our Creator's designs. Our most religious duty and greatest progress consist in discovering our own powers and our greatest happiness is found in exercising them


THE END









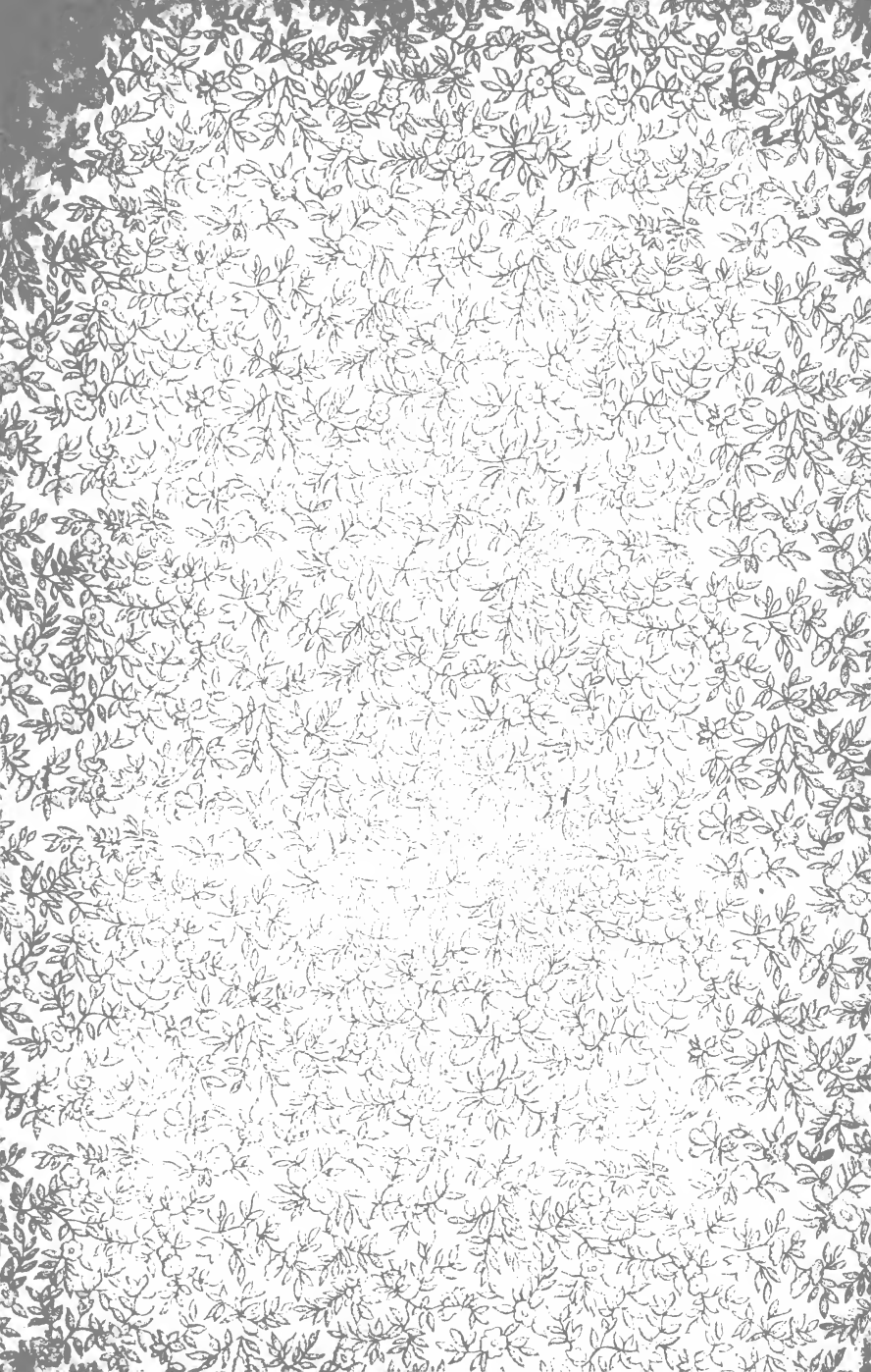


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: July 2005

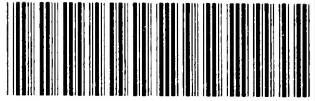
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