

scious, under false forms. No possibility glanced at of there being a silent distinction made by some idolaters, if made only by a very few discerning among them, between the idol served and the one incorruptible, jealous God as meant by such exceptional idolaters to be merely symbolized in the idol ostensibly worshipped by them. Reserve none on behalf of certain initiated, illuminated souls seeking and finding purer religion in esoteric "mysteries" that were shut out from the profane vulgar. Nay, it was, as I suppose, with definite reference to just such pretentious sacred secrets, that elsewhere Paul writes, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of." Christianity leaves open *no* loophole of escape for the judged and reprobate anti-Christian religions with which it comes into contact. It shows instead only indiscriminate damnation leaping out like forked lightning from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power upon those incorrigibly guilty of the sin referred to, the sin of worship paid to gods other than God. There is no pleasing alleviation anywhere introduced in the way of assurance, or even of possible hope, that a benign God—here spoken dreadfully of only under His complementary attribute of unappeasable jealousy—that a benign God will graciously receive into His ear the ascriptions formally given to another as virtually, though misconceivingly, intended for Himself. That idea, whether just or not, at least is not scriptural. It is, indeed, intensely anti-scriptural, therefore anti-Christian. Christianity does not deserve the praise of any such liberality. As concerns the sole, the exclusive, the incommunicable prerogatives of God, Christianity is, let it be frankly admitted, a narrow, a strict, a severe, a jealous religion. Socrates dying may have been forgiven his proposal of a cock to be offered in sacrifice to Æsculapius; but Christianity, the Christianity of the Bible, gives us no shadow of reason for supposing that such idolatrous act on his part was translated by God into worship acceptable to Himself.

It is much if a religion such as the Bible thus teaches Christianity to be leaves us any chance at all for entertaining hope concerning those remaining to the last involved in the prevalence of false religion surrounding them. But chance there seems indeed to be of hope justified by Christianity for some among these unfortunate children of men. Peter, the man who, "filled with the Holy Ghost," said, concerning Jesus, "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men wherein we must be saved"—the straitened Peter, the one apostle, perhaps, most inclined to be unalterably Jewish, he it was who, having been thereto specially instructed, also said:

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him."

To fear God, first, and then also to work righteousness—these are the traits characterizing ever and everywhere the man acceptable to God. But