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# THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST

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## THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST

Nature pregnant with equality, with justice, and generosity, has given all men the same organization, the same functions, the same powers; she has neither created higher nor lower, superior nor inferior, master nor slave; inequality would imply monopoly; monopoly, partiality; and partiality, divine injustice; all the operations of Nature are simple, just, equitable, and invariable: nothing is done at random, nothing is effected by chance, nothing is the result of uncertain laws. The operations of Nature, the physical laws of men and of morality are as uniform as the revolutions of the solar system; every action is consistent with the essence of the acting body; nothing can act inconsistently with its elements. All Nature acts in conformity with universal laws; man forms an integral part of Nature, and must act in unison with his elements; the laws of Nature are beyond human controul, they are independent of man, unchangeable by any power less than the contriver; the laws of Nature are neither arrested, interrupted, biassed, or controverted by venal, bigoted, fanatical Priests.

A Priest has the same essence, is composed of the same elements, endowed with the same organization as other men; he has no more natural command, no greater power, no greater right; Priests do not come into the world with crosiers, or with, mitres, or with rosaries; the revolutions of matter create and destroy them; they are decomposed as a cow or a cabbage. It is not Nature, but the folly of man that has given consequence to the Priest; all the wealth, all the advancement, all the power the Priests enjoy, are acquired by hypocrisy, by perjury, by extortion, and by swindling: the trade is founded in fraud, in blasphemy, and impiety; matured by cupidity, by venality, and by masked villainy. The impostor pretends to have exclusive access to exclusive favour from the Deity.

It is by inflexible truth, by the invariable laws of Nature, that the impostor will be analyzed; bring him to the shrine of reason, denude him of his robes, of his mask, of his hypocrisy, he is not more than man by Nature, but worse by morality, inasmuch as he is covered by infamous offences; however intention may operate, however simplicity may be deluded, there cannot be one honest, one independent, and one intelligent man among the whole body of Priests; bigots by education, dishonest by trade, ignorant of the first principles of science, they must necessarily be superstitious, cruel, and vindictive; whatever purity, whatever humility, whatever candour, the Priest may profess, is resolvable into individual interest; he has no parent but avarice, no God but money. Although the Evangelists, the Priests, the sacred impostors, are similar by nature, similarly educated in chicane and hypocrisy, they do not agree in any one religious profession: the Bonzes, the Muftis, and the Priests, have different churches, different Gods, different creeds. Religious impostors uniformly coincide in plundering the people; there is no other symptom of similarity, no atom of cohesion, but rapine, among Priests: God is made something and nothing, every where and no where; he is one thing at Ispahan, another at Constantinople, and a third at Rome; what is religion at one place, is blasphemy at another.

If truth was as mutable, as liable to change, as subject to variation, as the dogmas of Priests, conflicting opinions would act to mutual destruction. God, acting always through Nature, always by universal and self-evident laws, would not permit a thousand sects of ignorant, profane, impious, blaspheming Priests, to mislead, impoverish, and barbarize the people. If God manifested himself through the medium of Priests, of churches, and of creeds, it would be by means as self-evident as universal, and as candid and invariable as the rotations of the solar system; it would not be by starvation at one hour, and gluttony at another; or kneeling, tenths, pilgrimages, exorcisms, sprinklings, crosses, sacraments, ablutions, circumcision, and gibberish.

Religion is a matter of imagination, of fiction, an hypothesis, and not of fact: the multifarious dogmas of sectarians, demonstrate the multiplicity of vapours and conjectures; while men reason from false principles, religions will multiply to infinity. Philosophers have only one God—the God of Nature; but roguish Priests, old women and fools have an endless number; every arch-impostor has profanely made a God of his own; Priestly genius, pregnant with extortion, and cogitating more effectually to pick pockets, with his own new trap, than with the stale tool of other men, has given rise to a multitude of diurnal Deities, if we witnessed as many variations in the laws of Nature as in the Priest-trade, the Priests might insist that some attention should be given to the business of fraud and cant. Every Priest differs from every other Priest, and all differ from the truth; the Deity does not operate by stealth, he does not work clandestinely in holes and corners, as the miracle-mongers attest, but generally, openly, in the face of day, before all the world, in his works: he does not skulk in mosques, in churches, or in wildernesses, but is equally every where; he knows no more of the cross, the crescent, or the crosier, than he does of a tobacco-pipe, a mile-post, or a broom-stick. If there is one man more wicked than another it is the impostor, and the lying, cheating Priest-the misleader of innocent, inoffensive, unsuspecting men; the more the Priests profess to believe, the greater is the iniquity, and impiety, and hypocrisy—the more religion they believe, the less morality they practice. The people should believe the Priests when they profess principles consistent with Nature, and scorn them: when they claim belief in inconceivable and false enigmas; attention is to be given when assertion is demonstrable by collateral facts and not to matters of faith, mystery and superstition; the Priests are more likely to tell lies, swindle and deceive the people, than the Deity is to be cruel, inconsistent, impotent, and enigmatical; believe nothing out of the order of Nature; the assertion of even one thousand honest fanatics would be inadequate to induce any sensible man to believe that the course of Nature was changed for one moment.

The Priests knew it would be useless to spend their time in declamation, in anathemas, in denunciation, against such as would not from mercenary motives, or good sense, pay tithes, and feed the idol of superstition; to enforce their doctrines, to support their extortion, to effect their unholy rapine, they fallaciously promulgated posthumous torture; they invented a Hell, to agonize, to rack, to torment such as would not help to support the imposition. The Priests know their Hell is not a place of actual existence, but a bugbear, and the Devil, the head master, is invented, is used as an emptying-pocket tool; such as do not believe this pick-pocket machinery, such as do not suffer themselves to be duped, misled, and plundered, by hypocrites, swindlers, rogues, and extortioners, are reproached as criminals, as sinners, as blasphemers, as infidels, and as lunatics, and doomed to suffer everlasting torture. Is it likely that a just, wise, and benevolent Deity would thus unmercifully punish innocent men for refusing to contribute to the lasciviousness, licentiousness, and drunkenness, of a vagabond, blaspheming Priesthood? there is no greater impiety than attributing such enormity to a wise and parental God! The profanity of Priests cannot be sufficiently deprecated for alledging such monstrous injustice to the Deity, and asserting that he has more horrible powers, principles, and actions than the Devil; the latter is generous, brave, and forbearing, compared with their God, to whom they attribute malice, revenge, cruelty, fallacy, and persecution to a whole race of people because a poor, ignorant, exhausted woman happened to rob an apple-tree, as he permits school-boys to do with impunity daily: even the Priests must allow he does not think so much of his apples as formerly. The Priests should build altars and offer apples to the Lord to act consistently.

The Priests are famous mathematicians; they can demonstrate that one is equal to three, or that three equals one; three eternals is equal to one eternal, and one holy equal to three holies!

To please the Deity is to act consistent with his ways; his desire, his intention, his object, is manifested in the organization of nature, and as independence and equality are the predominating features in nature, so those who most strenuously advocate those principles are the most religious, the most patriotic, the most praiseworthy among men.

The contrary policy of Priests, destined solely to aggrandize their trade, is debasing the Deity, degrading man, and trampling upon his creation. Whatever the Deity values, Priests despise; with a vandal ferocity they attack whatever does not tend to secure, enlarge, or multiply the emoluments of the mosque and the church; it is not, in fact, about the church they bicker, nor about souls and religion, but about tithes and offerings: the conduct of men is immaterial, they have a licence to commit any crime, so long as they will pay money for absolution and subscribe to the sanctity of tithes. There is no competition among Priests who shall do the utmost degree of good, but who shall have the power of tithing and deceiving the people: if the people had sufficient sense they would treat all Priests as the different kinds of Priests treat each other—as hypocrites and impostors; constant in jealousy, constant in acrimonious opposition and mutual abuse, every order, every genus, are contending for the spoil of credulity.

The Priests are the enemies of liberty, the adversaries of free discussion, and the opposite of equality, constantly conspiring against a people enjoying the blessings of freedom, constantly fettering, debasing, and insulting the slave. While the Priest is too weak to be intolerant, he is flattering, deceitful, mean and servile; but when fraud has elevated him to power, he is arbitrary and domineering, inflated with despotism, with insolence, and with vanity.

The multitude of assassinations, of massacres and of wars—the avarice, the villainy, the bigotry and bloody-mindedness of Priests have occasioned, exceeds the powers of calculation; the number of religious murders is lost in figures; every field has groaned under an altar of immolation; the vegetation of every country has been fertilized, and the streets of every town deluged with blood shed by the machinations of Priests; look at that fact, for the benefit of your religion, you followers of the cross and the crescent; cant no more about your justice, your generosity, your forbearance, your humanity, your meekness, or your candour. The Priests have been, for selfish purposes, the orators and fomentors of most of the mischiefs that have disgraced, paralyzed, and disfigured the fair character of human nature: it is disgraceful to any man to be seen in a dispute between Priests and kings; as hypocrites, as impostors, as common rogues, men of wisdom will never participate, never be interested, never be duped by the quarrels, and the envious animosities of the swindling trades.

All the Priests—all that live by the trade of hypocrisy, all that live by sacred imposition, are blasphemers, are infidels, are perverters of the truth, are the distorters of the will and object of the Deity; and such as most assiduously attempt to dispel the delusion, are most religious in the eyes of God. Blasphemy is not an offence against truth, but the offence of truth against Priestcraft.

Notwithstanding the bickering, the animosity, and the jealousy the Priests entertain towards each other, they are consistent, they are unanimous, they are combined in prosecuting any man who has ability, who has honesty, and who has independence to attack the fraud and hypocrisy by which they live; whoever attempts to analyze the farce, to unveil the imposition of revealed religion, is sure to be attacked by Bishops, by Imans, by Bonzes, and by Muftis; truth acts upon these animals as light does upon the organization of bats and owls, and other reptiles, at mid-day.

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