

erful as in those lands which boast the highest civilization. We know that, even if it be untrue, it gives us the grandest conceptions of a God the world has ever known. Is Jesus Christ a myth? Whose was the sublime imagination that created such a character? It has been well said that such a creator would have been as transcendent a character as Jesus Himself. We know that this Bible reveals to man his own needs and weaknesses as nothing else does. It sees the secrets of his inmost nature. It voices his deepest aspirations. It touches with a master hand the chords of emotion, and administers consolation for his most poignant griefs. We know that its precepts are the purest and wisest that have been given for the guidance of life. Then we know that, whatever this Book may be, it satisfies human longings to the very uttermost. Like the rising tide that flows into every frith and inlet and bay, so the Bible fills each recess of man's nature, heart, and mind, and soul. And it is for all classes—the child and the sage, the lowly and the exalted, the unlearned and the scholar. It reaches all and makes new creatures of them.

But the Christian may be certain of much more than this. Paul had no doubt as to the Gospel. He had already entered upon a race, and he was not for one moment uncertain as to what the course was. Every man may have that certainty, and, if he will surrender himself to Christ, may be fully assured of the truth of the Gospel. And yet there are Christians that are troubled with doubt. I may be certain what road is the right one, and yet be uncertain whether I am on that road. I may be assured that Christianity is true, but not that I am a Christian. Paul was sure of both, and I believe every Christian may have all of Paul's confidence. I believe doubt is from the devil. It was invented by a priesthood that didn't want men to become sure of their inheritance in heaven, but wished to hold them in subjection by fear and superstition.

Then, again, I may be sure of the right road, sure I am on it, and yet be doubtful whether I shall reach the goal. Unto such I commend the words of an old darkey whom I once met. I asked him how long he had been serving the Lord. "Fifty years," he replied. "Well, uncle," I said, "after keeping the faith so long, you must feel pretty confident of holding out to the end?" "Ah, massa," he responded, "it isn't a question of *my* holding on, it's only a question of whether de Lord can hold on, and I reckon I can trust Him."

It is the privilege of every Christian to have a like faith. "No one shall pluck them out of my hand," said Christ.

But irreligion also has its certainties, and first among them is that dim, undefined unrest of soul. Do what one may to conceal it or to crush it, it is still there, an enemy to peace, a destroyer of happiness. The shadows of the future are certain. Laying aside the teachings of revelation, the realm beyond death is only a dark mystery. See the philosopher ascending the highest mount of speculation, and his only answer to questions of the future state is, "I don't know; I can only guess." Hear another as he cries out, "I am taking a leap into the dark," swinging off into an unknown eternity.

Could anything be more terrible? And another certainty is the dread of judgment after death. The river of life is swift and smooth, perhaps, but the sinner, unreconciled to God, knows that there is a cataract over which he must plunge to ruin, and every moment is bringing him nearer to it. A conscience forever reproaching, a soul that is never at peace, death with its shadows projected far ahead, and the dread of an awful judgment day—these are some of the certainties of irreligion.

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PREFERRING FALSEHOOD TO TRUTH.—You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it.—O. W. Holmes.