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CONCLUSION

To sum up this brief review of the influence which superstition has exercised on the growth of institutions, I think I have shewn, or at least made probable:—

I. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for government, especially monarchical government, and has thereby contributed to the establishment and maintenance of civil order :

II. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for private property and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment :

III. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for marriage and has thereby contributed to a stricter observance of the rules of sexual morality both among the married and the unmarried :

IV. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for human life and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

But government, private property, marriage, and respect for human life are the pillars on which rests the whole fabric of civil society. Shake them and you shake society to its foundations. Therefore if government, private property, marriage, and respect for human life are all good and essential to the very existence of civil society, then it follows that by strengthening every one of them superstition has rendered a great service to humanity. It has supplied multitudes with a motive, a wrong motive it is