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The Things Which Remain

An Address To Young Ministers

By
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PREFACE

This little book contains the larger part of an address I have delivered at several Annual Conferences on the occasion of the admission of probationary ministers into full membership. At the suggestion of some who have heard it when delivered and whose assurance that it would be useful in print I am bound to respect, I have consented to its publication.

Matter not directly relating to the theme, but of sufficient importance to accompany it in addressing an Annual Conference, is here omitted, that all possible space might be given to the discussion of the question, "How much Christian doctrine will still remain, though much of the most radical criticism be accepted?"

Preface

It will be understood that concessions made for the sake of the argument by no means represent my own views of that which must be ultimately yielded to the critical spirit.

Already some opinions which threatened the authority of Gospels and Epistles, and which have had wide acceptance, have been modified or withdrawn. My aim in this address was not to scout criticism, from which much of the highest value to faith is to come, but to steady the wavering young minister; to sustain his preaching power by helping him to a definite message, and to encourage him to a slow and guarded acceptance of critical opinions destructive of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

CHATTANOOGA, TENN., December, 1903.

The Things Which Remain

The followers of Him who said "I am the Truth" can never afford to hold or propagate that which is false. No man can preach with power unless he strongly believes. Teaching force depends on Faith.

Thus far our ministry has had teaching power because it has been founded on and inspired by a Christian experience. Our Church has always emphasized that essential Christian statement, "If ye do ye shall know." At every ordination we have demanded of every candidate a declaration of his persuasion that he was "called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ" to the particular office to which he was then to be advanced. By this we do not mean a mediate call through the order of the Church or the judgment of the Bishop, but an immediate call by the Holy Spirit from Christ Himself. This call is antedated by that personal surrender to Jesus Christ; that blessed acceptance by Him of the self-surrendered; that witnessing Spirit as to sonship which brings the consciousness of pardon, renewal, and justification known as "a religious experience."

Those who possess this know something. Whereas they were "once blind, now they see." They know they have "passed from darkness to light" through the changed love which now controls. However the persuasion reached them, it is a persuasion; not merely a hope. It is a conclusion borne in upon them by satisfactory evidence, and is a lasting certainty while the faith which brought it abides in its original measure.

Thus to-day we have a pulpit substantially in doctrine and force what our pulpit always has been. Even in some cases where doubt has entered, it would appear that this Christian experience has steadied the wavering head by the full and regular impulses of the believing heart.

It is, however, to be admitted that the years to which we have come bring with them problems which our fathers did not have to solve. Doubts of which they knew nothing throng our atmosphere and crowd upon our consciousness. The attacks on Christianity are no longer the ribald jeers of the unlovely and the vile. They come in the name of honest investigation, historical veracity, and scientific accuracy; and are projected by characters apparently truth-loving, reverent, and candid.

This may be said for most of them, but on occasion it is hard to believe that all the German critics are wholly and exclusively truth-loving and candid. So extreme are the positions of some, so evidently tinctured with overreadiness for criticism and unbelief, that they must be excluded from the "most" above described.

I speak of the Germans because they, chiefly, are those capable and active in original research. Most of our American "advanced critics" are merely translators and adapters of German work. Their volumes add nothing to the controversy to those who know the German originals. Not a few Americans have obtained reputation by the expansion of the note books they made at the feet of German professors.

This also is largely true of the English critics. Many of them are well furnished for Greek criticism. The number of Greek Englishmen is still very large. But these seem also to fortify, at least, their own conclusions by the opinions of the original German investigators. It is hard to believe that, in the contests for German professorial position, as well as in the justification of the incumbent when the position is gained, the desire to attract attention by some critical novelty of method or result has not been in some cases, at least, as influential as a simple love of truth.

There is always the question also, which I profess seems to be one

not easy of answer, whether the literary judgments as to style when men are dealing with another language than their own, and especially with Greek and Hebrew, can be as worthy of acceptance as their authors and many others hold them to be; whether, in short, their opinions may not, like those of experts in handwriting, come to be so colored by their personality, or their interests, as to be of little evidential value. On this point it seems to me that not enough allowance has been made by these critics for the difference in style when men write familiarly or didactically, or when they are engaged in narration or exhortation.

Whatever may be the truth as to these matters, the present state of faith is due to the unsettlement of the foundation of belief by scientific and critical scholarship. *Foundation of Belief Unsettled.*

This unsettlement, admitted on every hand with difference of opinion as to extent, is either to increase until faith in Christianity, except as an ethical and humanitarian system, is dead, or abide until faith revives by a perception that the Church has maintained an erroneous basis for faith and that a new and stronger one is emerging from the sea of discussion. This last I believe to be the truth in the matter. I hold, therefore, that faith is not dying, but suffering in some minds from a kind of lunar eclipse, where a shadow diminishes, temporarily, the radiance, but does not extinguish the planet itself.

When we ask what foundation is weakened, the answer is: The authority of the Scriptures as the sole rule of faith and practice. Some claim that only a few of the books are genuine and almost none authentic. If this is to be the final judgment of the learned and the sincere, it is plain that we must seek another foundation for faith than the word of Scripture. It is no more a "Thus saith the Lord" for us. *The Authority of the Scriptures Weakened.*

But we are very far from seeing that final agreement among the critics which warrants us in discarding a single book. If any one has been fought about, and fought over, it is the Gospel of John. "It used to be said that this was not a history at all, but an idealizing of tradition in the interest of a speculative idea; now theologians are mostly agreed that if John is the most speculative, he is, at the same time, the most personal of New Testament writers." No other book has been finally overthrown. Archæology has confirmed Paul, and also some Old Testament writers, especially those who speak of widely separated settlements of the Hittites. I get a strong impression that the New Testament writers are sometimes attacked because they teach what the critics do not wish to believe. Thus it would appear that Harnack scouts the early chapters of Matthew and Luke because he doubts the virgin birth, and would hold that belief therein is no part in authority or value of the Christian religion. *Critics not yet Agreed. Archæology and the Bible. Personal Standpoints.*

I now wish to declare my own confidence that the verification of the truths contained in the New Testament was never intended to rest upon an absolutely inerrant record or on an inspiration which dictated to a personality rather than expressed itself through a personality. The Bible presupposes a power in man to test and verify its statements and doctrines. It makes its appeal to this steadily from the earlier books to the later; the appeal growing in content as the soul has developed its power of recognition. This is the familiar law of knowing and doing, of proving by practice, of perceiving the leadership of Jesus Christ through the leading of the Holy Ghost. As to doctrine, there is left in man the power to make the beginning of a faith. On this beginning devotion builds a belief in the greater mysteries. Thus reason deduces a First Cause, then the unity of the First Cause. This is as far as reason can go. Huxley, looking out on the universe with this power, said: "There is an impassable gulf between anthropomorphism, however refined and the passionless impersonality underlying the thin veil of phenomena. I can not see one tittle of evidence that the great unknown stands to us in the light of a Father." Nor could he. Religious truth is conditioned in a way in which the apprehension of physical truth is not. There must be a certain condition of the heart, conscience, and will to see the truth of the Godhead of Christ. One may resist this evidence. Only a living Christian is competent to look at the subject—"unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." In physics "nothing is needed but open eyes and a sound understanding." Moral character has nothing to do with it, except as vice may affect vision and deteriorate the judgment. But in a soul's relation to the Christian religion, the ethical element is that which is fundamental. "The pure in heart shall see God." The foul soul has no vision for the eternal purities. In the days of idolatry "there was no open vision." So in the heart of sin there is no light of spiritual truth. The higher verities appear fully founded to the Christian consciousness only. *Bible Appeal for Verification. Gracious Ability. Huxley's Passionless Impersonality. Gracious Conditions for Belief. Ethical Conditions for Faith.*

Yet, let us remember that below this Christian consciousness lie the substrata of reason and ethical canon common to all men. Religious truth rests on these in its first revelations. Above the first and simplest revelation, truth rests on Christian experience as to those matters for which reason and natural ethical canon are insufficient. *Natural Ethical Canon.*

This having been the teaching of the Methodist Episcopal Church from the beginning, she has been little disturbed by the critical school. *General Calm of Methodist Episcopal Church.*

While holding that the Bible is the sole rule of faith, she has not committed herself to any one theory of inspiration. She has not believed the Scriptures because they are written, but, being written, she has found them true. She has believed in the supernatural power of the Gospel because in her sight its leaven has wrought in the individual and in society what it claims for itself. John Wesley believed that there were God-breathed teachings outside of the Bible. He believed this because of his feeling that the Divine Fatherhood must have spoken to other than His Jewish children. Inheriting from our founder these thoughts, we have kept a high degree of calm in these later days of inquiry and doubt.

We have already admitted that the present tendency to unbelief has wider range and fresher foundations than our fathers knew. The belief in the natural immortality of the human soul whether of Platonic or Christian origin is shaken to an extent not known in a century. The doubts of Huxley, the denials of Hæckel had a purely scientific basis. The suspension of consciousness by sleep, by accident, by drugs, the decay of mind by old age and by disease are freely put forth as proofs that mind can not exist without the mechanism which supports and manifests it. If this last be true a doctrine fundamental to Christianity must be abandoned. The doctrine of immortality through Christ does not meet the new objections. The scheme of redemption and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments are involved in the fate of the doctrine of natural immortality. We have thus shadows of doubt thrown upon two great doctrines, the virgin birth of Christ and natural immortality. The miracles, Resurrection, and Ascension must be added to the shadowed list.

Whatever relation the fact may have as a cause, it is noteworthy that as to time, this new era of doubt largely coincides as to its beginning with the movement to revise the New Testament. The variations of the manuscripts, the interpretations, the comparatively late date of the oldest manuscripts were before this in possession of scholars only. The daily press have made them the possession of the Christian world. The shock to traditional confidence through this was very great. The Congress of Religions at Chicago had a similar effect. The mistaken liberality which permitted Christianity to appear on the same platform with the ethnic and imperfect religions contributed largely to doctrinal indifference. The taking and uncandid misrepresentations of these religions convinced many that there was at least no better foundation for Christianity and no better content therein than for and in the false and imperfect faiths. Many of these were defended by men who had had an English education and had come into contact with Christian vocabulary and civilization. They did not hesitate to read into these religions ideas wholly Christian and wholly foreign to the original teachings.

These and other considerations lead me to ask what remains that we may and do believe? While far from admitting as finally proved the radical conclusions reached by some as to authorship and inspiration of the Bible and Divine authority for doctrines deduced therefrom, it must be profitable for us to ask, "What remains if some of these conclusions stand?"

Recall that I do not admit all these for a moment, or any of them as final. Some are probably true. But taking the worst and most iconoclastic as true, are we compelled even then to surrender our Christian faith?

Let us take the separate articles of the Apostles' Creed and see how they stand affected:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Surely this remains untouched and in full force. Huxley, to requote what has before been quoted, says: "I can not see one tittle of evidence that the great unknown stands to us in the light of a Father." What a contradiction is here! He knows that the great unknown can not be proved to be our Father. Then he must know of the great unknown the negative aspects so minutely as to be sure that no Fatherhood is in the great unknown. Then he knows the great unknown much better than he is willing to admit, better than an agnostic ought.

Yet that the idea of God may remain in power and not as a "passionless impersonality," it must be less interpreted by the teachings of Moses and more by the teachings of Christ. Human tempers and passions must be eliminated from our Divine Ideal. He must not be made an angry and jealous God as men count these. He must not be thought of as a vindictive personality, never so well pleased as when scaring His children into panic. In the thought of the Church He will be an all-pervasive Spirit whose nature is unfolded by the universe He has made. In that universe He will be felt to be immanent as the power of development, order, and destiny. All ages show Him to be "the power which makes for righteousness." The commandments are not only His because they are found in the Bible, but because they are perceived to be necessary laws of conduct proceeding from such a Being as we know God to be for such beings as we know men to be. Thus we perceive them to be the Divinely authorized bond of society and the guarantee and obligation of the Divine Ideal of humanity. All nature and all history are scrutinized for traces of the Supreme. These being found to coincide with the Christian Revelation of Him, men will read with new reverence those wonderful books which make up the Book, and which beyond all others

anticipate the latest results of scientific inquiry and natural ethical canon.

Out of this will come such a sense of the Divine Presence as the Church and the individual Christian have not hitherto known. Moral distance from God will be the only distance. "In Him we live and move and have our being" comes to full interpretation through this thought of God. Humanity is immersed in Him.

Advantage of Newer View.

But this immanent God is also seen to be transcendent. He is in nature and far beyond it. Vast as nature is, it is limited. God is the unlimited. Within this region of transcendence is room for all His gracious activities as distinguished from His natural activities; room for marvel and miracle if He will and we need. When Huxley abandons Hume's *a priori* argument against miracles it is not worth while for others to use it. Fewer doubt the existence of a God, I believe, than at any time since men sought to prove that He does not exist. The Fatherly in God is proved both by His work in nature and by those works of grace which the student of nature alone can not see. God is a spirit. The human spirit refined, purified, sees Him in proportion to its purification.

Transcendent.

Huxley Against Hume.

In respect of "Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord," it may, it must, be said He remains in full and glorious vigor as the Redeemer of mankind. The marked difference between our time and a half-century ago with respect to Christ is in the extension, rather than the diminution of His relation to salvation and the extension of the idea of salvation itself. In the former days men's eyes were almost wholly fixed on His death and its relation to salvation in the future life. Seldom indeed was the value of the following text taken into consideration: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life." There is less disposition to dogmatize as to theories of the atonement. Most, I think, come to feel that no one view contains the full significance of Christ's death. Have you noticed how the Ritual puts it in the order of the Lord's Supper? "Didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our Redemption; who made there [on the cross] by His oblation of Himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The men who wrote that struggled to interpret His death by every possible phase of its meaning. In our time we have come to see that the aim of Christ and Christianity is to develop character and that this must be gained in time that we may be ready for eternity. Thus the death of Christ as the ultimate of self-sacrifice persuades us to the death of sin in us that we may live renewed in God; "rise from our dead selves to higher things." His life persuades us as the condition and example of growth to move on from the first self-surrender into the habit and fact of constant obedience and therefore "into the likeness of God's dear Son."

Modern Christology.

Former Limitations.

Ritual Statement.

Aim of Christianity.

Likeness to God.

The consciousness, well-nigh universal, of the nobility of self-sacrifice is that which gives vitality and vogue among the masses to the doctrine of the atonement. Self-sacrifice becomes more rare as wealth and refinement modify men and women. He that has much is loath to lose or leave it. Hence the rich generally fight in security. The poor meet the bullets first.

Bad as is the conduct of some trades-unionists, it is among these toilers that great deeds of sympathy and generosity are done. How they tax themselves to help each other! How their women work for each other when one is unable to care for herself or her children! Their doctrine that "an injury to one is a wrong to all" has much that is Christlike in it. Let us who believe in an atoning Christ rejoice that as long as men honor bravery—self-sacrifice unto death for country, home, or the life of dear ones; as long as they build monuments to generals, soldiers, firemen, physicians who die for others, so will the world be slow to disbelieve the doctrine that "Jesus Christ tasted death for every man."

More, too, is made of His life before the Incarnation. The pre-existence of Christ is an essential element in Christianity. "His eternal relation to God is the only way of conceiving Him which answers to His real greatness."⁴ The Christ was present and active in the creation. John's use of the word "Logos" is right. "Logos" is not merely a result but a Force. It is not only the speech, but the speaker. Let us admit once for all that the fact, much belabored of the critics, is a fact. Let us not be afraid of the word which expresses it. God must be anthropomorphic if He exists. We can come nowhere near to thinking out any other kind of God. Christ has the value of God to devout Christians because in the fullness of His moral perfections He expresses God so far as we can know Him and man so far as man can hope and grow.

John's Logos.

An Anthropomorphic God.

Is His Sonship different from ours, or only an expansion of the fullness and perfection of our sonship? This last seems to me a most important question. If He was born as we were born—that is, as to the beginning of His earthly life, there can be no pre-eminent sense in which He was the Son of God. He was either a happy accident of natural birth or a "sport" in evolution.

How Son of God.

This brings us to that doctrine which is the greatest challenge to the doubter: "Conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary,"—a doctrine fiercely fought by Harnack and yet by no means to be dismissed as he dismisses it. His teaching on this point seems to me the result of his theory of Christianity. If one seeks to rid Christianity of the supernatural, here is the place to begin.

The Virgin Birth.

But who will not feel the force of the position that, granted God was to be incarnate, the story of Christ's incarnation is the noblest and most probable? He is not born of a man's lust nor of a woman's desire—but of the submission of untainted womanhood to the direct creative power of God. The alternative to this is the Divinest man in all the world born of sinning and not yet married parents. If the new doctrine of heredity be true that men may inherit good as well as evil, we still have an astounding fact to account for; namely, the birth of such a child from such conditions, that is, with all the good kept in and all the bad left out.

: *Dignity of the Story.*

: *A Greater Puzzle.*

When men speak of a virgin birth as incredible and impossible and as the weakest of all Christian doctrine, do they know or have they forgotten that parthenogenesis (virgin birth) is a fact in nature; existing, for example, in as highly organized insects as the honey bee? There are other insects which are parthenogenetic at one time and sexually productive at another. There are also hints of it in human life known to anatomists which can not be fully discussed here.

: *Parthenogenesis a Fact.*

The virgin queen bee produces males in abundance, but can not produce females until she has made her nuptial flight and met her mate in an embrace invariably fatal to him. Nor does she ever need to meet another. From that time on, she is the fruitful mother of every kind of bee life the hive needs; the undeveloped females called neuters and those who become queens by being fed on royal food. Virgin birth is therefore imbedded in nature's order. To occur in the human species nature need call in no novelty. Christ, if born of a virgin, was born with the smallest possible departure from the order of nature. A process known in a lower form of life was carried into the higher to produce the unique being called for by the spiritual needs of mankind.

: *Among the Bees.*

: *A Small Departure from Nature.*

Passing over the historical assertions which follow the doctrine of the virgin birth, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," because there is nothing in these statements difficult or incredible, we reach the doctrine of His resurrection, "the third day He rose from the dead," a doctrine next to that of the virgin birth in natural difficulty of acceptance.

: *The Historical Statement.*

Faith in this seems to me to depend on how far we have accepted Christ's Deity and His incarnation. If by the Holy Ghost we have been able "to say that Jesus is the Lord;" if by that blessed energy we perceive His Divine mastership; if by the same energy we feel that He has transformed us into the image of His dear Son; raising us "from the death of sin into the life of righteousness" it is not difficult to believe that Jesus "the power of the Resurrection" rose from the dead. "The fact of the Resurrection and belief in the fact is not explicable by any antecedent conditions apart from its truth." The disciples did not expect what they saw. His death was for them so far as we can see, without hope. They were not able yet to interpret His prophecy that He would build again His temple, nor understand the spirituality of His kingdom. These facts seem to me utterly to demolish the theory of a vision called up by eager, yea, agonizing, expectation. The idea of the Resurrection justifies His prophecies as to Himself and the fact accounts, better than any theory which denies the fact, for the faith and founding of the early Church as well as for the course of subsequent history and of the believer's experience.

: *Christ's Resurrection.*

: *Surprise of Disciples.*

: *The Fact Accounts for History.*

It is much to see that belief became belief only with great difficulty. The idea of the Resurrection was strange and alarming to the disciples. "They were terrified and affrighted and supposed they beheld a spirit." Slowly by tests of sense as well as by persuasions of teaching did the disciples come to believe that the Christ of the Resurrection was the same Christ who suffered on the cross.

: *Slow Belief in Resurrection.*

It seems impossible that the Resurrection could have been an invention or that the account of it could be a work of the imagination. The last is almost as great a miracle as the Resurrection itself. In detail, in naturalness, even in the presence of difficulties and hindrances to easy belief of the story, the narrative seems that of an eye-witness. No reasoning can bring faith, however, to one who denies the miraculous. As a fact, the Resurrection is incapable of naturalistic explanation. To those who deny the miraculous I can only again point out how Huxley cuts out the *a priori* argument from Hume as worthless. As quoted in his biography, Huxley says: "We are not justified in the *a priori* assertion that the order of nature, as experience has revealed it to us, can not change. The assumption is illegitimate because it involves the whole point in dispute."

: *Not an Invention.*

: *An Eye-witness Story.*

Necessarily miraculous also is the doctrine, "He ascended into heaven." In this He passed from the visible into the invisible; from the conditions of human life to those of the life of a spirit; from the work of redemption to that of intercession. If His resurrection be accepted, His ascension presents no difficulties to faith. This, with His incarnation, and the facts of His earthly life are the manifestation of the tender side of God to the senses even as His wisdom and power are shown to the senses by the facts and laws of nature. As to the doctrine, "God is love," nature's word can never be conclusive. In the natural kingdom joy and sorrow, ease and pain, love and

: *Ascent into Heaven.*

: *The Ascension.*

: *Nature not Wholly Love.*

: *Evil and Good.*

hate, kindness and cruelty, trust and terror exist side by side, as do life and death. No man concludes, from nature alone, that God is ruled by love. Because man can not conclude this, Ormuzd and Ahriman are found substantially in all religions, as in that of the Parsees, except in the Christian. Here the warfare is not to be eternal. The victory of good is to come. Divine help is promised, that it may be secured in every soul. The conquest of evil by good is within that Christian omnipotence which Paul knew. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." It requires a Christ to show that the path to rest is through toil; that the way to ease is through suffering; that the highway to life passes through death. Only thus can "mortality be swallowed up of life."

In the unity of the Godhead, Christ is God in manifestation, ; *The Meaning of Jesus.*
redemption, intercession, judgment. In the Trinity, in which we must ;
believe God exists, Jesus Christ is the personality expressive, at first ; *Christ as Revealer.*
visibly and now invisibly, of the tender qualities of the Divine nature
which, manifested in part in the world of nature, are there so linked with severity as to require
special and peculiar revelation in the person of Jesus Christ in order that God may be understood
both as transcending nature and as eternal love.

Surely the doctrine, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," will remain. It is a misfortune that the word "ghost" has, in our English use, an unworthy and terrifying significance. On this account it were well if we could substitute for constant use the word "Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is the energy of God, whether working as Creator or ; *The Holy Ghost.*
in the processes of redemption. It stirs us to the depths when we ;
consider that the Author of the worlds, the Source of the energies is ; *The Energy of God.*
He who transforms, renews, sanctifies, and witnesses in us. There is ;
no question as to the pervasiveness and competence of the Power ; *The Interpreter.*
which "works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." We are
taught to trace all our religious uplift to the highest possible source. We gather a great sense of
our worth by the dignity of this association as we do of the condescension of our Lord in making
His home in our hearts. This Holy Spirit is in all Christians the energy of the entire spiritual life.
By this we do the things which by nature we can not do. His is that Divine impulse which
initiates, continues, matures, and satisfies the life of God in us. It is the indwelling, all-pervading
Holy Spirit, which interprets that great word, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be one as
We are."

And if the most advanced philosophy should yet be confirmed as true ; *The Doctrine of Energy.*
that there is nothing really but energy, none the less would the ;
doctrine of the Holy Spirit abide. Back of all the individual energies of humanity; back of all the
forces of nature is the supreme energy of God. If creation be our theory, it is the Spirit of God
which broods on the face of the waters. If evolution be our creed, it is "in Him we live and move
and have our being." All science is but the knowing of His way of working, and all theology is but
the discovery of His mind. To know Him is to know all things. The latest Christian will be saying,
"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

And what becomes of the doctrine of the "forgiveness of sins" in this ; *The Forgiveness of Sin.*
outlook for "the things which remain?" Accepting Huxley as the ;
incarnation of the skeptical spirit of our time, I quote from him his ; *Huxley on Depravity.*
thought of sin, depravity, and punishment, as a hint of where the ;
scientific spirit may yet aid us. "The doctrine of predestination, of ; *Not All Born Good.*
original sin, of the innate depravity of man, the evil fate of the greater ;
part of the race, of the primacy of Satan in this world, of the essential ; *Experience of Hell.*
vileness of matter, of a malevolent Demiurgos subordinate to a benevolent Almighty who has only
lately revealed Himself, faulty as they are, appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth than the
liberal, popular illusions that babies are all born good, and that the example of corrupt society is
responsible for their failure to remain so.... That it is given to everybody to reach the ethical ideal
if they will only try; that all partial evil is universal good; and other optimistic figments." "I
suppose that all men with a clear sense of right and wrong have descended into hell and stopped
there quite long enough to know what infinite punishment means."

Surely, the established truths of heredity confirm the doctrine that ; *Transmission of Evil.*
man, if not born depraved, is born *deprived* of tendencies toward good ;
essential to his own welfare and that of the race. "Where sin has once taken hold of the race, the
natural reproduction of life become reproduction of life morally injured and faulty. With evil once
begun, the race is a succession of tainted individuals; an organism that works toward
continuance of evil. Not but that good is transmitted at the same time, for it goes along with evil.
Any virtue or value which is strong enough to live will pass from generation to generation even
while evil is making the same journey."⁶

While we hold that this tendency, this natural sluggishness in laying ; *Depravation and Deprivation.*
hold of the things of the higher nature is not in itself guilt, it becomes ;
so by the voluntary adoption of the lower forces as the guide of life. ; *Natural Standards.*
Nature has her own decalogue. There is a law written upon our hearts. ;
The wasting of power by anger, jealousy, envy, covetousness and the ; *The Decalogue.*
like, and the degradation following their expression in acts of revenge,
concupiscence, and mere rapacity, are known without revelation by all races which have not

suffered the downward evolution. The literatures prove this back even to the days of Hamurabi. Thus natural standards of temper and conduct are seen to exist, below which men may not live without loss, and hence there are natural laws to disobey which is sin. The table given on Sinai, though given to Moses, was in the world long before Moses. But higher sanction was given it by the lawgiver, and the highest by the re-enactment of the Decalogue by Jesus Christ.

Sin is blameworthy because it is born of the human preference and the human will. The nation which, knowing most of the Divine will, disobeys, is the most guilty because the most knowing. The proportion of guilt depends on the measure of knowledge and the measure of opportunity. Hence there is some guilt among those who know only a part of the truth, and if a man perceives, without the aid of revelation, a law in nature and a penalty, and breaks that law, then is he a sinner. Some of the physical consequences may apparently be avoided by future obedience. But the inner and spiritual consequences of sin are the worst—these things; namely: In the weakening of the will; in the hardening of the conscience; and, later, in the recklessness as to consequences, indicated by that terrible indictment by Paul, "Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over." The consciousness of sin is practically universal. It is no invention of Christianity, though brought to its greatest force by Christianity. Religions, governments, literatures,—all and everywhere,—treat of sin as a fact. It is more than dominion of body over spirit; more than an incident of growth; more than a result of undeveloped judgment, tinged with emotion, and applied to questions of motive and conduct. Sin is the abnormal; sin is a variant from standard; sin is self-will and selfishness throttling duty. Where men accept a God, it is opposition to His law and government.⁷ If no personal God be believed in, then sin is willful opposition to the course of nature and to law, as proved by experience. So, in every case, it is unworthy, injurious, and guilty, and must be repented of and atoned for. The doctrine of sin will never be essentially disturbed.

The Heart Law.
Effects of Sin.
Characteristics of Sin.
Results of Sin.
A Supernatural Event.
Lacks Scientific Proof.
An Old Fallacy.
A Jewish Argument.
Kant's Reasoning.
Can Not Be Demonstrated.

The next clause in the creed, "The resurrection of the body," if it remains as a permanent article of faith, must rest on the declaration of Christ and on His resurrection. It is confessedly dependent, not on a natural, but a supernatural order. On this point it is again worth our while to note a concession by Huxley, as showing the consistency of one Christian truth with another. "If a genuine, and not merely subjective, immortality awaits us, I conceive that without some such change as that depicted in I Corinthians xv, immortality must be eternal misery."⁸ Surely, this is a great testimony to that famous chapter on the resurrection. No scientific proof or probability can be adduced for the resurrection of the body. The older theologians used to point out that the caterpillar entombed itself that it might emerge to the higher life of the butterfly. But we must not take from such a fact what suits our purpose, and leave a fatal weakness in our argument. The butterfly does, indeed, emerge from the coffin of the cocoon and the seemingly dead pupa. But it is only for a brief day of life. Then it lays its eggs and dies forever. It is born to no immortality, but to the most ephemeral life. The early Church; yea, the Jewish Church, found rational warrant for belief in immortality and the resurrection of the body, first in the thought that it was unjust for those who fought for and brought in the kingdom of God, to enjoy nothing of what they secured. So the doctrine of the first resurrection appears as a contribution of justice to holy life. Later on, similar reasoning demanded the resurrection of all. A judgment is necessary, not to acquaint God with the merits of men, but to acquaint men with the righteousness of God. This would be impossible without the resurrection of all. Very close to this is the reasoning of Kant, summarized as follows: "Every moral act must have as an end the highest good. This good consists of two elements, virtue and felicity, or happiness. The two are inseparable. But these can not be realized under the limitations of this existence. Immortality follows as a deduction. The moral law demands perfect virtue or holiness; but a moral being can not realize absolute moral perfection or a holy completeness of nature in this present life." It is wholly of faith that men are immortal. It of necessity can not be demonstrated. The mass of mankind have believed it, and do believe it, and it is one of the most difficult of beliefs to escape from, returning to some skeptical scientists almost as an intuition, conquering the logic of death and decay.

It is also true that faith in immortality grows with the fullness and intelligence of the spiritual life. It becomes a complete persuasion to the pure in heart. Yet some scientific facts, as related to man, make the idea of his extinction improbable, and separate him from the "beast which perisheth."

How Faith Grows.

It is true that much is common to men and brutes. They walk the same earth; breathe the same air; are nourished by the same food, which is digested by the same processes. Their life is transmitted by the same methods, and their embryonic life is strangely similar. It is also true that there are strong mental resemblances. Both love and hate; are jealous and indifferent; are courageous and cowardly; they perceive by similar organs; record by similar mnemonic ganglia; and are within certain limits impelled by the same motives. Nor can a measure of reason be denied to animals. While much of what appears to be mental life is automatic and unconscious response to an external stimulus reaching a nerve-center, yet within limits they deliberate; they exercise choice; and determine routes and methods.

Men and Brutes.
What Brutes Have.

But when all this is said, man rises almost infinitely beyond the highest brute. Man can stand outside of himself; contemplate the movements of his own mind; watch the play of motive upon energy and will, and know himself as no brute can ever be trained to do. Nor have brutes the ganglia, lobes, or convolutions which house and direct such powers; and no tribe of mankind has been found without them, however undeveloped. Very limited, indeed, is the use of natural forces or of supplied materials in the life of a brute. The birds pick up feathers, hair, twigs; but no bird provides such things by deliberate prevision and co-operation with nature. What animal sows that he may reap? The so-called agricultural ants gather what they have not sown, and reap what they have not planted. Man sows that he may gather; breeds that he may use; and accomplishes civilization by an ever-increasing mastery and adaptation of natural forces. An insect may float with the current on a chip; but what one ever put a chip into the water? A beaver may build a dam; but what beaver ever turned the heightened water on a wheel? The dog may lie in a sunny spot; but what dog ever created artificial heat or condensed by a lens the sun's heat on a particular point? The hen may lay and incubate an egg; but what hen ever invented an incubator to save her long sitting in one pose or place, or studied the development of life in and from the egg she produced? The ox may select the richest pasture; but never dreamed of creating a rich pasture by the culture and fertilization of which he is the chief source. The tiger chooses and slays his prey; but does not know how to propagate, develop, and safely mature the animals on which he feeds. All animal life below man must locate where its food abounds, or follow that food in its migrations or seasonal changes. Man alone stores and transports his food, creating commerce by his mastery of climate.

Man Above Brutes.

Habits of Animals.

Limits of Brute Intelligence.

Limits Continued.

The brute obeys law unwittingly in the sustenance and transmission of life. Man alone perceives and deduces law from a thousand facts, and concludes a lawgiver from the law, and one Lord and Giver of Life "from the unity and universality of force." The brute turns its eye skyward to detect danger; but never measures or counts the stars, discerns the movements of the planets, nor extends vision and hearing by telescope, microscope, and megaphone, nor proves by the spectroscope the sameness of stellar elements with those of our own world. The brute neither makes history nor records it. He remembers, but does not recollect. His affections are evanescent as to his kind, and only approach permanence as they are fastened upon us. The brute cognizes external things, but does not perceive their being. Thus man can live in an intellectual or spiritual world as to his aims, motives, and occupations. He need touch matter only so far as it is necessary to support the bodily strength on which his spiritual and intellectual movement must depend for basis and manifestation. On the other hand he may reduce the intellectual and spiritual life to the lowest limit by giving the mastery to his physical appetites. We feel instinctively that to do this last is unworthy of manhood and destructive of the higher nature and intent. But who expects a brute to do anything else but minister to his appetites? If he delays a single second in doing it, it is only through fear of man or of some stronger animal. His intellectual movements have this as an end in complete reversal of the case with man. With the brute the intellect seems incidental to the body. With man the body is incidental to the intellect. One feels for this reason that man might live a purely spiritual and disembodied life. No one from this standpoint thinks so of a brute.

Man Parts Company.

Man and Brute Compared.

How Man Can Live.

How Man Can Decay.

Incidental as to Body.

Once more let Huxley speak as to the scientific possibility "with regard to the other great Christian dogmas, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, what possible objection can I, who am compelled, perforce, to believe in the immortality of what we call matter and force, and in a very unmistakable present state of rewards and punishments for all our deeds, have to these doctrines? Give me a scintilla of evidence, and I am ready to jump at them."⁹ But when all conditions are considered, and just weight given to all the probabilities, the full persuasion of immortality comes through Him who has "brought life and immortality to light." These seem part of His communication to the souls in whom He dwells. To them He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Into their being He injects the power of an endless life. Their hopes, faith, affections center less and less on time. The truer, fuller, richer life is felt to be coming. It is to surpass the earthly life in quantity and in quality only because the soul, as it flutters Godward, must here feel the attrition of its fleshly tabernacle. This dissolved, the fullness and the freedom come. The house not made with hands henceforth enshrines the spirit. Christ's great Word is finally interpreted: "I am come, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly."

Immortality of Force.

Christ's Light.

The Christian's Eye.

"The life everlasting!" This is the grand finale of the Creed as it is the end which all devout souls seek. It is made probable by what man is, which is the same as saying that there are, from considerations above mentioned, probabilities in its favor. It has been the habit of pious souls to attempt to understand and describe this life, and many are the volumes which proceed upon the literalness of the Bible descriptions. I suppose there are phases of faith which can not reach beyond literalness, and hence do not rightly interpret the splendid imagery of St. John. Such we must leave to the blessed surprise and ecstatic awakening of Paradise.

The Life Everlasting.

Literalism.

To other minds the life everlasting is unbelievable except as the

Great Figures.

great pictures of John are spiritualized. To such the place becomes a state or condition. It is of no interest to us to inquire, as did the Christian philosopher, Dick, into the locality of heaven and hell. Such ideas as those recently put forth by a preacher, not of our Church, thank God! that hell is in one of the spots on the sun, and heaven in the chromosphere are distasteful to the last degree to those who believe that "God is a Spirit," and that "flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God." Such feel that heaven may be anywhere and everywhere; that the gulf which separates the rich man and Lazarus may be only a moral gulf, seeing that they talked across it. They see eternal punishment in the perception of the sinner that he has forever stunted his soul by his sinfulness and the grossness of his affections. Though he should begin a progressive life from his present status, he could never catch up with a soul which has a purer point of departure.

: *Locating Heaven.*

: *Eternal Punishment.*

There is an awful penalty in the fact that this sense of loss may be eternal. The consciousness of limited powers, the certainty that so much is lost, never to be regained, is surely a fire that is not quenched; a worm that dieth not!

But how much more awful the thought that this limitation of the nature by sin, whether of body or soul, may affect the soul through unending life without fitness for any pleasure or delight possible to that state! The company of good and refined men and women is here little less than hell to a bad and coarse man, if he is compelled to stay in it. There is nothing in the spirit, aim, and employments of such that he can measure. He can understand the delights of eating and drinking. Even then it is the coarse foods and the drunk-bringing drink that he most enjoys. He can understand noise, coarse jokes, but not quiet conversation, nor the play of a delicate wit. When the pleasure of life is sensual, bodily, the capacity for mental and moral pleasure slowly diminishes, and at last dies. Project such a soul into the company of the redeemed; place it where the body has no existence, and therefore no pleasure to give; compel it to remain among those whose every thought is pure, and whose eyes are fixed on the "King in His beauty," and, like the rich man, it will lift its eyes in torment, and ask for "water to cool his parched tongue."

: *Limitation by Sin.*

: *Illustrations.*

: *Strength and Disuse.*

It is no part of my aim to say a final word on any of these great truths, even if I deemed myself capable thereof.

But it is my hope to point out the way in which we find our faith strengthened, and to show that the great truths of Christianity will survive the most radical criticism of the Scriptures. Every one of these truths has increasing confirmation as we accumulate the teachings of science, history, and religious experience. The Bible will never be superseded, because it contains the struggle of every type of soul Godward, and because its record of what the Lord said and did; of what He was, and of what the apostles thought Him to be, stands as the verification of what we know Him to be. The Bible and experience are mutually illuminating and corroborative. It is possible that the Church receiving the deposit of truth orally from the apostles, might have passed that truth down orally, and by her ordinances, illustratively as she did, until the Gospels were written; as she must do now in lands where the people can not read, having no written language. To avoid, however, the defects of human memory and to accumulate a standard by which teaching and experience should be verified, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son;" through His Son to the apostles; and by the apostles and their successors to us; those successors being not those made so by the touch of a human hand; but by God's transforming grace, giving to every believer power and privilege "to speak the things we do know." "We having the same spirit of faith; according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God."

: *Aim and Intent.*

: *Confirmation by Experience.*

: *Effect on the Bible.*

: *The Coming of Revelation.*

Footnotes

[1 \(return\)](#)

Denney. Studies in Theology.

[2 \(return\)](#)

Cf. Denney.

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[4 \(return\)](#)

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[5 \(return\)](#)

[6 \(return\)](#)

Outline of Christian Theology. Clarke, p. 242.

[7 \(return\)](#)

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[8 \(return\)](#)

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[9 \(return\)](#)

Biography. Vol. I, p. 260.

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