

whosoever, therefore, resisteth the ordinances of God shall receive to themselves damnation." These words, unqualified by any others restricting their meaning, are just what any tyrant would want. And they have been quoted whenever a brave soul has attempted to urge his countrymen to rise in their might and relieve themselves of the tyranny of a selfish and cruel ruler, or from the burden of unjust and oppressive laws. And with the multitude, these words have proved a greater protection to despotism than all the armies it could muster and all the physical power it could command. Believing it to be their religious duty to submit to "the powers that be," the people in past times have yielded to almost every conceivable form of oppression and outrage.

By speaking of the speedy end of the world, the New Testament has led thousands to abandon their pursuits, to give away all their possessions, and even to become hopelessly insane. The early Christians lived in daily expectation that the end of the world was near at hand. Now it is said by apologists for the Bible that Jesus and Paul did not mean what they seemed to say, and what those who listened to them understood them to say. Even granting this apology to be well founded, the system is responsible for all the misery that has resulted from the ambiguity of its teachings.

Christianity is responsible for all the dissensions that have resulted among its adherents from the contradictory character of the doctrines and teachings of the New Testament. To-day there are irreconcilable differences in Christendom among men equally honest and learned as to what the Bible really teaches. This diversity of opinion is the cause of much acrimonious controversy, sectarian strife, and social discord. If the Bible were regarded simply as a human production, differences of opinion respecting its teachings would be as harmless as those prevailing among scholars as to the meaning of certain passages in Plato or Lucretius; but, invested with divine authority, every portion of the Bible must be considered as of the greatest importance, and so long as it is believed to be a revelation from God, given by him to be read and understood by men, it is natural that believers in the infallibility and perfection of the book should look upon what they deem false and dangerous interpretations as the result of perversity and wickedness on the part of those who differ from them as to the meaning of certain texts. Hence sectarian bitterness and hate. Luther's disposition and conduct towards his brother reformers in the Protestant cause, simply because they could not see with him that transubstantiation was taught in the Bible, afford a good illustration of the natural result of the vagueness, obscurity, and contradictory character of portions of the book on minds that are pious, earnest, and convinced of the divine origin and infallibility of the Scriptures.

Christianity has opposed and hindered scientific discoveries by making the crude speculations of man in early ages "the authoritative standard of fact and the criterion of the justice of scientific conclusions" in modern

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