

sentiments which lead men to offer benevolent gifts for the benefit of their fellow-men are evoked and inspired by certain doctrines respecting the character and love and will of God. These doctrines are proclaimed in Christian pulpits, contained in Christian creeds and set forth, fundamentally, in the Christian Scriptures. There are three questions, therefore, which may well be asked and which I shall attempt to answer in this and in the following papers. These are as follows: What is the Christian religion? What does Christianity do for men? What does Christianity promise for the future?

Christianity, as it exists in a concrete form in the mind and heart of an individual man consists of three things, namely, a certain intellectual belief of the character of God and His relation to men; a certain moral power of resisting evil and of doing good; and a certain hope which is deemed a prophecy and a promise of eternal life.

Christianity as it exists apart from any individual man and considered as a system of religion consists of three things, namely, the revelation of the character, the love and the will of God; the redemption of men from the penalty and the power of sin; and the regeneration of men by which they are brought into vital correspondence with God and into the fulfilment of the conditions of eternal life.

Revelation, Redemption and Regeneration are the essential elements of Christianity. That these three things are claimed by Christianity and for it cannot be questioned. All that is preparatory in the Old Testament and all that is promised in the New Testament fall under these heads. From the opening sentence of Genesis, which declares God to be, in the beginning, the source of all things, to the words of Jesus, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," Christianity claims to be a revelation of the being, the power, the character and the will of God.

From the first promise of victory over evil to the declaration that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," Christianity claims to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." From the first declaration of the danger of death and of the condition of life to the positive doctrine that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and overcometh the world and hath eternal life," Christianity promises eternal life to them who believe and obey. The task now undertaken is that of applying scientific methods of investigation to certain phenomena which appear under the influence of the Christian religion, and to certain promises of Christianity that it may be ascertained whether the claims of Christianity can be verified, and whether the promises base themselves upon conditions which, if true, insure their fulfilment.

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