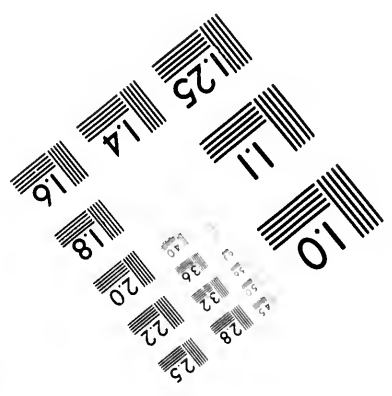
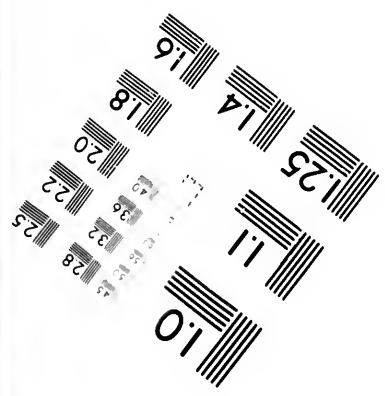
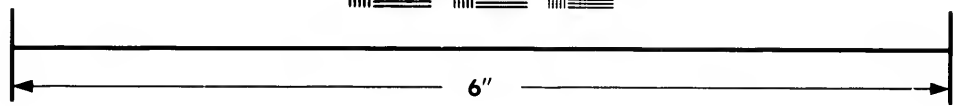
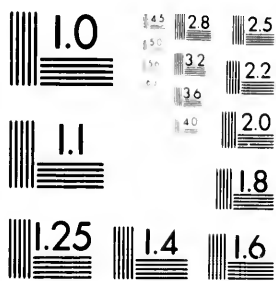


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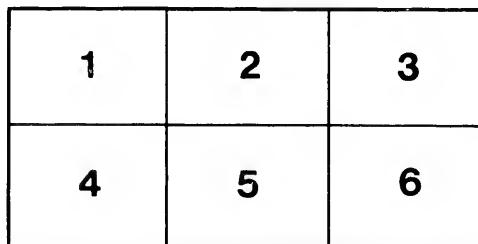
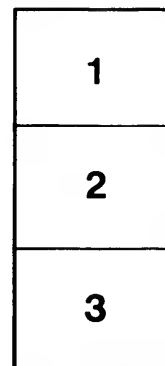
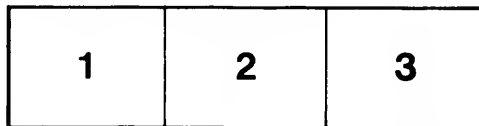
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DELIVERED BEFORE THE

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OF THE

University of Victoria College.

VOL. II, 1883-1887.

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WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 KING ST. EAST.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Lectures and Sermons included in this volume were delivered before the Theological Union of Victoria University, which was organized in 1877. Both Lecturers and Preachers have been very felicitous in selecting topics of living interest to the Church and to the Theological Student. As they are largely Apologetic in their character, the Annual Meeting of the Union hopes, by their publication in this form, to help toward the settlement, in the minds of the young, of some of the religious difficulties of the age.

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SIN AND GRACE

CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT OF MAN.

BY THE

REV. JAMES GRAHAM.

The Practical Test of Christianity.

BY THE

REV. HUGH JOHNSTON, M.A., B.D.

BEING THE SIXTH ANNUAL LECTURE AND SERMON
BEFORE THE THEOLOGICAL UNION OF
VICTORIA COLLEGE, IN 1883.

TORONTO :

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

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1883.

SIN AND GRACE CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO
GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT OF MAN.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE THEOLOGICAL UNION OF
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, MAY 13TH, 1883.

BY THE

REV. JAMES GRAHAM.

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LECTURE.

SIN AND GRACE CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT OF MAN.

THE sources of moral influence indicated by the terms Sin and Grace are not discoveries made by man, but information communicated to him. Revelation not only furnishes new subjects of thought, but sheds additional light on the whole course of providence. But it does not manifest all things happening under the course of providence so clearly to us, as to leave no further light either desirable or possible. On the contrary, it indicates that what we now see only through a glass darkly, we shall yet see in the light of noon-day; and that, what is unknowable by us now, we shall know hereafter. Out of our relation to Revelation arises our duty to study its credentials and contents. Whatever Revelation may be intrinsically, its regulative influence on our life is according to what our thought concerning it is. Though our thought can add nothing to the contents of Revelation, it may

enable us to make some progress in a more correct apprehension, and in a more systematic statement of its truths. Patient investigation, not hasty anticipation, is the proper temper of the student of Revelation, as well as of the student of Nature. But, as in every other sphere of thought, so in Revelation, we may meet the mysterious and the difficult. If it is the glory of God to reveal one thing, it may also be His glory to conceal another thing. Partial ignorance concerning the reasons of the Divine procedure, is probably the condition of all created minds. A perception of our ignorance of some things may indicate more mental clearness, than an over-confident pretension to know them. It is not a mere paradox to say that it is part of our knowledge to know our ignorance. If, then, we should find that, considered in some aspects, both sin and grace are somewhat unknowable by us during our present life, that is not contrary to, but in analogy with, the whole course of providence concerning us. Revelation informs us that man, as created, was "very good." Thus, what an omnipotent God created, an omniscient God approved. But that very good man was created with a power of mental freedom, which might be used in obedience to the will of his Creator, or it might be abused by willing against the will of his Creator. Man did abuse that power by willing against the will of God. But still man is, and God is, and the race will be. But the old foundations are now out of course. If we ask here, Why did not God prevent that sin? or why did the creature commit

that sin? even Revelation does not furnish an answer to either question. And if we contemplate the various attempts that have been made at a philosophical solution of the origin of sin, we see failure legibly stamped upon every one of them. It is not unreasonable to suppose that very few can be ambitious of adding another to that long list of failures by making another attempt at the solution of that problem. But it should be remembered that mystery is not absurdity. The confounding of these has been the source of much fallacious reasoning on religious subjects. The importance of not confounding these may be perceived from the fact, that we must either believe facts or truths, notwithstanding that some mystery may be connected with them, or stand convicted of absurdity by denying them. We can believe notwithstanding mystery, but we cannot, rationally, believe absurdity. Mystery may only be that which transcends our mental comprehension, but absurdity contradicts the immediate perception of our intellect. And though we have to confess that the origin of sin is to us a mystery, we do not cognize it as an absurdity. True, we have had a good deal written about "how sin came," but that does not answer the questions why was it permitted, or why was it committed? The *how* in these cases is not the *why*. Had this been always perceived, it might have saved a goodly number of writers on the subject, from confounding their expositions of the possibility of sin, with a rational solution of the origin of sin. I do not discuss here

the origin of sin either in reference to God who did not prevent it, or in reference to man who committed it. As it is admitted that man is a responsible subject of moral government, I design to consider the influences of both sin and grace upon man, considered in his relation to the moral government of God. If man is naturally a totally depraved being, how can he be held as the responsible subject of moral government? This is the mental difficulty of man's moral history in his relation to the Divine government. This question has puzzled more minds, in reference to the acceptance of Revelation as true, than the cycles of Geology or the evolutions of Biology. And it seems that instead of shedding any light upon this difficulty, the darkness has been thickened by the teaching of a large part of the theology of Christendom, upon the subjects of sin and grace. In treating of these subjects here, there is no attempt made to explain the mysterious, but to expose the absurd, and to state the true. First, let us consider the fact and doctrine of

ORIGINAL SIN.

But what is, or what should be meant, by the phrase "original sin?" Considered in reference to Adam, it includes his first sinful act, and the depravity of his nature consequent on that act. Considered in reference to Adam's offspring, it means the depravity consequent on Adam's sin as transmitted from his fallen nature to the whole race. That type of anthropology which denies the depravity of Adam's nature by his

original sinful act; and also denies that his depraved nature is transmitted to his posterity, is here rejected as being utterly anti-Biblical. Revelation teaches that Adam's sin depraved his nature, and that the depraved nature is transmitted to his posterity. And the whole photograph of human history seems to corroborate that doctrine. But among those who admit the fact of congenital depravity in the human race, there has not been, and there is not now, uniformity of opinion with respect to its influence on man's relation to the moral government of God. The following questions are still subjects of discussion:—"Are we legally liable to suffer for our original depravity the penalty annexed to Adam's original sinful act?" and, "Are we personally guilty for the depravity of our nature as transmitted to us?" Numerous theologians have answered, and do answer, these questions in the affirmative, but I must answer both in the negative. If our depraved moral state be viewed ethically, and in comparison with the holiness of the Divine law, it may be pronounced sinful, as being in non-conformity to that law. But this transmitted sinfulness of nature forms no just ground for the charge of personal guilt for its existence as transmitted to us. Hereditary, personal depravity, there may be, but hereditary guilt there cannot be. The ambiguous use of the term guilt, to designate our relation to the Divine government because of inherited depravity, has darkened and perplexed this subject. The strict sense of the term guilt is liability to punishment for free personal wrong-

doing. But, unfortunately, it has been largely used in the theology of Christendom, to mean liability to legal punishment, and even liability to providential suffering, through the wrong-doing of others. But it makes no matter what mere word-juggling may be employed on the subject, one thing is clear, for inherited depravity there can be neither responsibility, nor guilt, nor liability to the punishment annexed to Adam's original sinful act. But—as if to bar out all further questioning—*consciousness* has frequently been appealed to in support of the charge of guilt for inherited depravity. The appeal to that court is useless. It has not jurisdiction in the case. Consciousness can only say guilty for what is the result of the known wrong use of our natural powers. But inherited depravity is not such result, therefore consciousness cannot pronounce guilty for it. Again, though it may be considered a moral state, hereditary depravity is also a congenital, and necessary state; therefore, consciousness can no more pronounce guilty for it, than it can pronounce guilty for a naturally sickly habit of body. It has also been contended that the intuitive judgment of conscience declares guilty, for our naturally depraved moral state. But, it may be replied, so much the worse for that intuitive judgment, if it does so. But it does not do so. Such a judgment will not stand the tests of intuitive truth—“self-evidence, universality, and necessity.” Will the declaration of guilt for unavoidable depravity stand the first test? Is it self-evident? On the contrary, I submit that self-evident moral axioms, and logical

deductions from them, on the subject of moral responsibility, stamp their effectual and legible veto on the verdict of guilt, and punishment, for an inherited depravity. That judgment contradicts the moral axiom that *moral freedom must underlie moral responsibility*. We never had freedom from inherited depravity, and therefore no responsibility, and no guilt for it. This will stand the test of intuitive truth.

But it is also submitted, that the doctrine of liability to suffer the legal penalty annexed to Adam's original sin, for inherited depravity of nature, destroys all justice in God's moral government of man. If the penalty annexed to Adam's sin was eternal punishment, and if for inherited depravity that punishment may be inflicted on the whole race, then the whole race may be doomed to suffer eternally for what not one individual of the race had any more power to avoid than he had to avoid his existence. Such a judicial procedure as that destroys all justice in the government which employs it. So far as we can judge of justice, we must decide that the charge of guilt, and liability to eternal punishment, for an inherited and necessary state, contradicts our first perception of justice. It is to be regretted that the calling such a judicial procedure justice, should not always have been left to stand as the peculiar glory of the old predestinarian den of realistic solidarity in Adam's guilt, and of the glorious justice of necessitated damnation.

But, furthermore, this doctrine involves another most appalling consequence. If there is personal

guilt chargeable against any person for *our* inherited depravity, it must be charged against God. The steps to this conclusion are few and plain. It is not our guilt, because we never had power to avoid it. It is not Adam's guilt, because, though guilty for his personal act, he did not constitute his own being, nor did he establish the naturalistic law by which his depravity of nature is transmitted to us. God constituted Adam with a nature which his sin would deprave, and ordained that his depraved nature should be transmitted to his posterity; therefore, for what is inherited through the natural law of transmission, the sustainer of the race through Adam is responsible; and, therefore, if guilt for our natural depravity exists at all, it lies against the Creator of Adam, and the sustainer of the race through Adam, depraved by his sin. This conclusion must be accepted, or the premises from which it legitimately results must be given up. It is of no avail in support of the doctrine of guilt for our original sin, to say that it is not the guilt of Adam's original sin imputed to us, but our own sin, because of the "solidarity of the race in sin." But it appears to me that this doctrine is also absurd. Sameness of moral state is not unity of personality. As the individuals of the race had no personal existence in Adam, they cannot be guilty for his act, though it may be euphemistically called "the act of humanity." The charge of guilt for such a fictitious crime indicates more the power of invention than the purpose of righteousness. Nor is it of any avail to charge us

with guilt because Adam acted as our "Federal Representative;" because, in any sense applicable to this argument, such a representative is simply a fiction. In truth, the charge of guilt for an act without personal existence, or of guilt for the act of a representative that we never elected, or of guilt for a state transmitted to us by a natural law, are all, in one sense, equally absurd, because in any, or in all, we have no moral control. The mind that can declare guilty for those, so-called, acts of humanity, or for that necessary moral state, may be capable of judgments still more surprising, but of none more absurd than that.

But still, on this point of guilt we are plied with the question:—"Are we not guilty for our moral state as well as for our moral act?" The terms of this question, as related to man's naturally depraved condition, are ambiguous, and in order to develop the fallacy wrapped up in them, I reply, Yes, and No. Yes, if the meaning is that we are guilty for continuance of that transmitted depraved state. And again I reply, Yes, if the phrase "moral state" refers to a state of necessary depravity, which may be superinduced by the persistent abuse of our free power. But I reply, No, if the phrase "moral state" refers to our moral state, as transmitted to us. And again I reply, No, we are not guilty for our natural "moral state," as we are for our "moral act;" because, from that moral state we had no freedom, but from our moral act we had freedom. In short, for the reign of sin in us we are guilty, for perpetuity in sin we are guilty, and for

our moral act we are guilty; but for a moral state which we never had power to avoid we are not guilty.

Dr. Pope—speaking from the Theological Chair of English Wesleyan Methodism—makes the following statement on the subject of *Original Sin*:—"Methodism accepts the Article of the English Church! Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is engendered naturally of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world; it deserveth God's wrath and damnation," etc. *

Now, I hesitate before accepting that doctrine as the standard doctrine of Methodism. Nor was I previously aware that the English Wesleyan Methodist Church "accepted" the whole Anglican Article on the subject of "Original Sin." But if she accepts as her standard teaching the doctrine that, for our inherited corruption from Adam "every man deserves God's wrath and damnation," I doubt whether she can claim Wesley's mature judgment for that doctrine. The deserving damnation for that depravity was rejected by Wesley when he formulated the VIIIth Article of our Church. I accept that article as it came from Wesley's hand, but I do not accept the whole Anglican Article on the subject of "Original Sin," either as *our* Church stand-

* *Compendium of Theology*, p. 243.

ard, or as being in accordance with the Bible standard. It is quite clear that the Anglican Article teaches the universal *desert* of damnation, for inherited depravity from Adam. Had Wesley believed that doctrine when he formulated our Article on Original Sin, he would not have deliberately rejected it from the Article. Wesley seems to have done with the Anglican Article on "Original Sin," what he did with the whole thirty-nine Articles—he gathered the good into sound vessels and cast the bad away. It is of no avail in support of the acceptance of the Anglican Article to say that it is our sinful nature which is meant when it is said that it deserves God's wrath and damnation; and that the *nature* must be conceived of as abstracted from the *person*. As a subject of thought, we can conceive the nature as abstracted from the person; but with respect to a moral being, considered as the responsible subject of moral government, no such abstraction of nature from person is allowable. Could the nature be deserving of any thing abstracted from the person? A person, and only a person, can be deserving of either reward or punishment. But if the person is not endangered, we cannot feel very keenly on the subject. Yet I do feel that such attempted hair-splitting is very like trifling with such a subject as desert of God's wrath and damnation. And most certainly that abstracted nature is not the meaning of the Anglican Article on Original Sin. It says plainly that for inherited corruption from Adam, "*every person* born into the world deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

This *personal desert* of damnation for *that* depravity Wesley rejected. So do I. And so ought every man who believes in God's justice, and in man's moral intelligence.

It is really surprising—and were it not for the solemnity of the subject it would be amusing—to hear the absurd platitudes from the lofty altitudes, which have been delivered to us by sapient theologues on the subjects of just penalty for, and on the mode of deliverance from, the just penalty of original sin. We are told by some that eternal damnation is its just and legal desert, while they admit that man never could have avoided it. The absurdity and injustice involved in such a decision as that, render it incapable of rational belief by an intelligent mind, or a feeling heart. In embracing such a mental monster the heart is perverted, and the intellect pushed backwards. And we are told by others that, though eternal damnation is the just and legal desert of original sin, yet no one will ever suffer that penalty for it, because Jesus Christ died to save the race from it. This is a decided relief to the feelings of the benevolent heart, but it is quite unsatisfactory to the rational decisions of the intellect. On the strict principle of justice, we are bound to deny that any one was ever liable to eternal suffering for inherited depravity. Such a doom for such a state, could not be inflicted by a just God. And if such a liability never existed, and if such a doom would not be just, how can it be said with propriety that Jesus Christ died to save us from it? Did He die

to save us from that to which we were never liable? Or did He die to save us from God's injustice? Most certainly not. It is not the intuitive moral judgment, nor a legitimate logical procedure, that can lead the human mind to accept such absurdities, but a confused and confounding theological culture. If any human being can believe that it is just to doom any one to eternal suffering for what he never had power to avoid, there is no use in reasoning with that man on moral subjects, because the subjective mental ground-work on which all such reasoning must be based, is wanting in that mind. And then, on the other hand, how absurd the procedure which unjustly represents man as liable to eternal damnation for original depravity, and then calls in Christ's merit to save him from the injustice! Such mental conceptions seem to resemble the, so called, reprobates of "Reformed Theology"—damned before they were born. These contradictions cannot be avoided in the structure of Systematic Theology, until the baseless assumptions of guilt, and liability to eternal punishment for an unavoidable state, are swept down to the region of moles and bats by the purifying breezes of heaven.

One argument in support of the charge of guilt, and the infliction of legal punishment by God without personal demerit in the being punished, may be considered here. The argument has been considered a real poser for its opponents, and a theodicy for its abettors. It is this: "None but the guilty can suffer under the government of God, even infants do suffer

under that government, therefore they must suffer because of the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to them." To this I reply, it is not true that none but the guilty can suffer under the government of God. Whatever may be our philosophy of suffering under the Divine government, the fact that the innocent do suffer under it, is self-evident; and therefore, all conclusions based on the assumption that none but the guilty can suffer under the government of God, crumbles into ruin. And with respect to the imputation of Adam's guilt to the child, it is absurd, because guilt cannot be separated from demerit in the person who committed the sin. Nor can legal punishment be justly inflicted on any human person who did not commit the sin deserving it. And as respects the theodicy contained in the imputation of Adam's personal guilt to the infant, it is a total failure with respect to a vindication of the Divine justice in the infant's sufferings. Some good souls seem horrified at the thought of the innocent suffering at all under the Divine government, but they seem to become pacified by God imputing the guilt of Adam's sin to an infant, in order that thereby God's justice may be vindicated in dooming the personally innocent infant to eternal torment. Now, when we are called on to assent to such a profound theodicy, and to admire such poetic justice as are manifested in such a judicial procedure as that, perhaps the best thing we can do in the case is to beg the author's pardon, and request him to take that theodicy, with our compliments, to the Sphinx. Verily, that

defence of the Divine justice seems like a miserable specimen of human casuistry. But such are the contemptible shifts to which false postulates drive their honest devotees. Until these pseudo assumptions are discarded, the throne of God will appear to human intellect not only tinged with mystery, but bristling with injustice.

The true relation of God to Adam, and to the human race, I conceive to be this: God constituted Adam with a nature which his sin would deprave; and God ordained that Adam's sinful nature should be transmitted from him to all his offspring; and God ordained means for the final well-being of all, which shall fully vindicate His righteous administration at the great day of final account. What those means are will appear sufficiently evident if we carefully examine

THE ADMINISTRATION OF GRACE.

I do not here contemplate that administration of grace manifested in the conscious justification and regeneration of the adult believer in Jesus Christ, and the impartation of which is conditioned on the trust of the recipient in the atonement of Christ. The term grace is here restricted to that universal and unconditional favour to man through the atonement of Jesus Christ, which, under the administration of God, opens the way of salvation to all who do not persistently reject its benefits. The impartation, of such grace, and the continuance of a depraved race, was God's eternal purpose. It may be safely assumed that God can

neither be harassed with doubt, nor disconcerted by contingencies. God's creation of man did not take place without the knowledge of what the creature would do, or could do; nor without the knowledge of what God himself would do. God knew before the creation of man not only the possibility, but the actuality of Adam's sin; and also, its consequences to the race through Adam's depraved nature. The decision to continue a naturally depraved race did not exist in the Divine mind independent of, or separate from, the decision to restore free power to man—for good—through the atonement of Jesus Christ. These decisions existed together in the Divine mind before human depravity became a fact, or grace a Revelation. With the bestowment of such universal grace on man in view, the continuance of a depraved race is morally possible; but without it, we cannot see the moral possibility of the existence of a depraved race under the righteous moral government of God. Rational thought leads to the conclusion that God's moral providence concerning man was, from the first, pitched on the key-note of grace. And without grace, fallen man cannot be the responsible subject of just moral government. Justice renders to all, and demands from all, only what is due. There may be a mercy which goes beyond this—though it must be consistent with it—but short of this, justice is not. Would it be consistent with that justice to continue a race of naturally depraved beings, without any means being afforded them whereby they might overcome sin, and escape

everlasting woe? Such a procedure is inconsistent with Biblical representations of Divine justice; nor is it consistent with human ideas of justice. Without the bestowment of gracious power to moral good, naturally depraved man cannot either overcome sin, or escape suffering. To leave man under such an everlasting curse, without ever having had the power to avoid it, is not a mere mystery which transcends our power of mental comprehension, but a contradiction of all that we can ever know about justice in this world. If man is naturally a depraved being, and yet is held as a responsible being, I conclude that universal depravity must be met by universal grace. Jesus Christ is God's theodicy to the moral universe in His government over man. The creation of man, the continuance of the race, and the vast scheme of providence over this world, are all based upon that plan of God which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. As the radii of a circle all meet in the centre, so creation, providence, and grace, centre in Christ, the incarnate and redeeming God. And as the sun enlightens all in the solar system, so spiritual light is shed upon all men, through the grace of that Eternal Word who "enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

We have frequently read from the pages of Christian writers, and heard from Christian pulpits, the doctrine that God, without any impeachment of His justice, might have left the whole human race under the reign of unavoidable sin, and endless woe, without any redeeming grace. But I cannot help thinking

that such a governmental procedure as that would be more accordant with the throne of Nero, than with the Throne of Jehovah. Without doubt, we occupy a rational and Scriptural position, in maintaining that the existence of a race of moral beings congenitally depraved, without grace, is not morally possible under the righteous moral government of God. And though there may be found in Methodist writers a stray word inconsistent with this position, yet the standard writers of Methodism are almost unanimous in occupying this ground, when attempting to justify the ways of God with men. Perhaps a few of their testimonies may not be deemed irrelevant here. Speaking of the manner in which the grace of Christ to man meets the principle of theodicy, the

Rev. John Wesley says :—" It is exceedingly strange that hardly anything has been written, or, at least, published, on this subject ; nay, that it has been so little weighed or understood by the generality of Christians ; especially considering that it is not a matter of idle curiosity, but a truth of the greatest importance ; it being impossible, on any other principle,

‘ To assert a gracious Providence,
And justify the ways of God with men.’ ” *

Rev. John Fletcher says :—" As we sinned only *seminally* in Adam, if God had not intended our redemption, His goodness would have engaged Him to destroy us *seminally* by crushing the capital offender

* *Wesley's Sermons*, vol. 2, p. 43.

who contained us all. . . . But we see His justice and goodness shine with equal radiance when He spares the guilty Adam to propagate the fallen race, that they may share the blessings of a better covenant." *

Rev. Dr. A. Clarke says :—" Had not God provided a Redeemer, he, no doubt, would have terminated the whole story by cutting off the original transgressors ; for it would have been unjust to permit them to propagate their like in such circumstances, that their offspring must be *unavoidably* and eternally wretched." †

Rev. R. Watson says :—" Had no method of forgiveness and restoration been established with respect to human offenders, the penalty of the law must have been forthwith executed upon them ; . . . and with and in them the human race must have utterly perished." ‡

Rev. Dr. Pope says :—" The mediatorial government of the world from the beginning, has been a fruit and proof of redemption. No race, unredeemed and without hope of redemption, could in the universe of a holy God continue to propagate its generations." §

Rev. Dr. Whedon says :—" Without the Redeemer no equitable system of probation for fallen man is a possibility. . . . Without Christ the foundations of our present moral system cannot be laid." ||

* *Checks to Antinomianism*, vol. 1, pp. 146, 147.

† *Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 74.

‡ *Theological Institutes*, vol. 2, p. 56.

§ *Compendium of Christian Theology*, p. 403.

|| *Whedon on the Will*, pp. 341-343.

Rev. Dr. Raymond says:—"The only conception admissible in the case is that, but for redemption, the race would have become extinct in the persons of our first parents." *

Thus we have the consecutive and uniform teaching of standard Methodist writers in support of the position that the existence of a naturally depraved race, without the provision of redeeming grace, is not morally possible under the righteous moral government of God. And I think they are entirely correct in that teaching. But if they are correct, what becomes of the doctrine of liability to eternal punishment for inherited depravity from the first Adam, seeing that only for the grace of the second Adam the depraved race could have had no existence? Surely, if it is true that nothing produces nothing, it is also true that nothing is liable to nothing.

Should it be said that the ground of moral government herein advocated, "is only mere hypothesis, and not based on positive Revelation," I reply, that the impartation of universal grace to man is not *mere* hypothesis, but a truth of Revelation, and the non-existence of the race without that grace, is a legitimate inference from the moral character of God as manifested to us in Revelation. Thus we see that the continuance of the race, through universal grace, is supported by the facts, or truths of Revelation, and by the logical inferences deducible from them. With this just and gracious economy in view, man was created,

* *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 309.

and the depraved race continued. Its gracious bestowment and provisions, furnish the necessary conditions of a just moral government over a race naturally depraved. The combined anthropology and soteriology of St. Augustine affords no just moral basis for the government of a race congenitally depraved. It professes to save some of the race by an irresistible force, called free grace; while it leaves others without help or hope, under the everlasting dominion of necessitated sin and damnation, for what they never had power to avoid. It is very much to be regretted that a scheme so parsimonious with respect to salvation, but so liberal with respect to damnation, should ever have been charged to the God and Christ of the Bible. But the combined anthropology and soteriology of St. Paul, lays the basis for a just moral government over the fallen race, by the bestowment of free power to man, and gracious provision for the final well-being of all through the Saviour's propitiation for the sins of the whole world. This general grace is God's pyramid of truth, standing erect in the vast solitude of time, which can never be moved from its foundation on the Rock of Ages, and around its summit the light of eternity must play.

The King of Terrors is said to love a shining mark. But it may be said with equal pertinence that he loves a youthful prey. Half the human race is said to die in infancy. All these never were probationers. The decision of many Christian theologians on these dead children would be a matter of curiosity, only for its

sadness. By some, they have been sent to a limbo milder than hell, but still outside of heaven. By others, they have been consigned to annihilation, without hope of resurrection. And by others, they have been doomed to an eternal hell of torment, if not among the elect. But over those hills of darkness light is breaking, calm and clear. Even the upholders of creeds which restrict the benefits of Christ's atonement to the elect number of the human race, by the eternal decree of God, have ventured to hope that all dying in infancy are saved. I do not see how that hope can be rationally entertained by those who maintain such a decree; because, all the children who die could only be saved by being included in the elect number; and I do not see how any one can rationally hope that all dying in infancy are included in that elect number. But still that hope makes the theological outlook more hopeful. If, during the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, He corrected the error of His disciples by the example of a living child, so, after the elapse of eighteen Christian centuries, He may, by the instrumentality of a dead child, both shake our false creeds, and "enlarge our scanty thought to reach the wonders He has wrought." Does not this hope of salvation for all dying in infancy indicate a departure from the heretofore historical theology of Calvinism on the subject? Most certainly; for that has largely been for infant damnation. Even the theological world moves—let us hope upwards. Nor must we fail to note here that other non-probationers, as well as chil-

dren, are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ without passing through a probation, during which their salvation is conditioned on free volitional action. Our ignorance of the mode of the administration of the saving grace in these cases, cannot make void the fact that the atonement in Christ brings salvation to all men; nor should it eclipse our faith that God will impart the saving benefits of the atonement to all who do not wilfully reject them.

And with respect to all probationers of the race, that grace is given them, unconditionally, which is necessary to restore that moral balance towards holiness, which has been destroyed by original depravity. I do not mean that original sin has destroyed any constituent faculty of human nature. Original sin is only an accident, as distinguished from an essential constituent of the human constitution. But original sin has so deranged the action of the faculties of the soul in reference to moral good that fallen man cannot move towards holiness, volitionally, without the aid of grace. It is sheer sophistry to say of a totally depraved man, when totally deprived of grace, "He can be good if he will;" because the fact is, he cannot *will* towards holiness, without the aid of grace. But under the gracious administration of God, that free power is given to all, unconditionally, which is necessary to restore the free mental balance towards holiness, and thus place them upon that moral level of freedom which is a necessary condition of their being placed on a responsible moral probation. As well might we consider the brute im-

pelled by animal instincts, or substances in the crucible of the chemist, to be on moral probation, as a totally depraved man without the aid of grace to be on moral probation. But, with graciously restored free power, we are placed at the helm on life's perilous voyage, and in spite of storms and false lights on the shore, we can gain the port of safety.

Without some power for good acting on man, we cannot account for the facts of human history, nor square them with the statements of Scripture concerning the condition of our fallen humanity. Most certainly, the Bible teaches the total moral helplessness of the merely natural man to moral good. But the whole history of man, viewed as inside or outside the lines of external Revelation, does not present one unrelieved mass of seething depravity. To account for the apparent element of good in man, some ascribe it to an universal natural ability to good in fallen man, independent of all grace. Dr. Tulloch, in a late work, entitled "*The Christian Doctrine of Sin*," says: "We look within, and we know that whatever may be our connection with a given order of events which hold us in their dependence, we are free to act—that if we sin daily, yet we can help sinning—that even when temptation is at its strongest we can turn away from it, and choose that which is right and good. Nay, we know that the right and good form the law of our being, to which we are truly bound; and not the wrong and the evil which yet so often binds us. There is that in us which is deeper than all sinful habit, and which

no force of original sin can overcome if only we give it free play." *

This doctrine may be called by some *broad-churchism*, but I think it is *mis-called* "*The Christian Doctrine of Sin.*" Freedom to the right and from the wrong is freely admitted. But not by a naturalistic power inherited in fallen humanity, independent of Divine grace; but by grace given to all men, through Him who is at once the life and light of men. Let us take a glance at this "natural ability" philosophy of moral good in man. If there is inherent in fallen man naturally, a power to right and from wrong "greater than all sinful habit;" then it legitimately follows that man can never pass beyond the possibility of restoration to holiness, except by the annihilation of his natural powers. Again, if fallen man possesses, naturally, a power to good and from evil, which "no force of original sin can overcome," then it legitimately follows that original sin can only be a partial weakening of man's power, not a total helplessness to moral good, without the aid of grace. And furthermore, this doctrine of natural ability to good, independent of grace, departs from the Christian *supernaturalist*, and sides with the mere naturalist in religion. But it may be seriously doubted whether the Augustinian theologian will succeed in rejuvenating his own shattered constitution, or in shedding any light on the darkness of man's moral history, by transmigrating into the body of the equally sickly Pelagian

* *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, p. 197.

philosopher. It is only by a graciously given power for moral good acting on fallen humanity, that the fact of any good in human history can be squared with Biblical statements concerning the totally depraved condition of fallen man; and that all good in human history receives its rational explanation. The bestowment of universal grace sets aside *mere* naturalism as a useless hypothesis in theodicy, and Scripture statements concerning the total moral helplessness of man to moral good by original depravity, convicts it of falsehood. The truth is, without universal grace man's moral history is enclosed in tunnel darkness; but with it, the tunnel flames with light from above.

As God's government of man does not end with man's removal from this world, we must take a step onward. The judgment is now set. Now it is only by the bestowment of universal grace that we see a moral basis laid, for the approval of the doom inflicted on the finally persistent sinner by the Judge of all, on the last judgment-day. Suppose the sentence upon any man to be, "Depart, ye cursed, into the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels." Now, suppose that the man so doomed could truthfully say, "I was born in sin, and never had any power to avoid the sin for which I am condemned, therefore my doom is unjust." Would not the conscience of the moral universe decide for the condemned man? Certainly it would. And it is just because he had sufficient grace given to him, and that he will be judged not according to that which he had not, but according to that which he knows

he had, that the condemned himself will feel that just and true are the ways of the Lord. And this will be the judgment of all consciences on that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to Paul's Gospel. But neither the conscience of approved nor condemned could possibly feel the justice of the sentence, if the condemned never had power to avoid the sin for which he is condemned. And if he was naturally depraved, and never had sufficient grace given him to overcome sin, he could not have avoided the sin. In the government of a naturally depraved race, the withholding all grace renders all condemnation for sin unjust. But the Judge of all the earth will do right. He will be just when He judges. And we can see even now that, like colours in the rainbow, justice and grace are blended in his rule over man.

But against this plan of universal justice, by the bestowment of free power on man through universal grace, in the moral government of man; objections have been urged, which, though often refuted, are still repeated, and therefore, demand continued refutation. First, it is said that "as this free power is demanded as a justice, it cannot consist with a system of grace." This plausible sophism has often been refuted, but as it is still repeated, I present once more the most concise refutation of it that has lately come under my notice, in the language of its author:—"Of an entire system a single part may be, as viewed in different aspects, both a justice and a grace. It may be a justice, because, if the other parts of the gracious system are

brought into existence, that part too must exist *in order to the completeness of the system*. Unless that part be supplied, the system is defective, perhaps *graceless*, or even *cruel*. But supply that part, and not only is the whole system *gracious*, but that part itself is pre-eminently *gracious*. The entire process of restoring Lazarus to life, and to the enjoyment of his friends, was a miracle of mercy. Christ was not bound to perform it. But to have granted him conscious life without the power of locomotion, fastening him for ever, consciously alive, in the tomb, would have been the height of cruelty. Was the additional grant of locomotion a debt? As a completion of the miracle of mercy, we answer, it was. The Saviour could not benevolently perform a part without performing the whole. But performing the whole, not only was the whole process, but every part of the whole process, benevolence and grace. So in the system of God, were He to bring the whole race into existence under the law of natural descent from a depraved parent, and under the impending curse of the Divine law, He would be obligated by His own righteousness to furnish the redemptive part. The system, as a righteous system, would be incomplete, graceless, and cruel, without the compliment of atonement. Furnish that part, and not only is *the whole gracious, but that particular part is pre-eminently gracious.*" * Thus we see that there is a harmonious blending of justice and grace in God's government of man. Grace is not ex-

* *Methodist Quarterly Review*, 1861, p. 665.—Dr. Whedon.

clusive of justice in the Divine mind, but exclusive of moral merit in man.

Again, it has been urged that "it is no goodness to bestow free power on man, by grace, in order to probation." But if it is no goodness to confer free power by grace, it must be equally destitute of goodness to confer free power in creation, in order to probation. Therefore, the principle that denies goodness in bestowing free power to man, by grace, in order to probation, must also deny that it is any goodness to confer free power in creation, or in any way upon any creature, in order to probation. This excludes goodness from the whole intelligent creation, as all were created free. That argument resembles one of those overloaded, or ill-constructed guns, which, in being fired off, does more execution at the breech than at the muzzle. It seems there are some minds who can see no goodness in the creation of any being that is not placed under the law of necessary force. But we well know that the God of providence and grace has based the probation of some moral beings on free power given in creation, and the probation of others on free power imparted by grace; and in doing both He is just and good.

I conclude that sufficient has been said to show that hereditary depravity is the mental difficulty of man's moral history, and that the impartation of universal grace to man, through Jesus Christ, is its only solution. If the light of that grace does not remove every cloud from between our intellectual eye and the ways of

God with men now, it does point our eye to the bow of hope which has always spanned this stormy world; and it enables us to see that every revolution of the wheels of providence, assures us that we approach the revelations of that final day when—"the righteous saved, the wicked damned, God's eternal government shall be approved." And had it not been misrepresented by a large part of the theology of Christendom in the past, the Divine government of the world would be better understood and more widely approved of to-day than it is. One of the darkest chapters in the history of human thought, is that which represents the all-righteous God as an Almighty Moloch, dooming from eternity the intelligent creatures of His creative hand to endless suffering, for what they never had power to avoid, "for the praise of His glorious justice." One feels like asking, How did it come that so large a part of the Christian Church was afflicted with such a paralysis of intellect, and such an atrophy of conscience, as are manifested in such misrepresentations of God's governmental relation to man? As the misrepresentation is almost as pernicious as the denial of God, it may be confidently expected that when Church creeds and, so-called, philosophical theologies cease to publish libels on God's government of man, there will be fewer rebel voices raised in His kingdom.

To us who have the common salvation pressed on our acceptance through life, the deadly, damning sin is rejection of the life which it offers through faith in

the atonement made for all by Jesus Christ. Man can lay hold on eternal life, through grace; and he can, by sinning against grace, lay hold on eternal death. But he does either, in the full possession of free power to the contrary. If he holds on to sin to the end of this life, even the Revelation of grace holds out to him no hope of deliverance from it, beyond this life. His sin remains. Mere power could call a dead Lazarus from the grave,—

“But the deaf heart, the dumb by choice,
The laggard soul that will not wake,
The guilt that scorns to be forgiven,
These baffle even the spells of heaven.”

Damning sin freely chosen, saving grace freely rejected, results in self-superinduced subjection to sin; and that soul removed from all counteracting influences to good, becomes “a wandering star to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” But for that doom the sinner alone is to blame. And a bitter ingredient it must be in his cup of everlasting woe, that for his rejection of eternal life offered through the Saviour, he will be compelled by the law of his own conscience to feel a self-contempt that is bitterer to drink than gall. We may “pass on, nor venture to unmask that heart, and view the hell that’s there.” But from out all the providential darkness which surrounds us in this world, we may all be able to look up to the home of our Father above, and feel a well-grounded hope that one day we shall be in the full possession of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Even now, unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. Though the Christian may be able to see some things now only through a glass darkly ; though he is subject to unavoidable suffering now ; though he must wait until the future for the entire repairment of the impairment of his nature by original sin ; yet, he possesses now the anchor-hope of a compensation-day coming, when all perplexities will be unravelled, and every murmur hushed for ever. In a hope which outlasts the smoking cinders of a ruined world, he waits for introduction to that world, of which it is said, "*There shall be no night there.*" Standing with undimmed eye in the unclouded light of that eternal world, we shall then see all this world's

" Obscure mystic symbols glow
With pleasing light—that we may see and know
The glorious world, and all its wondrous scheme ;
Not as distorted in the mind below,
Nor in philosopher's, nor poet's dream,
But as it was, and is, high in the Mind Supreme."

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THE PRACTICAL TEST OF CHRISTIANITY.

A SERMON DELIVERED BEFORE THE THEOLOGICAL UNION OF
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, MAY 13TH, 1883.

BY THE

REV. HUGH JOHNSTON, M.A., B.D.

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SERMON.

THE PRACTICAL TEST OF CHRISTIANITY.

“The tree is known by its fruits.”—MATT. xii. 33.

OUR Lord here lays down the general principle, that nature lies back of effects: that what is good or evil in essence will be good or evil in results. The character of the tree is back of the fruit. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” Never. This principle is of universal application, and applies equally to individuals and to nations, to systems and to creeds. On this is based the scientific test. On it is based the Bible test of our holy religion. The gospel must be judged by its fruits. Christianity is a wide-spreading tree. Its roots are planted deep in the social soil, and intertwined with all that most profoundly affects the destinies of man. It is the most conspicuous, and widely-influential power on the earth: the mightiest factor in the world’s life, moulding the government and laws, the literature and morals of the best races of

men, and directing the currents of the world's progress. It claims authority over the conscience, over the affections, over the life of man, and carries with it promises and penalties that reach into the life beyond. It is of untold personal concern to each one of us, for in it are bound up the duties and the destiny of every soul that is feeling after some solid ground, some sure foothold on the floors of eternity. To uproot this tree would be to convulse the social world, and prove as fatal to the life of humanity as to tear a throbbing heart out of a living organism. And yet, this is the desperate work that infidelity is attempting. The adversaries of the Gospel are many, and strong. I do not believe that since the days of Celsus there has been a single infidel objection that has not been fairly met and answered; yet the old attacks are constantly renewed. Now, how shall we meet modern skepticism? What is the chief evidence of Christianity to-day? Shall we go back to the miracles and predictions of the past? It seems to me that the conclusive evidence is to be found in Christianity itself. Here is an impregnable defence. Christianity is a practical system: Let us apply this crucial standard of judgment, "the tree is known by its fruits," and we shall find that it challenges our confidence and gives ground for unshaken assurance.

I. APPLY THIS TEST TO THE GREAT BOOK OF CHRISTIANITY.

In history, a mere book is often a sufficient basis for faith. The truth of Xenophon's *Anabasis* is unquestioned, though not a monumental inscription marks

the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks. Not a trace of wall or palace is left of old Tyre; upon a more desolate shore you never gazed; and yet we doubt not the story of her ancient greatness. Pliny tells of a cloud of ashes that descended from Vesuvius and buried Herculaneum and Pompeii. The story seemed incredible, for there was not a trace of the lost cities. Yet men of faith began to excavate, and found walls, and temples, and dead men's bones, all in accordance with the statements of the historian; and to-day tourists wander through those silent, rut-worn streets and roofless houses, and read the open volume of city life as it existed nearly two thousand years ago. Now, the documents of Christianity from which we ascertain its facts and its teachings are the Holy Scriptures. Here is the most wonderful volume in the whole circle of authorship—the Bible—to *Biblion*—*the Book*—as if there were no other book, as if it were the one Book of the world. This Book claims to be of Divine origin—the inspired Word of God. It is indeed a *wonderful Book*.

(a) *Wonderful in its age*—Older than the Vedas—older than the sacred books of the Chinese—older than the Greek classics—the oldest book in the world. Written in the venerable Hebrew and the beautiful Greek, both of which became dead languages when the record was completed, there the Revelation abides unaltered—petrified in languages of stone that can never be changed. The earliest book of Job was written more than six centuries before the Iliad of

Homer ; the Pentateuch is a thousand years older than Herodotus, the father of profane history ; the Psalms of David are five hundred years older than the Odes of Pindar ; while the completed revelations of Jesus Christ and His Apostles rank in age with the Latin Classics of Virgil and Cicero, Tacitus and Sallust. Made of paper, the most perishable of all materials, written upon rolls of parchment, it was copied with such unerring precision that the scribes could give the central letter of each book, and of the entire Scriptures ; they copied not only every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter, but, with scrupulous exactness, they measured every pen-stroke ; and the latest copy of the Hebrew Scriptures does not vary a single hair's-breadth in extent from the first that was received. Thus it has come to us across the waste of thirty centuries, while copies of it have been taken from tombs that have been sealed up for fifteen centuries.

(b) *Wonderful in its sublimity* ; for the brilliant passages of the sages and poets of Greece and Rome seem like the compositions of school-boys compared with the inimitable grandeur of Moses, the gorgeous imagery of Isaiah, the lyric poetry of David, the lofty reasonings of St. Paul, or the dazzling metaphors of John. From its glowing pages the master-thinkers of the world have drawn their highest inspiration, and the most gifted poets have struggled to set its grand conceptions in song, the divinest painters and sculptors to embody them in colour and

marble, and the great musical geniuses to swell them in oratorios.

(c) *Wonderful in the range of its subjects*; sweeping back to the world's dawn, and on to its day of doom. It is called pre-eminently the Book of God, because the great theme of it is that one, living, true God, whom no man hath seen or can see, but "in whom we live, and move, and have our being." How sublime its conceptions of Deity in comparison with any forms of mythology, ancient or modern, Egyptian or Hindu, Greek or Roman, where the gods, many, are such personifications of wickedness that the very worship of such beings corrupts and degrades men. It furnishes the only rational account of the creation of the world and the origin of man. Compare the simple and significant statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," with the childish fancies of the most civilized nations of antiquity concerning Chaos, and Erebus, and the starry Ouranos, or with the more recent scientific speculations about "molecules" and "atoms," "correlation of forces," "molecular machinery, worked by molecular force," "differentiation," "potentiated sky-mist," "highly differentiated life-stuff," "evolution," "natural selection," "spontaneous generation," and other phrases, whose mysteries are past finding out. What does star-eyed science tell of the origin and the destiny of man? The genealogy of the Bible ends with, "which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God. The genealogy of the High Priests of Nature ends with, "which was the son of a

hybrid, which was the son of a demoralized and tailless monkey, which was the son of a fish, which was the son of a frog, which was the son of a polawog, which was the son of an oyster, which was the son of a jelly-fish, which was the son of protoplasm, which was the son of bioplasm, which was the son of nothing." Now, I do not wish to undervalue science or philosophic inquiry; but how weak is atheistic evolution to explain the mystery of a universe, self-made, without a God, by the side of the true Genesis of the Bible, which presents the world of life, "fresh-teeming from the hand of God," whose Infinite Intelligence directs and superintends all things; for He "binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades, brings forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guides Arcturus with his suns." And as to human destiny, it only hath brought "life and immortality to light." Six thousand years of human existence have rolled away, and generations have gone down in ceaseless procession to the grave, from which has come no voice or murmur to tell "whether they sleep with the brutes or wake with the angels." The living have gone with their broken hearts, and hung over the remorseless tomb with a speechless agony, waiting, with heads bowed, to hear a whisper from that deep abyssmal darkness; or, in the hush of night, they have looked up to the stars, and cried to the all-merciful Father and to the spirits above, for some ray of light or sound of the hushed voice. But no prayer of broken hearts, no cry of desolated homes, no wails and sobs that have gone surging up to the

heavens, have ever awakened a response from our darlings, or called back a messenger from the dead. Not one, not even a father asks,—

“ Who is it that cries after us
Below there, in the dark ?”

Sit down with the philosophers and ponder the subject; search among all the other religions of the world, and you will find nothing but husks, and they will leave you desolate with an utter desolation. Only one voice speaks out of the silence and darkness, and with more than heavenly sweetness it says: “ I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Wonderful, this book. It alone has truths that are vital to the race—truths for which the world has sighed and longed and wept—truths that go down to the everlasting granite of human existence.

(d) *Wonderful in its organic unity and completeness*: A library in itself, written by more than thirty different persons—enthroned monarchs and humble fishermen—sagacious statesmen and unskilled peasants—at vast intervals of space and time, forty centuries contributing their best things to it, these sixty-six books when brought together are found to constitute one book bridging over the entire course of human history from the creation to the final judgment; a harmony of design pervading all and running like a thread of gold through types and ceremonies, precepts

and promises, the same doctrinal truths taught, and all gathering around one majestic character and one sublime purpose—the purpose of Redemption in Christ Jesus. The magnificent cathedral at Strasburg is full of deformities because the architect died before the work was completed, and there was no one who could fully understand the plan which he had in his mind. But here are men of every shade of intellect and variety of endowment writing through the long period of fifteen centuries, these many and diverse books all linked together and making one work as absolutely perfect as though it were a grand epic by one writer; a unity which proves its author to be one and Divine, for no mind other than the mind of God could act over so vast a lapse of time and be 1,500 years in working out a common plan.

(e) *Wonderful in its moral teaching.* Inculcating every duty that we owe to ourselves, to our fellow-men, and to God. It is the great text-book of morals; the ultimate standard of appeal in human conduct, disclosing to us the will and purpose of a Being with whose will and purpose we are to be concerned forever and forever; telling the story of sin and of salvation so plainly that the Sunday-school children of our infant classes can understand them, with mysteries so profound that the student-angels as they bend over them may droop their wings wearily and ask God to give them rest, and time, and strength. It is indeed the Book of books, and claims to be God's written word. It has never shunned the test of logical inquiry,

and has defied the sharpest criticism of all the centuries; for from Genesis to Revelation the Bible has been in the battle, and all the while its armor has grown brighter, its sword keener, and its arm stronger. Have its wonder-laden narratives ever been falsified by authentic history? Never. Have its teachings ever been found in antagonism to true science? Never. Has the evidence of miracles ever been overthrown? Never. Have the prophecies ever been falsified by events? Never. Visit Egypt, now the basest of kingdoms, Philistia, Edom and Babylon in heaps, and Nineveh lying empty and waste, and the voices sounding to-day among their ruins tell us that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man. Tread the ancient land of Palestine, behold Jerusalem left desolate, Mount Zion literally a ploughed field, and wheat growing on the ground where stood the stately palaces of David and of Solomon. See brought to our very door prophecy fulfilled; for when the skeptical Frederick the Great demanded from his Chaplain in one word a reason for believing the Scriptures, he answered, "The Jews, your Majesty, the Jews." Behold this people, plundered and robbed, persecuted and scorned, a by-word and a hissing among the nations; yet for two thousand years preserving their nationality—a gulf stream flowing through mid-ocean never mingling its waters with the emerald walls that press on every side—the same people that received the law of Moses and that rejected and crucified our Lord. How is it that these old prophecies are fulfilled to the letter, that the Jews

should be scattered to the ends of the earth and yet be kept separate, while the other great empires march on in their predicted course? This book rests upon a rock of adamant. No discoveries in science have shaken its foundations; no facts of history have falsified its records; no changes in the modes of thought have superseded its instructions; and while the advancing tide of knowledge is sweeping away the false system of religion—while modern geography convicts the Koran as an ignorant imposture, and the microscope exposes the folly of the Shasters, and astronomy confutes the system of Confucius—the Bible retains its place and power, and with the growing light the truth of God shines brighter from the sacred page.

Now the question comes, who wrote this Book? Is it God's book or man's? Did bad men write it? Impossible; for "like produces like." "Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?" Bad men write a book which enjoins all duty, exalts all virtue, is filled with sanctifying power and loads with eternal infamy every "hidden thing of dishonesty!" Such a book bad men would not write if they could, and could not if they would. Then, they were good men who wrote it; and if good men wrote it, it is true. Good men are not forgers and deceivers. They would not be found perjured witnesses of Jesus Christ, and say of the most stupendous fraud, "Thus saith the Lord." If this Book is not the inspired truth of God then it is the grandest imposture the world has ever known, and its "Hear ye the word of the Lord" is but the lying

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invention of fraudulent, designing men. If it is a bad book, how is that bad men hate it and good men love it? I hold every skeptic to this position. "The tree is known by its fruits." If this is a bad book why is it not found among bad men? Why is it not found in all our drinking saloons and in all the dens of gamblers, thieves, and debauchees? If this is not a good book why have all evil powers leagued together to extirpate it from among men? Antiochus sought to destroy it, but the fidelity of the Jews frustrated his designs. Diocletian, in his bloody persecution, issued an imperial edict that all the Scriptures should be burnt; cruel superstition has tried to blot it out, and boasting infidelity to demolish it; but the Book has outlived all its enemies, and "abideth forever." This Bible preserved through all the ages is now printed in some three hundred languages or dialects. Thirty-five copies drop from the press each minute of every working day, and its total copies scattered broadcast over the earth are nearly two hundred millions. Men may hate it, resist it, but they cannot destroy it. Lord Hales has found scattered through the writings of the Christian Fathers, to the end of the third century alone, the whole of the New Testament with the exception of less than a dozen verses, and now it is so interfused into almost all the books on earth that if every Bible were annihilated it could be reproduced again from current literature with not a missing thought. To destroy the Bible you would have to destroy all the literature of civilization. The Sibylline

leaves are torn to pieces and scattered, but this Book is imperishable—its voice has gone out to all lands; it enters into all that we love and cherish; it reigns over human thought and feeling, and is influencing the destinies that await the remotest generations. This Revelation is divine. Escape the conviction you cannot. Think of a book standing in unapproachable greatness, lifting itself above the mightiest thought and intellect of every age, like the peak of Teneriffe, or like Sinai, the Mount of God, above the level plain; think of such a Book coming with falsehood to fill the world with honesty, coming with a conscious lie to teach consummate holiness, to inspire the affections, fill the soul with holy light, and hold the best hearts of the world through all the centuries. *You cannot.*

This Book has in it a self-evidencing power. You cannot read it frankly without feeling the Divine presence, and exclaiming, "Lo! God is here?" Who has not heard about John Newton, the blaspheming infidel, who one day was led to ask himself the question, "What if, after all, the Bible should be true?" He was induced to examine it, and came upon the passage which promises the Holy Spirit to them that ask for it. He applied the test and found it true. The Spirit was given. He was awakened and converted. The raging profligate became a true believer, a holy, happy, experimental witness of the truth, and having lived a saint for fifty-five years, and having written some of the sweetest hymns that we sing, he died in the triumphant assurance of ever-

lasting blessedness. Now am I addressing any who from association with unbelievers, or who from reading brilliant but skeptical periodicals have begun to lose faith in the old Book that has lain neglected on the parlour-table, or the bed-room stand? Let me ask, have you acted fairly toward a book which professes to be the Word of God? Have you examined honestly and candidly its claims? If not, pause; though you have travelled far on the road of unbelief—stop; read the Book—read it thoughtfully, with an open spirit, and the secrets of eternity will lighten upon your eyes; read it earnestly, honestly, and just as sure as there is a God you will hear His voice, and feel the pressure of His hand. You will feel that God is a reality—the soul a reality—the eternal future a reality—and though the truth on which you have stood may have seemed before a fragile and storm-driven thing at the mercy of the awful waves, you will realize that adamant is beneath your feet, and that the foundation standeth sure and immovable. When the wounded soldier lay dying in the hospital, and the tender mother, who had journeyed far, was denied the boon of seeing him lest the shock should prove fatal, the kind nurse who sat beside the sleeping boy with her hand upon his forehead, allowed the mother to slip quietly into her seat, and place her hand upon the fevered brow. No sooner did he feel that soft, familiar touch, than with eyes still closed, he murmured, “That’s my mother’s hand? O! mother, have you come?”

So shall you know the touch of the parent-hand of God, and become a happy witness to the divinity and power of His word. This is the one ultimate standard, the present, self-attesting evidence that this Book is supernatural. "The tree is known by its fruits."

II. APPLY THIS TEST TO THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST,
THE SUPREME HEAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

The one majestic presence which pervades the Book of Christianity, and runs through all its pages like the coloured thread which runs through every foot of cordage in the British Navy, is that Jesus of Nazareth, who has led, and is leading through all the ages, the moral progress of humanity. Of the four Gospels which tell the story of Jesus Christ, Matthew wrote for the Jews, the Gospel of the Messiah; Mark wrote for the Latins, the Gospel of Incidents; Luke for the Greeks, and John for the Church—the spiritual Gospel—the final picture of the Redeemer. Now, how do we know that the Gospels are true? They stand on their own authority. We can trace them back to a certain period as surely as we can trace back any writing of classic authors. "No single work of ancient Greek classical literature," says Tischendorf, "can command three such original witnesses as the Sinaitic, the Vatican and the Alexandrine manuscripts to the integrity and accuracy of the Gospel text? These Evangelists describe one who lived for thirty-three years a perfect life. They knew Him intimately; saw every act of His public life; heard His daily words;

witnessed the miracles which He wrought ; and they unfold His life as the Holy of Holies of Biography. Zeno preached a stoical virtue, but he was not personally moral ; nor was Plato, and even the highest and purest name of heathen antiquity grows pale and dull in the light of Christ's purity. Compare Socrates, the son of Sophroniskos, with Jesus, the Son of Mary. Compare Krishnu, the incarnation of Vishnu, the purest god of the Hindoos, with the incarnate Son of God, and he appears a lascivious and lustful monster. Of all the generations of men, He was the only one who ever dared to put the question, " Which of you convinceth me of sin ? " and the men of that age, by their silence, and of succeeding ages, by their speech, answer, " Not one." All unite with Rousseau in the testimony, " the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." Think of that lowly peasant, born in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, reared in a wretched village, no better then than it is to-day, the citizen of a despised nation, with no advantages of learning, no means of culture, pursuing His holy mission unstained and untainted, hated for His purity and goodness, at the age of thirty-three crucified and buried, but now alive for evermore, the crown and glory of the race, filling the world with His influence and power, all history past, present and to come, revolving around Him, His name set above every name, all mythologies, pagan Calendars, Yugas, Kalpas, Olympiads, City Foundings, Hegiras, having lost their meaning and become merged in Him whose appearing in Palestine has given the epochal date of

human chronology, so that every event takes its place before or after Christ—His name the only name in the universe that is strong enough to balance the ages upon itself.

Great is the miracle of His mighty works ; greater still the miracle of His words, but greatest of all the miracle of His life—the one model divine man before whom we instinctively bow and worship His perfectness. We cannot find one spot in the whiteness of the marble, or cast one sullyng breath on the purity of the mirror.

Is this record real or is it fiction—a mere myth—a Galilean idyl—a wreath of legends which the romance of the disciples festooned around the head of their Master ? Did these humble fishermen invent such a character ? Search all the romances, all the poems of the world, and then answer could these men, unpracticed writers, destitute of artistic skill, out of their imagination invent a character so pure, so lofty, so divine ? Impossible. Shakespeare stands colossal above all men that have portrayed character, and he is greater than his Hamlet. It would take a greater than Christ to forge a Christ, and if these Evangelists produced such a marvellous creation of fancy then they are greater than the Lord Jesus, and let us bow down and worship them. No. His life must have been real, or they, of all men, could not have portrayed it ; and, if real, then it is Divine. And this is the marvel of the record—they present Him as the

God-man. Here, too, is something beyond human conception, and the problem is to invent a Divine-man; to describe Him from birth to death in all His discourses and actions; perfectly human, perfectly Divine, yet so blending the Divine and the human that no flaw can be found. I ask could any mind, short of the Omniscient Spirit, paint such a picture?

This Divine Man comes to seek and to save the lost.
—He laid down His life for us, and His crucifixion is the overwhelming tragedy of time. “He was delivered for our offences,” and the cross stands in direct relation to the dark, appalling mystery of sin. His atonement is attested by actual experience, and it alone gives peace to the troubled heart; for in the absence of expiation man’s conscience forebodes punishment, and only when we place the death of Christ between us and our sins in all their multitude and mass of guilt and weight of punishment, and by faith lay hold of His redeeming sacrifice, does the conscience find peace and the heart exult in the joys of salvation. Only the blood of Christ can wash Lady Macbeth’s red right hand, and only this divine method of redemption can sustain in the supreme moment of life. When the good Bishop Butler drew nigh to death he trembled; but when one quoted “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,” a calm came over his spirit and he said, “I have read these words a thousand times, but I never felt their meaning as now.” When the saintly Bishop McIlvaine, of Ohio, lay dying in

Florence, far from home, with childlike faith he grasped the cross, saying,

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee ;”

and when they sang

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,”

“That,” said he, “is the whole of my theology ; let it be sung at my burial.” So our own Dr. Punshon lifted his eyes to the cross, and with his last breath saying, “I feel that Christ is a living reality,” was charioted away into His glorified presence.

Now apply the test to this greatest historical personality, “The tree is known by its fruits.” Is He what He claimed to be, the true God, or the greatest of impostors ? Do you say “He was only a good man ;” we answer, “Nay, for He deceiveth the people.” Is He a mere man ? How then has he such supremacy ? Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, have to live to establish and perpetuate their empire. Christ dies that He may make His truth mighty over all hearts ; and now, out of sight, out of hearing, crucified eighteen hundred and fifty years ago, yet He has more personal power than ever He had before He died, and millions upon millions love Him as no one else has ever been loved ; love Him more than a mother her child—more than a woman the idol of her heart ; love Him because He first loved them. Is He a mere myth ? Then explain

His power to create historical personalities second only to Himself—men that have made the centuries, like Paul and Peter, John, Augustine, Aquinas, Milton, Pascal, Luther, Calvin, Knox and Wesley. Let these personalities be dropped from history, and what would the world be? Why, the great men of this and every age, the benefactors of our race, have had their purpose and inspiration from Him. Do myths exert such influence? That influence, penetrating and pervasive as the atmosphere, has passed into the thought and spirit and blood of humanity, and the world cannot escape it. Our very infidels, who reject and deny Him, cannot escape Him; and standing up in borrowed plumes, with Christ's truth and Christ's thought and Christ's ideas, they proclaim their so-called religion of humanity. Of Him Goethe says, "He is the Divine man, the Holy One." Byron says, "If ever man was God or God man, Jesus Christ was both." And Tennyson sings:

"Thou seemest both human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood 'thou."

He Himself declares, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" "I and my Father are one;" "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Are these astonishing pretensions true or false? His self-assertion is boundless. "Follow me," "Believe in me," "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Yet He is the model of humility and says, "I am meek and lowly of heart." Is this conceit? Theodore Parker,

dying, stroked his own forehead and said, "Noble forehead, it ought to have done something for mankind." He thought himself the pioneer of a religion that should last a thousand years. The other day, when in Boston, I passed the church in which he preached his great discourses, now a rendezvous of the Bohemians and Ishmaelites of society. How comes it that Christ's ascendancy over men increases with the ages? When Lepaux, of the French Directory, was trying to impose his new religion of organized Rousseauism upon the nation, in his difficulty he sought the advice of Tallyrand, who said, "I am not surprised at the difficulty you experience. To succeed I recommend you to be crucified and to rise again on the third day." The race is shut up to the cross of Christ as its only hope. Before Him the whole world withdraws its pretensions. He says: "Judge me by the fruits. The works that I do they bear witness of me." The most credulous thing in the world is infidelity; and the man who can believe that Jesus Christ, the leader of humanity, is a mere myth, or mortal hero, has not the faith which can remove mountains, but the credulity that can swallow them.

III. APPLY THIS TEST TO INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE.

"The tree is known by its fruits." As a test of the essential truth of religion, the practical evidence must always be the strongest. The answer from a sun-lit soul,—the sense of pardoned sin, joy such as angels do not know, hope full of immortality, peace like a

heavenly benediction ; these give a confidence in Christianity which it is impossible to overthrow. The question which should determine the divinity and truth of religion is, what does it do for man ? Does it provide for his weakness, does it meet his needs, does it satisfy his spiritual nature ? If it does these perfectly, it must have been made for man, and it must be true, unless God is a deceiver, and the soul of man a lie. Sin is a great fact, and the pardon of sin is also a fact. The Gospel promises to a genuine repentance and hearty reliance on Christ the sense of pardon, peace of conscience, and the hope of heaven.

There are thousands upon thousands of the most cultured, most gifted and best of men, who can by personal experience bear testimony to the truth and reality of religion. If the religion of the Bible were false and could not fulfil its promises, it must speedily have perished from the earth, it could not have survived the experience of a single generation, for every one who put it to the test must have become a witness of its falsehood. But it has been submitted to the actual experience of two hundred generations, from the sainted Abel, who obtained the witness that he was righteous, down to the penitent who to-day has found peace and joy through believing. What witnesses in ages past ? Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, a persecuting Saul, a polluted Magdalen, a dying thief ! It saved Augustine, the young Roman, from his abominations and made him "a royal diadem in the hand of our God." It took Whitefield from the riot and ruin

of a village inn, and made him a flaming evangelist of the Lord. And Bunyan, of Gipsy blood, himself so wicked and blaspheming, that he was reproved by an abandoned woman, it transformed and lifted into the the Palace Beautiful, from which he looks out upon the sunny ranges of the Delectable Mountains, and points the whole world to the splendours of the Celestial City. The long line of witnesses come from the martyr fields, looking up like Stephen when the stones crashed in upon his brain, to see heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God—witnesses from the Coliseum of pagan Rome, where timid women surrendered themselves to the devouring wild beasts, when a hundred thousand voices roared, “The Christians to the lions! the Christians to the lions!”—witnesses from dungeons and caves and sick beds, where human suffering has been transfigured into glory. Oh, this testimony of the dying, how precious it is! how many pallid lips have uttered it, how frequently has it been gathered up and consecrated by tears, where faith in Christ triumphed over every fear; when the grave had no terrors, and our farewells no sadness for them; when, as we moistened the quivering lips, we felt that we were ministering to angels, we knew that the sinking heart was already rising for immortality, and that the closing eyes already saw heaven open, and all the hills of God radiant with everlasting light.

How are you going to meet this practical evidence? What are you going to do with the testimony of the wisest and best characters the world ever saw, who

declare that they owe everything to Christianity; that it has redeemed them from sin, crushed out selfishness, tamed the passions, filled their cravings, refined their sentiments, uplifted and inspired their hearts, taught them how to bear sorrow, and triumph over suffering and tears. At the battle of Gettysburg the cannons were placed amid fruit trees, in which singing birds had built their nests. In the wild rush of battle when the guns opened their red throats and shook the hills, the little songsters were in an utter bewilderment of terror. But the moment there came a lull in the thunder of the artillery, they would spring up into the trees where their nests were, and pour forth their songs—songs on the battle field. So amid the conflicts of life, there are Spirit-baptized hearts that carol like the birds of heaven, and sing, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

How comes it that these experimental blessings are thus realized? There are many before me who are ready to declare that God for Christ's sake has pardoned all their sins, and they are accepted in the Beloved. They came to Him weary and heavy laden, and have found rest. Even those who have not felt its transforming power are familiar with examples of wondrous and manifestly real changes wrought in the life and character of men. Not long ago there dropped into one of our services an aged, trem-

bling sinner. He was a drinking, blaspheming old man. He had once been respected by all who knew him, the owner of an estate, and the head of a happy household. But drink had ruined all; his children were scattered, his wife had died broken-hearted, and he was left almost alone, eking out a miserable existence by standing on the street corners selling a few papers or a little fruit. But the cross was lifted up before the dim eyes of that ruined, reckless, helpless, hopeless, homeless man; and the blood of Christ was able to cleanse his sins away, and he was washed and arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. The other day I heard him give his experience: his mouth was filled with grateful song, his heart with joy, as he spoke of pardon and peace, and the hope of heaven. He is walking from day to day in purity of life, living quite on the verge of heaven. What but the Gospel could redeem and save that outcast man and wretched inebriate? Did you ever hear of philosophy, or science, or culture, our best things short of Christianity, saving men from intemperance? Even infidels expect a man to be made better by becoming a Christian; and if he is immoral or inconsistent, they are the first to denounce him. I ask who does not believe that the world would be benefited beyond conception if all men should become sincere, enlightened, whole-hearted, perfect Christians? What would be the result if every one who heard the Gospel should obey its precepts and follow the example of the Lord Jesus? Why there would be no vice or

debauchery, no lying or theft—every parent would become gentle and loving, every child dutiful and respectful, every husband affectionate, and every wife prudent and good. It would fill our homes then with the aroma of heaven; it would empty our gaols and prisons, close up our criminal and police courts, and make the community so peaceful that the passing angels gazing upon the scene would exclaim, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men!" The Gospel is its own witness. It bears its own fruits. A religion which produces such effects cannot itself be a delusion. Will you not believe it? If you will question the testimony of believers and regard them as fools or hypocrites, then test it for yourself. In an humble, prayerful, penitent spirit come to God in the name of Jesus Christ, and, my soul for your soul, you will feel His power to save. Deep down in your consciousness the sense of guilt will be gone, and forgiving love will take its place. You will be restored to the Divine image and favour and fellowship. You will know the truth, and realize that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. I believe this. I preach it. I risk eternity upon it. There is nothing more true in all the story of time than that God does forgive sin and plant a heaven amid the affections of the soul. Nothing is more real and certain than our heart experiences; and if you will not accept the practical evidence of living Christians, if you will not judge Christianity by its best fruits, then we challenge you to accept the demonstration of Christianity, the demon-

stration of the spirit and of power. He that believeth hath the witness in himself,—the deep, restful, undisturbed repose of a soul that knows, that is thrilled with the inspiration of a celestial certainty.

IV. APPLY THIS TEST TO THE GENERAL RESULTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Gospel aim is two-fold—individual and universal; personal and social. The individual but leads up to the social, and the world is changed by changing its units. Men were found to become new men by becoming Christians; and thus from the very dawn of the Christian era there has been a defined and continuous society—the Church of Christ. It started weak and helpless,—without wealth or arms, patronage or power; no swords were for it, but many against it; yet, in the midst of fiery persecution and fierce conflict, it defied the lions and the flames, laughed emperors to scorn, and ere three centuries had rolled away, ascended the throne of the Cæsars with the royal purple on its shoulder and the royal diadem on its brow.

What a triumph was the early triumph of the Gospel over Greece, when she was the fountain of light to surrounding nations; and over Rome, when she was the supreme mistress of the world. The myriads of deities then worshipped—the Olympian Jove, Diana, Apollo, and Venus, Queen of Heaven,—were unable to confront those pierced hands, but fled into neglect and oblivion. The temples that shone with splendour

crumbled, and the idols fell. For a thousand years no human being has bowed the knee to Jupiter, chief deity of the Roman Empire, or hung up garments saved from shipwreck to Neptune, god of the sea. Doré's great picture—the "Triumph of Christianity"—which represents the heathen gods all fleeing before the genius of the new religion, while Jupiter, the father-deity, has wild terror in his face as his ponderous crown drops from his brow, is a true representation of idolatry utterly destroyed throughout Europe, for not an idol can be found from the Ural Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean.

"Our Babe, to show His Godhead true,
Can, in His swaddling bands, control the damnèd crew."

True, there came an eclipse of faith, and the Middle Ages were a night of darkness that yet casts its dread shadow across the nations. But the morning of the Reformation came with a dawn of bright beams and an onward swelling life, so that in the eighty-three years of the present century Christianity has gained more adherents than in all the previous centuries together; and at the present rate of progress, before the twentieth century is rung out, the world will be restored and sitting at the feet of Jesus. The Church is the most amazing moral force ever exhibited in the history of mankind, and is indeed "the kingdom and royal dwelling-place of Christ upon the earth."

The chief blessings of the Gospel are spiritual and divine—blessings which uplift the nature and fill the

soul with holy light and life. But we shall not here confine ourselves to its saving and sanctifying effects, but trace its indirect influences as seen in institutions that bless humanity and uplift the race. But Christianity has saved civilization, and been the crowning benefactor of the world. We would not over-estimate its effects, but it has worked in conjunction with other forces.

1. *Look at the influence of Christianity upon man's social condition.* What were the homes of Greece and Rome in the days of their highest refinement? Reeking with every abomination, with no sanctity in the marriage tie, and woman utterly debased. Athens had become the corruptress of the world, and its shrines of consummate beauty were sinks of utter infamy. Rome was a cesspool of impurity; and even Juvenal pictures her as a filthy sewer, into which flowed the dregs of every Syrian and Achaean stream. But Christianity threw a purifying element into the fetid mass. It raised woman from the abysses of shame, and enthroned her a queen amid the sanctities of a well-ordered home, until even the heathen exclaimed, "What women these Christians have!" And how it widened human charity! What deeds of cruelty and horror are recorded on the classic page! The wandering Ulysses, landing in Thrace, sacking a city and killing all the inhabitants, was but a type of the world at large, where plunder and murder were perpetual, and the words stranger and enemy were synonymous. Christianity sounded a condemnation of war, pro-

claiming it a revolt of brother against brother; and although the voice of Christ commanding peace has not been obeyed by all His followers, yet it has greatly lessened the barbarity of war, and on every modern battle-field there flies *the Red Cross of Geneva*, a flag which every nation is bound to respect—the symbol of that religion which, when universally received, shall give universal peace. Human life was everywhere held cheap. You have seen Gerome's picture of the Gladiatorial Fight: there is the crowded amphitheatre, in the arena the two combatants—the conqueror standing with uplifted sword over the wounded athlete, waiting the signal to slay or to spare—the Vestal Virgins voting for his death,—the Emperor, on whose nod a human life is hanging, carelessly eating a fig; while a hundred thousand are enjoying the spectacle of a man “butchered to make a Roman holiday.” Christianity, however, proclaimed human life a precious thing, and uttered a plea for the poor and weak. “Our charity dispenses more in the streets,” says Tertullian to the heathen, “than your religion in all the temples.” In our day it has covered the world with hospitals and asylums. Its spirit made Howard the prison reformer; Wilberforce the slave emancipator; Florence Nightingale the Crimean heroine; and Müller the orphan's friend.

2. *Trace its effects upon Liberty.*—The slave, when Christ came, was a “mere live chattel, an implement with a voice, a piece of property valued less than an ox.” Crassus, after the revolt of Sparticus, crucified

ten thousand slaves at one time ; and Trajan made the same number fight in the amphitheatre for the amusement of the people, and prolonged the massacre one hundred and twenty-three days. At the root of this "sum of all villanies" a blow was struck when our Lord said, "All ye are brethren;" and though He left the great world-despotisms untouched, yet He gave a moral force which did two things: First, it gave an inward spiritual liberty to the individual, whether master or slave; and next, it made the creation of new civil institutions only a question of time. The Gospel is the nurse of liberty. Not only does she strike off the shackles from every slave, but she is ever the herald of national liberty as well.

3. *See its effects upon Science.*—Some of the wayward children of science, falsely so-called, who forsake their own domain to assault Christianity, and would like to banish God from His universe and set up their own crude speculations in the stead of His eternal truth, talk about the conflict between science and revelation. There is no such conflict. There may be a conflict between divine truth and many of the theories of scientific dogmatists. But theory is one thing and scientific fact another. In the domain of science we walk not upon adamant, but over a pathway strewn with the wrecks of vain speculations now utterly abandoned. So, many of the plausible theories of the day that stand in imposing semblance of truth will end in utter emptiness, and be recalled only with derision; and men will wonder that they could ever

have been accepted as established truth. True science can tell us nothing but facts, and true science and true religion go hand in hand. Do you want the proof? Where but in Christian lands has science found its widest sphere, its greatest welcome, and its most splendid victories? Where do we find the brilliant discoveries of astronomy and geology, of chemistry and physiology? Where do we find the inventive genius that saddles the wind, bridles the lightning, harnesses steam, constructs the telephone and the phonograph, and makes the electric light an illuminating agent? Where? In Christian lands alone.

4. *Trace its effects upon Literature and Art.*—How Christianity enriches the human mind! She touches with her mystic wand the rude, unlettered mind, and out springs the divine angel of thought. Intellect is ennobled, and poetry, painting, music, architecture, literature and philosophy revive under her genial influence. The debt of mind to religion is like the debt of vegetation to the sun. Modern art is but the handmaid of religion. Greek mythology gives no more fascinating picture than that of the delicate and resplendent Aphrodite, goddess of beauty, who rose from the foam of the sea and hastened with rosy feet to the land, where grasses and flowers sprang up beneath her tread. What is that but a fable of Christian art giving form and expression to its ideals of beauty in the glorious marble of the *Piéta*, the divine sweetness of the Madonna, the Hallelujah Chorus of "The Messiah," or the immortal verse of Paradise Lost?

5. *See what it does for Commerce.*—Christianity creates a commerce wherever it goes, for it stimulates men to develop the resources of the earth, gives industry and peace, security to life and property, brands all dishonesty and meanness, and makes trade to be governed by honest, and unselfish principles. Other systems of religion never sustain great commerce. Where are the white-winged ships of Asia and of Africa? There is no reason, except in religion, why the sails of those great continents never dot our waters. In short, Christianity develops manhood, and gives the highest type of character. Bacon attributes Britain's greatness to her breed of men. What but the influences of Christianity have given that elevation of the race, that sturdy vigour which leads the world, and by which her little band of thirty thousand British in the heart of India holds up the banner of civilization against the mighty odds of two hundred millions.

The Christian religion is the moving and inspiring power in our modern civilization. It is the foster-parent of enterprise, wealth, and scientific culture; and behind the commercial, mental and moral development of nations is this mighty power of Christianity, which has given us all that is noblest and most majestic in our civilization.

Can a religion which brings forth such fruit, which has contributed so much to the advancement of the race, which rides on the highest wave of progress in science, and arts, and civilization, and purer morality, be a fraud and imposture? I know that the advocate

of the naturalistic theory will deny that Christianity has had anything to do with human development, and will ascribe everything even in advanced humanity to the cosmic forces of nature, and the influence of external circumstances. But this is no mere question of theories—it is a question of facts. Will any sane man deny that the world is different now from what it would have been if Christianity had not been revealed? Compare our condition with that of unchristian lands. “Look on this picture, and on that.” How is it that beyond the pale of Christendom all civilization is unprogressive? We know what are the affinities of our holy religion; how it combines with pure morality and chaste living, with learning, liberty, law; we know its effects on domestic peace, industry, and comfort. We know, too, the affinities of infidelity, for Emerson has truly said “that depravity is at the root of much of the free-thinking of the day.” Hume, the greatest name on the roll of unbelief, was a defender of adultery, taught that suicide and even murder was lawful; for he said that there was no more crime in turning a few ounces of blood from their natural channel than in diverting the courses of the Nile or Danube. We know the degradation of morals in England one hundred and fifty years ago, when the principles of infidelity were rife. We know the Reign of Terror, and of licentiousness, in France, when the Atheistic Council abolished Christianity as a religion, and decreed “There is no God, and death is an eternal sleep.” Society was disorganized; a very hell was kindled; the earth was

drunk with the blood of four millions of the best citizens of the land; until, in terror, Robespierre called the Council together, and they issued the decree, "The French nation believes in God and immortality."

Once again, we hold you to the practical tests. Can that religion be a fraud, a stupendous lie, which, aside from the spiritual and eternal interests of men, fits them for the enjoyment of civil liberty; stirs up invention and enterprise; aids and carries forward civilization; extends science and art; renovates the moral nature of man, and multiplies the comforts and blessings of humanity? Impossible. When the great discoverer of America entered the waters of the Oronoea, one of the seamen said he had found an island. "No," replied Columbus; "such a river cannot flow from an island, it must drain the waters of a continent." So this mighty river of Christianity which lights up the landscape with its brightness, and creates life wherever it flows, cannot have any human origin. Its springs are far off in the everlasting hills of God.

You who think that Christianity is on the wane, that religion is going to die out as a force in the world. let me ask—does progress lie in the direction of barbarism? Is the development downward? Shall the world go back? Shall civilization lose all it has gained? When something purer and higher in truth and morality than the Christian system can be found then we will abandon it, but not till then.

Says the author of *Ecce Homo*:—"Among all the

men of the ancient heathen world there were scarcely one or two to whom we might venture to apply the epithet "holy," while there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself. And if this be so has Christ failed? or can Christianity die?"

Voltaire thought he was living in the twilight of Christianity, but it was not the twilight—it was the dawn of a more glorious day. It is yet morning with Christianity. Skeptics talk of the little that has been accomplished by the Gospel in these eighteen centuries. True, it has not overspread the earth and exerted all its vivifying power upon the hearts of men. It advances slowly—by suasion, not by miracle. Give the Gospel time. The period demanded by geologists for the deposition of strata and the building of our world is millions of years; and to adorn its surface, to lift up its mountains, and spread out its plains, and prepare it for the residence of man, enormous periods more. And in their theory of the Descent of man, to evolve him through all his intermediate forms, and get him educated away from his "poor relations" of the gorilla tribe, what ages do the evolutionists require? Will you not give as much time for the Ascent of man into the full stature of the sons of God? Will you not give as much time to transform a world of sinners into saints as to trans-

form a world of ancestral apes into men? Christianity has only begun its workings in the world; and as it multiplies its victories and advances its banner, behold its triumphs in homes refined and purified, hospitals and churches rising, art and industry expanding, manners catching a kindlier courtesy, science glowing with richer hues, literature kindling with nobler purposes, oppressions ceasing, and liberty triumphant. And as it widens over the world, from continent to island, from shore to shore, humanity is redeemed and glorified; our fallen earth ascends swiftly along the brightening way which leads to God, and as it mounts the empyrean, the sentinel stars which challenge its advance shall send reverberating from floor to floor, and from vault to vault, through all the aisles, and arches and pavilions of eternity, the onward, swelling chorus, "Hallelujah! The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

In conclusion, allow me to ask what is the extent of your belief in Christianity? Have you no positive convictions? Have you no personal interest in religion? Are your heart and life faithless, and are you living as if your *doubts* were true? Are you satisfied with uncertainties, and even guesses, in a matter of infinite moment? Or do you yearn to know the truth and do the right? Are you ready to accept Christianity in its Divine claims, though your faith is darkened by great shadows as you wrestle with the awful problems of eternity? Have no fear about your doubts if you are

earnest and true. They will lead you into light, and as you fall

“ Upon the great world's altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,”

and stretch “lame hands of faith” upward, they shall be clasped by the hands that were pierced and you shall “see God.”

Beloved, if these things are true, they are tremendously true. If this Book of Christianity is Divine, God help us to receive it, to believe it, to hold fast its doctrines, and adorn its truths. If the Christ of Christianity is Divine He still asks, “Why do you not believe me?” God help us to lay hold of His Cross and be saved through Him. If this experience of Christianity be Divine, God help us to feel its transforming power in our own hearts, for by this “we believe and are sure.” If the practical fruits of Christianity abound in the beauty and magnificence of our civilization—in all that is beneficial to mankind—all that makes life best worth living—if it is so high and holy that we cannot even conceive a religion that could make men better or happier, then let us acknowledge its truth, confess its power, and have our fruit into holiness that we may receive the end of our faith, even life forevermore.

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