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CHRISTIANITY

ITS

TRUE NATURE

BY

SAMUEL SPAHR LAWS

WASHINGTON, D. C.
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WARM SULPHUR SPRINGS,
BATH COUNTY, VA., *September 22, 1902.*

DEAR DOCTOR LAWS:

The sermon of last Sunday is of such importance and was attended with such power of analysis and demonstration that it should be preserved. If it will not overtax your time and strength, I would be very glad if you will write it out and give me a copy.

With most sincere respect,

JNO. T. MORGAN.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
1733 Q ST. N. W.

HON. U. S. SENATOR JOHN T. MORGAN.

DEAR SIR: Within a few days after receiving the above request I wrote out in pencil the discourse to which it refers, but as no typewriter was available I concluded to wait till my return home, and then I concluded to print.

I highly appreciate your favorable opinion, to which I have deferred, but I feel in complying with your request and suggestion, Mr. Morgan, that I am making only a slight return for my pleasure and profit in listening to your Address at the Springs and able Speeches on the floor of the Senate.

But my chief interest arises from seeing a conspicuous public man of great ability, high station, and eminent influence in the supreme council of the nation taking a personal interest in the subject of the Christian religion. If this discourse shall serve to deepen and confirm that interest, my reward is assured.

With the highest esteem,

S. S. LAWS.

S. S. Laws

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Psychological
THE TRUE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY. *W. S. 28*

“The Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”—*Acts xi : 26.*

It is proposed in this discourse to set forth, in a very elementary way, the true nature and distinctive character of Christianity.

There are three and only three passages of Scripture in which the followers of Christ are styled Christians. The first of these passages is the one just cited, from Acts xi : 26, from which it appears that it was in Antioch of Syria that the disciples of Christ were first called by this name. This city, with its half million population, was great and important politically and commercially. It was situated on a navigable river, the Orontes, about 20 miles from Mediterranean sea, and was a natural depot for the distribution of the goods of commerce brought by caravans from the far East, and thence southward to Egypt and Africa, and westward to Asia Minor and Europe, and by water to the various ports of the Mediterranean. Politically it had been for centuries the metropolis of Syria, under the Græco-Macedonian rule, down to 64 B. C., when it became the capital of Syria as a Roman province. Antioch rivalled Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome in the Christian influence that emanated from it in the early centuries of our era. It was the third city of the Roman Empire, and of it Eudocius and Ignatius were bishops.

The initiative of this Christian influence was a great awakening that occurred more than thirteen years after the crucifixion, which was so pronounced that the report of it came to the ears of the church at Jerusalem, distant about 300 miles to the south, where it made such an impression as to its importance that helpers were sent thither, and preëminent among these helpers was the uncle of John Mark, the evangelist, “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,”

named Barnabas, who "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

The movement soon assumed such increased proportions because "much people was added to the Lord" after Barnabas arrived, that he proceeded to Tarsus, not far away, the chief city of Cilicia, a province joining Syria: "And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch to assist. And it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together in the church and taught much people."

When Saul, ten or more years previous, returned to Jerusalem from his excursion to Damascus, on which excursion he set out as an infuriated and bloody persecutor, and from which he returned three years afterward a changed man, "preaching boldly in the name of the Lord," this same Barnabas then took him by the hand (Acts ix: 29); but so relentless and violent was the opposition of the Hellenistic Jews to him at Jerusalem that they sought to kill him. "And when the brethren knew it, they brought Saul down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus" (ch. ix: 30). This Tarsus was his birthplace, and from that time he remained hid away there in quiet inaction, awaiting the subsidence of passion for ten years, till Barnabas sought him out and brought him forth to aid the Church in this great awakening at Antioch, which in some way not explained gave rise to the designation of the disciples of Christ as Christians.

Whether this title was chosen of their own motion or by divine direction, as the usage of the original word (translated, "called Christians") may be understood as intimating, or whether the name was reproachfully given by enemies, heathen or Jewish, in any event it served to discriminate the followers of Christ from all other religionists and pre-eminently from the devotees of the heathen gods, of whom there were vast multitudes in this great and renowned city; and this name has appropriately clung to them ever since.

This is a concise indication of the circumstances under

which this appellation, Christian, was first given, and which for more than eighteen hundred years has served to distinguish them, and not a few think it unfortunate that they have ever been known by any other name.

However grandly the plea, *I am a Roman citizen* appealed to the mightiest power on earth for personal security, the plea by the persecuted, *I am a Christian*, infinitely transcends it as an appeal to the mightiest power in the universe for personal security for time and eternity. "If ye ask anything in my name (Jesus Christ), I will do it" (John xiv : 14, 27-29). The martyrs died in triumph, and their martyrdom was a crown of glory. They knew that they who profess Christ before men shall be acknowledged by him before his Father and the holy angels (Luke xii : 4-9 ; Matt. xxiv : 33).

The second recorded instance of the use of the name Christian occurred under very different circumstances. It was about twelve or more years later, 58 to 60, in Cæsarea, erected and occupied as the Roman capital of Palestine. It was on the occasion of Porcius Festus succeeding Antonius Felix as Procurator of Judea. Very soon after the arrival of Festus from Rome, "the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews" brought to his attention the case of Paul, whom Felix had kept in bonds at Cæsarea for two years, hoping to receive a bribe. These Jews urged that Paul should be taken up to Jerusalem for trial, "laying a plot," as we are told, "to kill him on the way." When these leading men, at Festus' instance, came down to Cæsarea and preferred their "grievous charges," Paul flatly denied them, saying, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all." He then repelled their sinister request for a change of venue to Jerusalem for his trial, and boldly and unanswerably pleaded, "*I am standing before Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged, and no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.*" Only think of it. This Cæsar was Nero. It was not the only time in his public life that Paul asserted his rights as a Roman citizen. Even Nero's tribunal was

deemed preferable to a Jewish trial. But Festus, even after this hearing, did not have sufficient knowledge of Paul's case to make a satisfactory presentation of it to the Emperor, and therefore, as Herod Agrippa II went to Cæsarea about that time to salute Festus, the case of Paul was laid before him for counsel and advice, especially respecting "certain questions of the Jewish religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive," whereat Festus acknowledged himself perplexed; and Agrippa, on hearing of the case, said unto Festus, "I also could wish to hear the man myself," and the morrow was fixed as the day for the hearing of Paul (Acts xxv : 10-12).

The case is thus far stated to refresh the memory that the line of Paul's defense may be by us in common the more readily apprehended and appreciated. This defense was very deliberate and a somewhat full review of his life and faith. It was presented with such power that the heathen Festus was amazed, and broke forth in loud exclamation, "Paul, thou art mad!" But Paul courteously assured the "most excellent" Festus that he was not mad, but spoke the words of truth and soberness. He then appealed directly to King Agrippa as having a knowledge of the Jewish religion which would enable him to appreciate the argument. "King Agrippa," says Paul, directly addressing him, "believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." And Agrippa said unto Paul, "*With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian.*" And Paul said, "I would to God that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am except these bonds" (Acts xxvi : 29-29).

Speak of oratory. Judging from its effect, where is there anything in the world's history surpassing this?

This avowal of King Agrippa acquires special significance from the circumstance that Jewish blood flowed in his veins, so that his utterance virtually placed Christianity in contrast with Judaism. He was a great-grandson of Mariaamne, whose personal beauty and purity are unsurpassed in the

history of women, whereas her husband, Herod the Great, who was perfectly infatuated with her charms, was one of the basest men that ever lived, and among other evil deeds put to death this charming wife, and also her noble and handsome son, Aristobulus, the grandfather of our degenerate King Agrippa. History furnishes us no evidence that Agrippa ever became a Christian in fact. Indeed, it is probable that the incestuous life he was then living continued.

The third and only other Bible use of the name Christian is by the Apostle Peter, in his First Epistle, written at Babylon, as is distinctly stated in the letter itself (iv : 13), about 65 A. D., and addressed to the followers of Christ dispersed through the provinces enumerated and extending from Babylon westward throughout Asia Minor. His language is addressed to the persecuted, and is consolatory and hopeful: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you. * * * If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye, because the spirit of glory and the spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler (busybody) in other men's matters; *but if a man suffer as a Christian* (εἰ δὲ ὡς χριστιανός) let him not be ashamed; but let him glory in this name" (1 Peter iv : 12, 14, 16).

The Apostle here uses the name Christian to designate the follower of Christ as having a purity of moral character in contrast with the immoral and criminal characters of the surrounding heathen. Indeed, this language of the Apostle strongly reminds one of the eighth and ninth Beatitudes, Matt. v : 10-12.

In a word, then, the name Christian, as used in these passages of the sacred writings, serves to differentiate the followers of Christ from all other religionists—Jewish and heathen—and from all immoral and criminal characters whatsoever. When, therefore, we search for the reason which underlies the permanent use of the name Christian, as the distinguishing appellation of the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, it must be and is in fact found in the nature of his

religion. Now, the fundamental marks of this religion, which differentiate or distinguish the disciples of Jesus Christ from all, others may be reduced to three, namely :

(1.) The unique character of their knowledge. It is a true knowledge of the true God and his Christ.

(2.) The peculiarity of their love. It is a love to Christ as God incarnate—their spiritual master and kingly ruler.

(3.) Their outward life as revelative of this inward frame of their unique intelligence and affections. The true Christians are in all ages a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and the devout followers and worshipers of the Redeemer.

1. The first distinguishing trait of the Christian is his peculiar knowledge.

Knowledge, then, is the primary element of Christian character and discipleship. It is an essential constituent of the Christian religion and character. Nothing could be more erroneous than the notion that ignorance is the mother of Christian devotion. The reputed dying words of Goethe, *mehr licht*—more light—might be taken as the mother of that religion which ignorance rejected. Ignorance may and does have a maternal relation to superstition and false religion, but certainly not to the religion of him who said, "I am the light of the world." One of the greatest prophets of this religion, the great and gifted Isaiah, more than seven centuries before the advent, challenges erring men in the name of Jehovah thus: "Come now, and let us reason together, that you may learn how your sins, though scarlet or crimson, may be removed and your souls be made white as wool or snow." Says another ancient prophet, Hosea (iv : 6): "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee," etc. God prescribed knowledge; the people preferred ignorance. Paul reminds young Timothy thus: "From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And he enjoins on him to commit this treasure to competent teachers (2 Tim. iii : 15).

These Scriptures teach us how the great God, who cannot connive at sin, nevertheless may be just and yet justify, pardon, accept, sanctify, and glorify the sinner who knows and believes in Jesus. Such knowledge transcends human discovery. We learn therefrom that the mission of the Son of God to the earth was to dispel sinful darkness and ignorance; to rescue men from the guilt and power of sin, and to give eternal life to the redeemed. As showing the essentialness of this knowledge, the Saviour himself has summarized it in this single sentence: "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ" (John xvi: 3).

It is sufficiently obvious that the knowledge thus spoken of is not general nor miscellaneous knowledge. In fact, it is not a matter of human discovery, but knowledge of a specific and unique character, which it becomes man to receive from heaven with docility. It is not simply the knowledge of some god, or of a god, but of the true God, "the only true God," and over and above this, the knowledge also of Jesus Christ. This knowledge of the true God is found only where the teaching of the Bible has gone. This peculiar and profound standard of knowledge, set up by Christianity as an essential constituent of its claims on man, is so exalted and yet so simple as to infinitely transcend that of every other known religion. Properly there is no religion without its god, although there are godless schemes which are termed and treated as religions, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintooism, and the pantheism of Brahmanism. Pantheism, whether in Germany or in India, is but a euphemism for Atheism. If everything or if all is God, then extremes meet, and there is no God. But whatever may be thought or said of other schemes, whether properly termed religions or not, the fixed standard of Christianity—it does not admit of question—is the knowledge of the true God and of his son Jesus Christ.

Many thoughtful persons, however, have needlessly bewildered themselves on the subject of knowing the true God.

There was no more gifted philosophic Christian thinker of the nineteenth century than the Scotsman, Sir William Hamilton; and his explicit and repeated utterance, that the finite mind of man cannot know the infinite God, has been lamentably misunderstood and misused. Properly understood, he was perfectly and profoundly right; and it thoroughly serves our present purpose to make this appear in few words. In a word, it came to this, that our knowledge of the true God is not intuitive, but inferential or faith knowledge. With Hamilton, knowledge proper is intuitive knowledge; all other is faith knowledge.

To explain: All knowledge rests on evidence, and evidence is at bottom of two and only two kinds, viz., (1) immediate or intuitive, and (2) mediate or inferential. For example, I know immediately my self-existence, the workings of my mind, my experiences of joy and sorrow, and some of my bodily changes. I also know myself as the permanent subject of these bodily and mental changes. All this I know immediately, or at once, without reflection or inference—without reasoning. Such knowledge can neither be proved nor disproved. It is intuitive knowledge. How ridiculous it would be for any one to attempt to show or prove to us that we do or do not exist; that we do not, in fact, by immediate consciousness, experience joy or sorrow, but reason it out.

This immediate evidence is primary and the highest style of evidence and underlies all other evidence. The only other kind is inferential evidence, which leads along either the path of pure mathematical demonstration, wholly restricted to abstract hypothetical conditions, or along the practical path of probability. All the practical affairs of life lie within the domain of contingent probabilities, which admit of all degrees of force from bare presumption to moral certainty; whereas demonstration admits of no degrees. It is positive and unqualified. What will be the party outcome of this fall's elections? What will the 57th Congress do about the tariff? What bearing is the anthracite

strike going to have on our domestic comfort and health this winter? What will be our state of health a day, a week, a month from this, if alive? Who of us will sojourn at this delightful resort in 1903? But the enumeration of conjectures as to the future is a waste of time. The facts of the past, however, admit of only probable proof.

Our knowledge of all such matters as history rests on contingent inferences and is faith knowledge. "Napoleonic Doubts" are in point. To bring the matter still closer, the personal knowledge we have of one another is inferential or faith knowledge, and not intuitive knowledge. It is by inferences from words and acts that we know each other. We are not conscious or directly cognitive of each other's spirits. Our knowledge of the external material world, except so much of it as admits of sensible verification by virtue of being in direct contact with our bodily organism, is inferential or faith knowledge. It is by faith that we know of the sun, moon, and stars, Richmond, Washington, London, Paris, Jerusalem, and all other objects distant in the least, as well as in the greatest, degree. It is by faith that the speaker knows of his audience, and that the audience knows of the speaker, respectively, as real objective entities. This is not only true of the blind, but of those having perfect vision.

Now, the point of importance in this exposition is that this faith knowledge, which is so pervasive of our lives as intelligent beings, is the very same in kind as the knowledge that we have of God—"the true God and of him whom he has sent, even Jesus Christ." We know him not by intuition, but by probable inference.

Christianity admits only of probable proof, not from any defect in the evidence, but from the nature of the case. Historic facts can only be known from testimony and the inferences based thereon. I am satisfied that the proof from the evidences of Christianity reaches moral certainty—*i. e.*, that degree which leaves no reasonable doubt—and also, that the human mind is so constituted that it acquiesces with equal composure and satisfaction in moral certainty as in demon-

stration. Hence such evidence is adapted to and is adequate for rational beings. Butler, in his great work, "The Analogy," speaks of probability as the guide of life. Yes, bare presumption, its lowest grade, or the simple determining of the scales, without kicking the beam, points to the reasonable or rational side of procedure, if action is to be taken in the case. Faith moves with and transcends reason. |

We are conscious of self, but not of God. The expression "God consciousness" is an utterly misleading form of expression. It is the very Shibboleth of pantheism, which is atheism. It is a fiction and a delusion. There is no such mental state. This is what Hamilton meant.

When the natural knowledge of God is spoken of, what is meant is that by *inference* the human mind goes through nature up to nature's God. The principle of causality, which is a first, a fundamental, principle of human intelligence—an intuitive principle—compels us to recognize an energy or power operative in bringing to pass all changes. Bare existence, as the eternity of God, does not require a cause; but beginning to be, change, and dependence do. Our knowledge of the finite universe certainly assures us of its changeableness and derivation, of its beginning to be, and of its dependence. This constrains us to infer an energy or power back of it adequate to its production. It cannot be said that as the effect, however great, is finite, the cause need be only finite, for the nature of the effect, in passing the chasm between non-existence and actual existence, calls for the exercise of infinite power. But the universe is so orderly that our sciences are proof positive that this omnipotence has been guided in its exercise by over-intelligence adequate to such a service or task. Moreover, goodness has tempered the exercise of intelligence and power in the creation as exemplified by the happiness of sentient creatures. The moral nature of man and human government, which is organized justice, reveal the attribute of righteousness, and the harmony and consistency which reign over all show forth the attribute of truthfulness. In the language of the Psalmist,

“The works of his hands are truth and justice. * * * They are done in truth and uprightness” (Ps. cxi : 7, 8). Thus we have a group of five attributes—power, intelligence, goodness, justice, truthfulness—manifested by nature; and individually and collectively they necessarily imply a subject of inherence, or agent who possess them and acts them out, and of whom their activities may be predicated.

In opening the second part of his “Analogy,” wherein the constitution and course of nature are compared with Christianity, Butler takes occasion to call attention to the fact that the Bible republishes all the points in the revelation of nature with simplicity and authority, then adds thereto the supernatural truths of the Christian religion, or the gospel, such as the fall, the redemption, the mission of the Son of God, and the mission of the Holy Spirit, the three persons of the true God—in brief, the group of doctrines so aptly summarized in the so-called Apostle’s Creed.

Credo: “(1.) I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth :

(2.) And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; born of the virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was crucified, dead, and buried ; he descended into hades ; the third day he rose again from the dead ; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father ; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

(3.) I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy universal Christian Church ; the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting.”

This is perhaps a sufficient indication of the unique sort of knowledge which pervades the intelligence of the Christian, and is an essential constituent of his religion.

That noted passage in Job (xi : 7-9) falls into harmony with this exposition : “Canst thou by searching find out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ? Deeper than sheol ; what canst thou know ? The measure thereof is longer than

the earth and broader than the sea." The notion or idea of God is not a discovery of human reason, but a matter of didactic instruction, and the proofs in support of it are rational inferences from nature.

2. In the second place, let it be noted that the constituent knowledge of the Christian religion is not merely head knowledge, but also preëminently heart knowledge. In three of the Psalms of David (x:4; xiv:1; liii:11) we have a notice of atheism, more than a thousand years before the birth of Christ. Atheism is no novelty, nor is it by any means a rarity. The language in two of these ancient Psalms is, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" and in the other the words are, "All his thoughts are, there is no God." It was a matter of thought and heart. The primitive and simple language of the Psalmist very naturally associated the two as a complex exercise of the soul. It was an atheism of the head and of the heart. In Romans x:9-10 we have a like expression as to the gospel: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The subject of love which is so central in the gospel scheme has three distinct aspects, viz., God's love for us, our love for him, and brotherly love.

It is God's love for us that is set forth in that marvelous utterance of the Saviour in his interview with Nicodemus, John iii:14-17: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." And with this passage in John should always be associated that climacteric passage in Romans viii:32, 35-39: "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

"Even as it is written,

“For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This is an everlasting and unconquerable love.

The mission and death of Christ were not the cause of God's love, but the expression, the effect, the outflow of it.

In meditating on God's love, this puzzling problem forces itself on our attention: How could a holy God, naturally and necessarily averse to sin, so love sinners in their fallen and sinful state as to do what he did in bestowing upon us the unspeakable gift of his Son with the Holy Spirit? Perhaps an approximation is made towards a solution, or at least, a relief of the perplexity, by pointing out that, so far from sin being a property or essential constituent of man's nature or make-up as man, it is an accident—a separable accident. Perhaps I may be allowed to appropriate from class-room an illustration of this valid but somewhat technical distinction. It was a university class of about 80 mature young men and some young women in logic. The distinction having been made as to the difference between property and accident, the next question was as to the different kinds of accident, and it came to a young woman who correctly answered that accidents were not essential to the subject considered as were properties, and that they were inseparable and separable. For illustration of an inseparable accident, she mentioned that she was born in the State where the university was located, and could not be other than a native of that State. Being then asked for an illustration of the separable accident, she hesitated a moment, her eyes rolled seemingly in search for it, and the class was all attention, when suddenly she emphatically answered *moustache*. The answer was colloquial but apt. Sin is no more a necessary

constituent in the constitutional make-up of man than moustache, and although it may not be so easily separated or removed, still it is in fact as really separable. Today Adam is sinless; tomorrow he is sinful, but does not cease to be a man; some days thereafter he is pardoned, it may be, and sanctified and glorified; but he does not cease to be man when divested of sin and thus transformed. Indeed, he is then more of a man. In all the essential characteristics of manhood he was the same individual personality in all these conditions. The leprosy of sin mars manhood, but does not extinguish it. Luther was asked where the church was before the Reformation, and answered, "Where was your face this morning before it was washed?" In addressing the Ephesians the Apostle (iv: 21-24) thus enjoins the transformation of the sinner into the saint. The "Truth is in Jesus; that ye put away as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." (Psalm xiv): As God looked down from heaven on our fallen world, it is easily conceivable that he beheld the nobleness of his creature even in the ruin, recognized the grandeur of the human soul, notwithstanding it was marred by sin, from which, as a pitying father, he promptly proclaimed a mission of rescue. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" "For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us" (Malachi ii: 10; i: 6; Isaiah lxiii: 16; lxiv: 8). God is not ashamed of his paternity of fallen man as his creature. "But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay and thou art our potter, and we are the work of thy hand." But in a higher and holier sense he glories in being our spiritual Father in Christ Jesus, redeemed from sin in a new creation.

² The Christian religion embraces our love for God quite as distinctly as it does his love for us. The importance of emphasizing God's love is that it is the bed-rock on which

the superstructure of Christianity rests as its eternal and imperishable foundation. Our love is a reciprocated love. Says the Apostle John (1 John iv : 19), " We love him because he first loved us." It is therefore normal and profoundly rational as begotten by and founded on God's love and far away from ephemeral sentimentalism. We are kept by the power of God through faith which works by love.

There are certain conditions which in all cases determine the exercise of love, whether its object be human or divine. Pure, chaste, and rational love is our theme, as distinguished from brutal lust, which so commonly and lamentably usurps its name and place. The love that razed the walls of Troy was not pure and chaste, but the foul passion, adulterous lust. These conditions of love may be stated thus: 1, There must be an object; all the affections require an object; 2, that object must be known; 3, it must be apprehended as having attributes of excellence; 4, congeniality or sympathy therewith must be experienced; 5, there must be enjoyment in the nearness of said object; 6, there must also be reciprocity or like-mindedness; 7, and, as giving permanence to the nearness and enjoyment in the presence or nearness of the parties, there arises a reciprocal desire of possession—*my* wife, *my* husband, *my* son, *my* daughter, *my* father, *my* mother.

We consist of two natures, the body and the soul, and our personality pertains to the higher part, the soul. The Savior has two natures, that of divine sonship and that of humanity, and his personality pertains to his higher or divine nature. The Logos, or second person of the Trinity, took the human nature into impersonal union to qualify himself for the work of our redemption. Now, the incarnate Son of God, our Savior, fills all these enumerated conditions, and all who have the vision of faith behold in him an object known to possess those supreme excellences which, without hyperbole, render him the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. It is the blessed privilege of such to enjoy God's covenant assurance of reciprocal affection and posses-

sion: "I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it, and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah xxxi : 33).

This is a wonderful consummation. Surely it is not possible to conceive of a more perfect consummation of divine and human love than that of which we have such a pronounced assurance in this language of the prophet Jeremiah, resting as it does on the eternal and everlasting covenant guarantees of grace and salvation.

³As to the third phase of love which enters into the Christian life, the frequent deliverances of the Savior are very explicit. He says (John xiii : 34), "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This is more than benevolence or a mere human brotherhood philanthropy, and argues a penetrating insight into the worth of man as man, as well as of man as a saint, like to the insight of God himself in sending his Son and also the Comforter into the world. What an appreciation of the nobleness of even fallen humanity is here disclosed, and also of the grandeur of its glorification! What a contrast to the selfish, heartless mummery of all heathen religions! Love, personal and reciprocal, spiritual and divine, is the master passion of redeemed humanity, as animated by the religion of Christ.

It was in the courts of the temple and on the last day of his public teaching and controversy, when the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees had been silenced, that a lawyer was singled out and put forward with the perplexing and unanswered question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he [Jesus] said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth and the prophets" (Matt. xxii : 34-40).

3. The knowledge of the true God and of Jesus Christ, on which eternal life is contingent, is not only knowledge of the head and of the heart, but also practical. It is practical, and controls the entire spiritual and physical man.

At the outset of this discourse the essential constituents of the religion which distinguishes the disciples of Christ in all the ages were signalized as their peculiar knowledge, love, and obedience. Having considered the first two, it remains to notice their unique outward life as revelative of their unique intelligence and affection.

The outward life of man, unless he does violence to his own convictions and feelings, must truthfully manifest his inward state. The faith of man has its roots in his intelligence and creed, and controls his heart and the heart the life. The tree is judged by its fruit. If the fruit is sour, then the sap of the tree is sour. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. xii : 33, 34; Luke xv : 18, 19).

This criterion of judgment often serves as a correction of self-deception, to say nothing of cases where sincerity gives place to conscious hypocrisy. If man's intelligence sincerely and conscientiously lays hold of the truth as it is in Jesus, as it has been already indicated, and the heart respond thereto, then this fountain must impart its qualities to the stream of life that flows forth from it, whatever the sphere of the man's activity. No exception can be allowed.

The Savior's interview with Peter on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, as narrated in the last chapter of the Gospel by John, gives a practical illustration of the connection of the inner with the outer vocation. After the Savior had breakfasted with the seven disciples present, he settled down into a conversation distinctively with Peter in the hearing of them all. "Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" Notice Peter's answer. He avoids or shrinks from the comparison for some reason. It

will be recalled that Peter had three times boastfully claimed a devotion superior to the others; that three times he had disgracefully fallen from his perch of conceit, and that three times he had in humility recovered. This is the dark background of the quiet implication of the question, and Peter's reserved and modest answer shows that he had not forgotten all that. He merely appealed to the Savior's own knowledge of him—"Thou knowest that I love thee." On making that confession and appeal, Peter is pointed to active Christian work—"Feed my lambs." The love of Christ is not a dreamy and idle sentimentalism.

The second question of the Savior leaves off the comparison and simply asks, "Lovest thou me?" To which Peter answers as before, and is again directed to more arduous work for Christ—"Feed my sheep."

The third question is in the same words as the second, and we are told that "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?" And his answer was wrapped in a most earnest appeal to Christ's omniscience as witnessing to his love, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." This is an act of worship. The same command is given as in the second case, "Feed my sheep." It is repeated, however, with a solemn admonition and the Savior adds the significant words, "*Follow me.*" These words, under the circumstances, are peculiarly significant, as though Peter's previous call to discipleship and apostleship had been forfeited by his backslidings, and this renewed it all and placed him on his feet again as forgiven and restored. "Follow me." And yet, although Peter thenceforth remained true to his Lord, he was not entirely freed from his characteristic weaknesses as a man. Obedience and service go with love and are protective.

Again: No active life in all history is more impressively illustrative of the power of a ruling passion than that of the restless and laborious Apostle Paul, who was wholly impelled by his regard for and devotion to Christ. "For," says Paul, "we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of

Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Hence his anxiety that all men should prepare to meet their God. He pleaded so earnestly with his fellowmen that some thought him crazy, and in self-defense he says, "Whether we are beside ourselves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober (sane) mind, it is unto you, for the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v : 10, 13, 14); and again: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. ii : 20). He identifies himself with his Redeemer and Master, who was both. Had he been a mechanic, a scholar, a farmer, a merchant, a lawyer, a statesman, a soldier, would not the love of Christ have ruled his life just the same?

In this connection, there comes to light a marvelous illumination of the concrete realization of the true law of Christian obedience. Christ claims obedience to his own will and word. Well, Christ is the perfect embodiment of the moral law and will of God, and his will is made the law of our Christian duty. His own explicit claim is this: "If ye love me, ye will keep *my* commandments." "In that day ye shall know that *I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.* He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. * * * If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words" (John xiv : 15, 20, 21, 23, 24). Hence as followers or disciples of Christ our obedience is due to him as a person rather than to a code of morals or a moral law.

As Christians we are not our own, but are the bond servants of Jesus Christ, and as such we owe our duties to him.

Paul, in the first four words of his epistle to the Romans, unequivocally avows himself to be "a bond servant of Jesus Christ." Jude makes the same avowal. What is true of them is true of all disciples of Christ; and Peter, in his first epistle, speaks of the price paid in our purchase or redemption by Christ from under the bondage of the broken law of God as more precious than silver and gold. He himself then took the place of the law from under which he redeemed us. It is incumbent on bond servants to obey the words of their master who owns them. That is our case. We have passed from the bondage of a broken law to the bondage or obedience of the person of our living and loving Redeemer and Lord. "If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." In this change of attitude from bondage under the broken law to that of bond servants of Christ, the law in all its purity is neither ignored, relaxed, nor compromised, but magnified and made honorable in all its righteous claims on us, in that Christ (the embodiment of the law) is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth, and he takes its place in relation to his followers. To illustrate: Our children obey and honor the laws of the State by obeying and honoring their law abiding and fulfilling parents. The abstract code takes thus a personal embodiment. This illustrates the exemption from legalism and hopeless servility and the cheerful freedom of obedience to the Savior on the part of Christians. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom. vi: 12, 14, 15). Nay, the love of Christ binds us to his holy obedience.

"If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." It is from love to Christ and not from dread of the curse of the law that Christians avoid sin and pursue holiness.

The ultimate foundation on which Christ's claim to the direct obedience of his disciples, and underlying his redemp-

tive work, is his deity. He had previously said, "Ye call me teacher and lord, and ye say well, for (so) I AM" (John xiii: 13). There is no warrant for this particle "so." Omit it, and then we have here his explicit claim to be the *I Am*. When Jehovah at the burning bush spake to Moses, he gave him this commission: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I Am* hath sent me unto you. * * * This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus iii: 14, 15). In three places in the eighth chapter of the Gospel by John the Savior directly claims to be the I AM. In these places, therefore, and elsewhere he directly claims to be the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and this claim is buttressed by his life work and teaching and especially by the term Lord being distinctively applied to him in the New Testament hundreds of times. This term in the frequent quotations from the Old Testament is the substitute for Jehovah. The history of this usage, which can only be alluded to here, would indicate the perfect propriety of substituting the proper name Jehovah for the title Lord wherever it relates to the Christ. Instead of the Lord Jesus Christ, we would then have, more appropriately, the *Jehovah Jesus Christ*—i. e., Jehovah, the Anointed Savior. And Thomas' confession, an act of profound worship, would become in more exact English, "My Jehovah and my God."

The substitute Lord for Jehovah in the Old Testament has been rejected from the 1901 edition of the Revised Version, which contains the emendations of the American Committee, and it wisely transfers the proper name Jehovah to the English text wherever it occurs in the Hebrew, as is done with all other proper names. It might have been well to conform the New Testament to the Old in this matter. The title Lord never was an equivalent of the proper name Jehovah, but only the substitute adopted by the superstition of the Jews in place of the sacred name in reading their Scriptures. There are Lords many and Gods many, but only one Jehovah.

In keeping the words and commandments of the Christ

we therefore do in fact honor and observe the veritable words and commands of Jehovah, the only true God, in the person of him "whom he sent, even Jesus Christ."

Under the circumstances it is not unreasonable to assume such an acquaintance with the words and commands of the Savior as to dispense with the necessity of attempting a detailed recital.

"Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. iv:23). It may suffice to notice that the Sermon on the Mountain was given, at the opening of his public ministry, to show the breadth and depth of the spiritual import and claims of God's law which had been smothered and made void by rabbinical traditions, as its claims rested on us, and as he undertook to meet all its preceptive and penal requirements. This sermon is as full of his life-giving words and commandments as an egg is of meat.

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v:17-20). Ye are the light of the world. Ye are the salt of the earth. But he descends into particulars, touching the various salient issues of life, and speaks of murder, adultery, perjury, love and not hatred of enemies, almsgiving, prayer, forgiveness, hypocrisy, the treasure in heaven rather than on earth, the service of God rather than of mammon, seeking the kingdom first in full and contented faith that God as a Father will then in his good providence supply all our wants, with many other equally incisive injunctions and warnings,

such as charitable judgments of others, the guilt of trifling with sacred things, the observance of the golden rule, caution in regard to plausible false teachers, etc., and then, with the conscious authority of a divine master, he concludes: "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, because it was founded upon the rock. And every one who heareth these words of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and smote upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall thereof." This was an astounding claim, yet more than eighteen centuries have intervened between the delivery of this discourse and the present, and yet it seems to me that the attentive listener of the present must be as really astonished as the original auditors. There is not a false note in it, not a false position or utterance, and its simplicity equals its truthfulness and profundity. Not the least impressive feature is its assumed and asserted authority in the several utterances, and especially in its final application. Its practical pertinence not only to the then present but to our present situation is by no means the least of its truly wonderful features. Nothing at all equal to it has been preserved to us from the lips of Buddha or Confucius, though their lives were prolonged to more than twice that of the Nazarene. Truly this young man was not only a great teacher of morals and religion, but the greatest known in the world's history. Indeed, both of the preëminent teachers named were atheists, acknowledging no God whatever, and neither had any faith in the immortality of the human soul; neither did say or could say, or teach his disciples to believe in or say, "*Our Father, who art in heaven.*" The comparison is a contrast.

Socrates, born nine years after Confucius died, also lived to over seventy, and rose far above the sages of India and of

China, but he also falls far below the young man of Palestine, notwithstanding his views were clothed and enriched by the genius of his great pupil, Plato. Socrates had a turbid faith in a future of the soul, and the last act of his life prior to drinking the hemlock was one of idolatry (in ordering a sacrifice to Esculapius). The evidence is conclusive that even Plato was a polytheist and an idolater.

It is sad to be compelled to confess that Buddha, Confucius, and Socrates—these three most notable men of all Gentile antiquity, and who as philosophers have never been surpassed—were, from the standpoint of the Christian religion, blind leaders of the blind. There is unquestionably no evidence to warrant the opinion that they had even a glimmer of the knowledge of the “true God,” and of course they were in absolutely total ignorance of Jesus Christ. Honest and impartial fidelity to the truth requires it to be affirmed, therefore, that not one of them possessed that knowledge which is the first essential constituent of eternal life. And of course the love and obedience of the Christian religion are out of the question.

As to the bearing this should have from the outlook of Christianity on the question as to the salvation of the heathen, it is needless to indulge in any present conjectures or inferences.

In this discourse Christianity as an institution—as a church organization—has been left quite out of view. It is the kernel rather than the shell that primarily interests us; yet in passing it may be remarked that there are four types of church organization, just as in the secular state—the democratic, the representative, the oligarchical or aristocratic, and the imperial—each resting in like manner on a distinctive interpretation and practical exercise of the three fundamental powers of all government, human and divine, in making, interpreting, and executing the laws of an organization.

There remain to be noticed a few general reflections, too important to be omitted.

1. It is a radical observation, warranted by the preceding discussion, that there are and can be only two types of true and genuine religion. One, and first in order, is pure monotheism, and the other is Christianity. Pure theism consists of a true knowledge of the true God, with corresponding love and obedience; but there is no Jesus Christ in it. This is the religion of unfallen angels, and was the religion of our first parents in their sinless state. It is suited only to sinless beings.

Christianity is a religion for sinners. Its formative idea is that of rescuing man from sin by the incarnation and mission to earth of the second person of the godhead and establishing the redeemed ultimately in a state of permanent holiness, the possessors of eternal life. The Jehovah Christ came to earth to seek and to save fallen sinners by raising them to a knowledge, love, and service of the true God and of his Son, Jesus Christ. Christianity provides a satisfaction of the penalty of the broken law of God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and also a satisfaction of the precept in the purification of man's heart. *It provides in justification and sanctification what man cannot do for himself.*

The world's history has furnished us no knowledge whatever of any other religion than Christianity that is at all suited to the rational demands of man as a sinner in the government of a just and holy God. Deism and the other schemes are utterly inadequate, except for a sinless being. That is the want which Christianity alone supplies. We have no warrant to assume that God will be indifferent to sin or pardon it without adequate atonement in satisfaction of offended justice.

2. The symmetry of the Christian religion in the individual and in the church organization plainly implies the equilibrium of these three elements—knowledge, love, and obedience. It is sometimes remarked that Presbyterians unduly emphasize the intellectual element; that the emotional is given too great prominence among our Methodist brethren,

whilst the ritual churches are viewed as exaggerating external ceremonies. Whatever the pertinence or justice of such strictures, certain it is that the harmonious blending of the three fundamental constituents of our Christian religion gives us in corresponding measure the ideal type thereof. The Socratic and Hindoo doctrine that knowledge is virtue and the whole of it is too narrow for Christianity.

3. The complete adaptation of the Christian religion in its great essential features, and even in detail, to the constitution and condition of the human soul argues its divine origin, the same as that of the soul itself. The key fits the wards of this complicated lock so perfectly as to show that both are from the same creative hand. It sets at naught the doctrine of chances. We have no innate ideas, but we do have innate powers of mind, and the three-fold grouping of these into the powers of intelligence, feeling and will is the work of the last century and a half in place of the old Aristotelic two-fold division of the centuries into the understanding and the will. It may still be improved on, but will probably never be wholly superseded. A single additional circumstance may be mentioned. Our present knowledge of the mind recognizes it as omnipresent throughout the body, just as the spirit of Christ is in his spiritual body. We also recognize a subconscious sphere, embracing the dispositions or habits which are the seat of character. We are not directly conscious of changes therein, and this explains that regeneration, which consists of a change of disposition or heart, is subconscious. We have no immediate knowledge of spiritual birth any more than we do of natural birth. Each is known from the consequences which flow from it. The Savior's eye penetrated to this depth when he said to Nicodemus, Ye must be born from above.

4. There is only one other trait of Christianity which will be mentioned in this connection, and that is one which surprisingly illustrates how this religion meets one of the most powerful, magnanimous, and spontaneous impulses of the human soul, which works havoc if not properly regulated.

That is the deep-seated disposition or desire to crown the victor—to commemorate deeds of merit in the public esteem. However mistaken or perverted at times, it is nevertheless irrepressible. This is largely the explanation of polytheism. It has furnished the world many of its gods. This notorious and extravagant apotheosis of those esteemed heroes and benefactors has been deemed a disease of the human mind.

Now, a thoroughly unique feature of Christianity is that it places before man's mind a supreme Benefactor, who is a proper object of supreme worship by virtue of his deity. Were he less than true God, this worship would be idolatry, as giving to a finite creature the glory alone due to the Creator.

When Thomas saw the wounds in the hands and side of the risen Lord, with adoring reverence and as an act of supreme worship, he addressed him as his Jehovah and his God. From that time till now Christians have all devoutly worshiped the Christ, the anointed one. This is probably the best and simplest test of genuine Christian character. For example, take prayer as a simple act of worship. The being to whom prayers are offered must be omnipresent, omniscient to read the heart, and omnipotent to provide answers; but these are attributes of deity, and our Jehovah Jesus is fully equipped with them. Hence no finite being, however excellent and exalted, can be worshiped by man without the degrading and flagrant sin of idolatry, and no jugglery of words or refinements can relieve the guilt of so doing. All Christians pray to Christ.

The familiar little child's prayer,

“Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take,”

is a Christian prayer, addressed to our blessed Lord, and is an act of deserved worship of the Lord Jehovah. It is said

that John Quincy Adams repeated this prayer every night on going to bed ; also it is related, in the life of John Randolph, that his mother taught him to kneel in bed every night before lying down and repeat this prayer, and, wayward as he was, its spirit seemed to sadly hover over his erratic life to the last. It may be repeated perfunctorily, thoughtlessly, but its true spirit is that of worship to the Lord Jehovah.

How different the discipleship of Christ from the discipleship of other great teachers.

If those who worship the Jehovah Christ are right and not idolaters, then what becomes of those who withhold from him the worship due to him as deity? One or the other must be in fatal error.

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