

righteousness, have possibly been tempted by the lust of the eye—and lust when it has conceived has brought forth sin—the sacrifice of principle being seemingly so trifling as not to subject to the strictures of the most moral community, or exclude from the communion of the most puritanical Christian Church. In each of these cases when duty demanded, when conscience approved, when the call of God was positive, the “right hand” was not cut off, the “right eye” was not plucked out, the “Isaac” was not offered up.

And the creed makers of Christendom have come up to these trials—have seen these temptations, and have not—conquered. What more natural than that these failures should be formulated in the creeds of their creation? What more likely than that these failures should be used to even make Christianity seem to limp.

Men refuse to “tread the wine press,” and yet profess to be Christians. What is Christianity? What is it that constitutes the essence of Christianity? Is it to fail at these supreme tests of life? Did Jesus tread the wine press alone and fail? Are we to fail, though He succeeded, and yet it be true that as He was so are we in this world? There must have been some divine method of succeeding for Him which is not open for us. Jesus must have been wrapped in some divine afflatus—some mystical form of divinity of birth—that caused Him to differ so much from us, His followers, that while it was possible for Him to walk as never man had walked up to that day, tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, yet it is impossible for us so to walk.

Jesus, a man, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, made use of the following words, “I and the Father are one.” How can the human and the divine be united on this earth? To that, this can be said, “How can man cry ‘Abba Father?’” Must it be by “immaculate conception,” by actual “divinity” as God is divine? These are questions that our creed makers and creed defenders may carefully consider.

Man must either be as God is, or as Jesus was. If he is as God is, then he

is divine. If he is as Jesus was, then it must be in some actual, positive way that this must be so. If I am as Jesus was, then the relation between my humanity and divinity must of necessity be the same as between Jesus’ humanity and divinity. Positively there can be no difference. If there be a difference, then just as positively I am not as He was in this world. Is it not just possible that the popular idea of the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ may be a myth—a tradition that has crept into our beliefs?

And it does not follow that because of the mythical character of the divinity with which tradition may have wrapped the person of Jesus—weaving this traditional divinity into Scripture, it may be—it does not follow that Jesus may be any the less the Son of God. When baptized with the Holy Ghost, we have it declared that the Father called Him His Son.

When Jesus said to Nicodemus, Ye must be born again—born of the Spirit—did Jesus mean that Nicodemus must be immaculately conceived? Or did He not rather mean that he must become one with God. As Jesus was one with the Father, was it not necessary Nicodemus to become one with the Father? No one on the earth had yet become one with the Father—had undertaken to do the will of the Father. In this sense, and in no other, did Jesus become the first-born among many brethren. He did absolutely the will of the Father, and because of this He was crucified. Men objected then as they object now to the “whole will” of the Father being done. They are quite willing that part should be done.

It was the doing of the whole that awakened the animosity of men in Jesus’ time. Only that will awaken animosity now. The servant cannot in this sense be greater than his Lord. He must of necessity meet with the same fate—crucifixion—not necessarily after the identical pattern of Christ’s crucifixion, but in one of the multifarious ways which the ingenuity of the modern Jews has devised, in which there will enter all the details of Christ’s crucifixion down to the Pilates and the Judases.

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